

General Introduction to Sangharakshita's Seminars

Hidden Treasure

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

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

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

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

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

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

Sangharakshita's Literary Executors and the Adhithana Dharma Team

Seminar on D.T. Suzuki's 'Outlines of Mahayana Buddhism', first published 1907 by Luzac, London. The seminar was evidently using the Schocken edition published in 1963.

Verbatim transcription of the seminar led by the venerable Sangharakshita. Others present: Devamitra, Devaraja, Lokamitra, Mamaki, Mangala, Nagabodhi, Ratnapani, Sona, Sudatta, Sulocana, Vajradaka.

According to FWBO Newsletter no.24, and Shabda for August 1974, this was held at Sulocana's house [the Old Rectory at Tittleshall, later known as Abhirati] in Norfolk in September 1974, and lasted for ten days.

Extracts from the actual text (only) are in "double quotes". The text studied contained a large number of misprints, and these are sometimes included, especially if Sangharakshita comments on them.

Original transcription by Gotami. Digitized by Kuladasa and Shantavira. Checked and annotated by Shantavira.

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[1] Outlines of Mahayana Buddhism

Sangharakshita: First of all a few general remarks on the text itself and our approach to it. As you all know, it is Suzuki's 'Outlines of Mahayana Buddhism'. I am hoping that we can get through the whole text in ten days, which will be quite an undertaking, quite an achievement, if we do manage it. If it is, in fact, hopeless to try to do that, we shall probably know by tomorrow and readjust accordingly, but I am going to aim, at least for the present, at getting through the whole text in ten days. I rather suspect that there are quite a few passages that won't need much discussion, whereas there will be other passages on which we need to concentrate, and passages which even raise matters of very deep and general interest that we can sort of go into rather more thoroughly even than the text itself requires.

In a way we shall be studying two things; first of all, Mahayana Buddhism itself, the importance of which need not be emphasized, and secondly, Dr Suzuki's own approach to and understanding of Mahayana Buddhism. We may not always agree with him, and in any case this is a very old book, as books on Buddhism in English go. It appeared practically seventy years ago, but it is still one of the best, possibly the best, and certainly it hasn't been decisively replaced by anybody, but even so it does carry on it, or carry with

it, some marks of the time at which it was written - that is, just at the turn of the century - and therefore there are not only some of the things that we won't be able to agree with, but also certain bits that are rather dated, and we can see that. But even though we are studying an old text of this sort, in this way, that itself will be something additionally instructive. We shall see first of all how Suzuki himself approached Mahayana Buddhism, seventy years ago, and we shall see in some cases how our understanding has even improved since then. We shall see Suzuki, for instance, having to take care to guard himself against certain misunderstandings which are not likely to arise now. In that respect there is a rather quaint and outdated bit, and that will be quite interesting from an historical point of view; and there will be a few things, I think, on which we are now better informed than Suzuki himself was in those days. For instance, in connection with Asvaghosha's 'Awakening of Faith' and a few other topics of that kind.

So it will be doubly instructive, the whole study. First of all we shall be studying, as I said, Mahayana Buddhism itself, and then we shall be studying, secondarily, the approach of a very great Mahayana Buddhist mind to the Mahayana around the beginning of the [twentieth] century when he was trying, practically for the first time in English, certainly for the first time in English systematically and completely, to expound what Mahayana Buddhism was all about. And again, as you know, Suzuki is more famous for his books on Zen, which he started writing only fifteen or sixteen years after this book came out, when he was in his, well, when he was middle-aged, and we can see a certain amount of connection between his approach to the Mahayana here, in this book, and his approach to Zen in some of his later writings. And I think it is very advisable that in any case we should take up this book before taking up any of his writings on Zen. To go straight into the writings on Zen can be rather misleading, due to no fault of Dr Suzuki. One is helped, I think, very much, in understanding his approach to Zen, by reading his book on Mahayana Buddhism first.

So we are going to go through the text as rapidly as we can - consistent [2] with a proper understanding. We won't delay and we won't get lost in side issues, and I suggest we skip Alan Watts' preparatory essay. He does rather go on about Buddhism and science, which I think isn't exactly relevant here, although it's interesting in its way, and those who are interested can read it by themselves. If there is any point arising out of that preface that anybody would like to discuss, perhaps we can do it right at the end, when we review the ten days' work.

So let's go straight on into the Introduction. I suggest also we ignore the footnotes. The footnotes are often of either purely scholarly interest, or purely historical interest, and are often quite outdated, so I suggest we ignore those. There may be the odd one which is relevant, in which case I'll draw attention to that.

Now we start off with the Introduction, on 'The Mahayana and the Hinayana Buddhism'. We are going to try to get through the whole of the Introduction this morning. It is divided into four sections: we'll try and get through two before coffee, and two after; and they do cover some very important ground. So let's go round, as we usually do, clockwise, reading a paragraph each, in turn, and stopping to discuss or explain or enquire

whenever necessary. If anybody wants to comment or to raise any point or any query just sort of butt in, or if there are several people, just sort of raise your hand, as it were, and let's see how we get on. Right, let's start then.

"The terms 'Mahayana' and 'Hinayana' may sound unfamiliar to most of our readers."

Sangharakshita: Oh, just one point before we begin. Can we try and get pronunciations right, especially as Dr Suzuki has given us diacritics. Let's say Mahayana and Hinayana, not Mahayana, or Mahayana; let's get it quite right: Mahayana and Hinayana.

Lokamitra: "The terms 'Mahayana' and 'Hinayana'"

S: Hinayana.

Lokamitra: Hinayana.

S: You're still saying 'Hinnayana'; it's 'Heenayana'.

Lokamitra: Heenayana.

S: That's right. A long sound.

Lokamitra: "may sound unfamiliar to most of our readers."

S: See how out of date we are already, yes?

"perhaps even to those who have devoted some time to the study of Buddhism. They have hitherto been induced to believe that there is but one form of Buddhism, and that there exists no such distinction as Mahayanism and Hinayanism."

S: Hmm. What was that one form of Buddhism, do you think?

Vajradaka: Theravada.

S: Yes, it was the Theravada Buddhism of the Pali canon, which became known in English-speaking circles much before the Mahayana became known. It wasn't so on the continent. Both in French and in German, and even in Russian, there were books - very, very reliable books - dealing with the Mahayana, but not in English. For instance, in France there was Burnouf's 'Lotus of the Good Law', which was on the Saddharmapundarika Sutra, which contains a very lengthy and very scholarly introduction on Indian Buddhism including the Mahayana, but there was nothing like that [3] in English. So what Suzuki says is applicable mainly to the Anglo-Saxon English-speaking scene.

"But, as a matter of fact, there are diverse schools in Buddhism just as in other religious systems."

S: Seventy years ago people had to be told this; that there were diverse schools in Buddhism just as in other religious systems.

"It is said that, within a few hundred years after the demise of Buddha, there were more than twenty different schools, all claiming to be the orthodox teaching of their master. These, however, seem to have vanished into insignificance one after another, when there arose a new school quite different in its general constitution from its predecessors, but far more important in its significance as a religious movement. This new school or rather system made itself so prominent in the meantime as to stand distinctly alone from all the other schools, which later became a class by itself. Essentially, it taught everything that was considered to be Buddhistic, but it was very comprehensive in its principle and method and scope. And, by reason of this, Buddhism was now split into two great systems, Mahayanism and Hinayanism, the latter indiscriminately including all the minor schools which preceded Mahayanism in their formal establishment."

S: This is very much a summary, this particular paragraph, of a very rich and complex development, but it is quite substantially correct, as a summary, even now. There is nothing we have learned about the history of Buddhism since which modifies the meaning of this paragraph in any way. As a summary of what happened it is still completely correct.

"Broadly speaking, the difference between Mahayanism and Hinayanism is this:"

S: Hmm. Just one other point: Suzuki seems to have tried to popularize the terms Mahayanism and Hinayanism, and several other Japanese scholars too. These have simply not caught on. We now say simply Mahayana and Hinayana, and I think that is better; anyway the terminal sound 'ism' has quite an unpleasant sound in some people's ears.

Ratnapani: Can we drop the 'ism' as we go through?

S: Well, if Suzuki does, we can. (laughter)

"Mahayanism is more liberal and progressive, but in many respects too metaphysical and full of speculative thoughts that frequently reach a dazzling eminence: Hinayanism, on the other hand, is somewhat conservative and may be considered in many points to be a rationalistic ethical system simply."

S: Here is a very broad and very general characterization of the two yanas, which is again broadly and substantially correct, though it must also be pointed out that words like 'liberal', 'progressive', and 'conservative' are not used in quite their modern sort of sociopolitical meaning. I think I've dealt with this in the 'Survey', where I have described the Mahayana as progressive, but I've taken care to guard against any misunderstanding of what progressive means. It is certainly not progressive in the modern sense, so one must bear this in mind, too, when reading Suzuki. What do you think he means by saying that Mahayanism is more liberal and progressive?

Nagabodhi: It's less tied to an idea of the letter of the law; it's following the spirit.

S: It certainly doesn't ignore the letter; it takes the letter into consideration and does not depart from it unnecessarily, and even conserves it, but it stresses the spirit all the time, and it also stresses fresh expressions of the spirit to meet new needs and new situations, new spiritual demands. So it is liberal and progressive in that sort of sense. But Suzuki is quite fair; he says, "but in many respects too metaphysical", and he is, of course, speaking, I think, mainly about Indian Mahayana; it is very highly metaphysical - I mean, using the word metaphysical for the time being. And some of the Mahayana texts seem very abstract, very remote, and very often rather long-winded, and the shastras, the works of the great teachers, the commentaries and other treatises, are, as he says, full of speculative thoughts, which sometimes, you know, go rather beyond what the Buddha would have considered necessary. They are not always tied very [4] directly to the spiritual path; there's all sorts of speculation about logic and epistemology and so on and so forth. And medieval Indian Buddhism got very deeply involved in all this, sometimes in a rather scholastic sort of way, though again, as Suzuki says, these thoughts sometimes reach dazzling eminence, but very often it is an intellectual rather than a spiritual dazzle. Though even that has its own place - we certainly mustn't knock the intellect. Suzuki's being fair: he's saying Mahayanism is more liberal and progressive, but in many respects too metaphysical and full of speculative thoughts that frequently reach a dazzling eminence. Hinayanism, on the other hand, is somewhat conservative. So, what does conservative mean, do you think?

Vajradaka: Pragmatic and sticking to the word.

S: Yes. It doesn't readily admit any change of expression or mode or tradition. Actually, of course, some have crept in, but they have very often been antedated. So in that sense, Hinayanism does tend to be conservative, and may be considered in many points to be a rationalistic and ethical system, simply. Some presentations of the Theravada, certainly modern presentations, are certainly of this kind, though in the Pali scriptures of the Theravada there is very much that goes far beyond rationalistic ethical systems. So that might be a fair estimate of Theravada, say, as often propounded, but not the Theravada scriptures themselves, as we saw when we had the Udana study retreat. It was quite remarkable what was in that little text. It didn't seem like contemporary Theravada Buddhism as usually expounded at all; it was much much freer and more alive and more fluid than that. And there were no lists, (laughter) which was quite remarkable. I think that some of us were wondering, you know, well, what's missing? And then we realized I think, well, it's these lists. We didn't have any lists in that little scripture. It was just like a little gospel. You felt very close to the Indian Buddhism of those days when the Buddha himself was around and things were very fluid and developing and very free and very creative. But that's also Theravada Buddhism, but it isn't the sort of material that modern Theravada Buddhists make much of. You know, they emphasize much more the scholasticism and the formalism. So what Suzuki says is fair on the Hinayana and of the Theravada as nowadays usually expounded.

Devamitra: Is there much imagery as regards growth and development in the Theravada, the Pali canon, because this is one point that occurred to me when we were on the summer school. Subhuti and I, and one of the evening lecturers, said that there was very little imagery in Buddhist scriptures regarding growth and development and I think he was someone who had just had contact with a particular group of Theravada teachers; because I mean they are certainly there in the Mahayana sutras, but I just wondered about the Pali canon.

S: When you say imagery of growth and development, are you definitely meaning imagery or are you just meaning the general idea of growth and development?

Devamitra: Well, that as well.

S: Well, you see, Mrs Rhys Davids has gone into that and she has shown that the whole emphasis originally was on growth and development, and in the Udana, for instance, we found the Buddha using expressions several times in Pali which meant self-development, or making oneself develop, self-cultivation, and this came several times. And there are even images: for instance, the images associated with the four dhyanas, and the imagery of the lotus in general and the Buddha saying the whole of humanity like lotus plants in various stages of development. So even the images are there.

Devamitra: This is in the Pali canon?

S: In the Pali canon, but the Pali canon I feel, on the whole, is just an unexplored mass of material, and the earlier, what I call the more [5] archaic material, in the Pali canon, which seems closer to the Buddha himself and more fluid, like the Udana, is not used as a basis for expounding Buddhism today by Theravada Buddhists. They will like to get on to Abhidhamma-type material as soon as possible, which is very abstract, highly analytical, and from which all imagery, all figures of speech, metaphors, similes and so on, have been deliberately excluded.

Devaraja: Why do you think that preference is there?

S: It seems to be to me more the Indian type of mind at work. Well, a certain kind of Indian mind. I don't really quite know what to say. For instance, you don't find the analytical approach and the scholastic approach in the Upanishads; it's not there at all. And in general sort of style and general feel works like the Udana in the Pali canon are quite close to some of the later Upanishads. It's the same sort of milieu. It's the same sort of intellectual and almost the same sort of spiritual atmosphere. Whereas, say, with the Abhidharma you're in a completely different atmosphere. I'm not saying that the Abhidharma approach isn't valid. I'm certainly not saying that. It has its own uses, and its own appeal, you know, for some people, but there's no doubt that it isn't necessarily the norm even of Hinayana, even of Theravada Buddhism.

If we explore the Pali canon, which has been handed down by the Theravadins, it is a much richer thing and it shows the teaching of the Buddha to have been much richer

and freer than one would suspect from some of the later expositions. So it's almost as though modern Theravada teaching doesn't do justice to Theravada Buddhism itself - doesn't do justice to the Theravada scriptures or the scriptures which they themselves have preserved. They make use of only a tiny selection of material, ignoring completely some very important documents. In a way you can't blame them because the material is so vast, but I think a better selection could have been made, to put it mildly, and, for instance, Dhammadinna remarked, after the Udana study retreat, that when she learned that it was going to be on the Udana, she thought, oh lord, a dry old Pali text, but she was quite surprised, and pleasantly surprised, she said, how fascinating it turned out to be, and how alive, and how vividly one could feel the spiritual life of those times, and what it must have been like to have been an early Buddhist, you know, in the days when the Buddha himself was around and everything was very fluid and very vital. So one has to make use of a certain historical sense, and very often the word Hinayana is used in the sense of this rather sort of cut-and-dried type of Buddhism, which does exist, which is even very popular in some quarters, but which is not necessarily always representative of the tradition to which it ostensibly belongs - in this case, say, the Theravada tradition. The Theravada tradition, if you dig deep enough and go back far enough, is a much richer thing than one might suspect from some of the modern and medieval little manuals on the subject.

Devamitra: Do you think it lost its richness when it left India?

S. Well it's never actually lost it, in a sense, because the literature's there, but for some reason or other - I suppose the monks are mainly to blame - they just became more and more involved in the scholasticism and a rather dry analytical approach, and some of the richer, more imaginative, more spiritual material just seems to have been neglected. But now we've got the whole Tipitika, the whole Pali canon, edited in roman characters, and nearly all of it translated into English, we're in a much better position than many Buddhists were in the past in the East, well for hundreds and hundreds of years. I don't think they've got the Pali canon translated into Sinhalese even now. They only started on it a few years ago, and only the monks who knew Pali could read the whole canon; the lay people, who very rarely knew Pali, had no direct access at all, you know, rather like [6] people in medieval Europe not being able to read the Bible if they didn't know Latin. It was rather like that, and they just picked up the bits and pieces that were, you know, translated from the pulpit. And it was much like with Buddhism, say, in Ceylon or Burma, and the monks usually translated the drier bits, so you can't wonder if the lay people used to not be very interested sometimes.

It must also be said that the Jataka stories were popular, but they were popular in a different sort of way, it was a different sort of material. It was quite inspiring, very often, but, you know, it didn't always satisfy the more intelligent lay Buddhist; there wasn't very much for them. You almost had to become a monk, and then, of course, you got caught up in scholasticism. I mean, I don't want to depreciate scholasticism, I certainly think it has its place, but I think it has been over-emphasized in the Theravada generally, right down to modern days. For instance, if a Theravada bhikkhu came to London, if you were to ask him a question out of the Udana I think he would be quite surprised and he

probably would not have read the Udana, not unless he had had, you know, some contact with the West, and possibly read it in the English translation. Anyway, is this clear, this very broad and very general difference of emphasis as between the Mahayana and the Hinayana? As we may come to see later, there is no sort of one school that can be labelled Mahayana, and there is certainly no one school that can be labelled Hinayana. Strictly speaking, the Hinayana is almost a sort of literary phenomenon, you never actually encounter it in the flesh, though you might have the odd individual who could really be described as a Hinayanist. But the Theravada Buddhism of South-East Asia doesn't quite correspond to Hinayana; sometimes it is a bit better, sometimes it's a bit worse. Well, let's carry on then to the next paragraph.

"Mahayana literally means 'great vehicle' and Hinayana 'small or inferior vehicle', that is, of salvation. This distinction is recognized only by the followers of Mahayanism, because it was by them that the unwelcome title of Hinayanism was given to their rival brethren, - thinking that they were more progressive and had a more assimilating energy than the latter."

S: It mustn't be forgotten that, say, Theravadins don't accept this designation of Hinayana at all, and some of them have suggested that it should be dropped because it isn't very acceptable to non-Mahayanists; that is to say, to the Theravadins. And strictly speaking it doesn't quite fit, but it is a very useful term historically with reference to Indian Buddhism to describe all these early schools, and even later schools like the Sarvastivadins and the Sautrantikas which were non-Mahayanistic, but one must be careful not to use it in a pejorative sort of way. There's one quite good phrase here about the Mahayana. Suzuki says that the Mahayanists "thought that they were more progressive and had a more assimilating energy." So what do you think he means by that? "A more assimilating energy" than the Hinayana? I mean, assimilating what?

Devaraja: I think they were able to kind of maybe adapt themselves to present-day circumstances and find a way relevant to coping with that without having to cut ...

S: Yes, right, yes. This is what he is getting at, but the word 'assimilating' is quite interesting. I think it is a better word than 'adapt', because 'adapt' sometimes suggest a sort of change, even a sort of betrayal or compromise, but 'assimilate' doesn't because when you assimilate something you incorporate it and make it part of your own substance. It's organic, just like when you eat food you assimilate food, you derive strength and energy from the food, but what was formally food becomes you, part of your organic bodily structure. So in the same way the Mahayana had that energy to draw upon - you know, Indian culture, Indian imagery, Indian tradition, even very low and crude ones - and assimilate them, transform them, into its own substance, and it is this great assimilative energy, as he calls it, that Suzuki is describing. I think this is a very good term, a very good [7] description. Suzuki, by the way, has this gift of phrase, you know, embodying quite a sharp insight, and I think this is a good example; that Mahayanism 'had a more assimilating energy' than did the Hinayana. I think it is very fair to say that, and of course it comes out especially in the Vajrayana, where that assimilating energy becomes a sort of principle. All right, carry on then.

"The adherents of Hinayanism, as a matter of course, refused to sanction the Mahayanist doctrine as the genuine teaching of Buddha, and insisted that there could not be any other Buddhism than their own, to them naturally the Mahayana system was a sort of heresy."

S: This is very much the attitude of the Theravadins in South-East Asia to the Mahayana even now, though there are individual exceptions, but certainly even in the course of the last twenty or twenty-five years Buddhists in South-East Asia have become much more aware of the fact of the existence of other forms of Buddhism, mainly Mahayana, and I do believe that their attitude is very slowly, and perhaps subtly, changing. They are not quite so sure of their own orthodoxy, rightness, as they were before. I can remember, you know, when I sort of started my own work, twenty-five years ago, if you mentioned Mahayana to some Theravada Buddhists there was an outcry; you couldn't even mention the word. It doesn't seem like that any more, they seem to have got over that, and you can at least talk about the Mahayana. They won't start getting angry. So, you know, that's an improvement.

"Geographically, the progressive school of Buddhism found its supporters in Nepal, Tibet, China, Corea, and Japan, while the conservative school established itself in Ceylon, Siam, and Burma. Hence the Mahayana and the Hinayana are also known respectively [as] Northern and Southern Buddhism."

S: You might have wondered why this was: Northern and Southern. Well, it's just a geographical distinction, as he makes clear. His enumeration is not quite complete: there's also Laos and Cambodia, which of course are Theravada or Hinayana, and there's also Vietnam, which is Mahayanist; though he goes on to say a bit more about this geographical division of Buddhism.

"En passant, let me remark that this distinction, however, is not quite correct, for we have some schools in China and Japan, whose equivalent or counterpart cannot be found in the so-called Northern Buddhism, that is, Buddhism flourishing in northern India. For instance, we do not have in Nepal or in Tibet anything like the Sukhavati sects of Japan or China."

S: Sukhavati. Long a and long i.

"Of course, the general essential ideas of the Sukhavati philosophy are found in the sutra literature as well as the writings of such authors as Asvaghosa, Asanga, and Nagarjuna."

S: By the way, I take it everyone knows what the Sukhavati sects are?

Mangala: The Pure Land.

S: The Pure Land. Literally it means the Happy Land; the Happy Land which is, of course, the Pure Land. In Japan, the Shin School. Suzuki's making the point that even, say, the distinction between Northern and Southern Buddhism isn't enough, because in the East, in China and Japan, there are developments such as the Sukhavati schools, which you don't find in the Northern, that is, the Indian, Mahayana. You get the seeds, you get the ideas, especially in the writings of these great Mahayana teachers, but you don't get that development into whole schools or sects. So therefore he wants to have a threefold geographical division of Northern, Southern, and Eastern, which seems quite sensible, but that has not generally been adopted, though you may remember that I sometimes speak in terms of, apart from Indian Buddhism itself, South-East Asian Buddhism, which is Theravada, of Tibetan Buddhism, which is triyana, and of Sino-Japanese Buddhism, which is what he means by Eastern Buddhism. So you've really got, apart from Indian, these three great areas. Let's just finish that paragraph and we'll talk about it a bit more.

"But those ideas were not developed and made into a new sect as they were in the East. Therefore, it may be proper to divide Buddhism into three, instead of two, geographical sections: Southern, Northern, and Eastern."

S: I would say if you are going to have this geographical division, you [8] need a fourfold division, I would say. First of all, Indian Buddhism: it all sprang from there. Then South-East Asian Buddhism, which is mainly Ceylon, Burma, and Thailand, which is Theravadin. And then Sino-Japanese Buddhism, or, if you like, Eastern Buddhism, which means mainly those forms of Mahayana which were actually developed in those countries which were not directly exported from India to China and Japan, like, for instance, Zen - I mean, as a fully developed school. And then, of course, the Buddhism of Tibet, Mongolia, and the Himalayan region. So first of all you've got Indian Buddhism, where the seeds of everything were contained, going through its three phases of Hinayana, Mahayana, and Vajrayana. And you get South-East Asian Buddhism coming from India during the Hinayana phase, and then Mahayana Buddhism with some Hinayana going to China and Japan during the Mahayana phase, and there developing its own schools. And then you've got Tibetan Buddhism going from India to Tibet in the Vajrayana phase, and taking of course not only the Vajrayana, but Mahayana and Hinayana too. So in this way you get the three main geographical divisions outside India and the main distribution according to yantras. I think this basic pattern is clear, because I've gone into it in so many lectures.

Mangala: Can you say what the second was again? India was the first. What was the second?

S: South-East Asia, yes?

Mangala: Yes. Which countries was that?

S: That's mainly Ceylon, Burma, and Thailand. And you remember that in India Buddhism itself went through these three main great phases, leaving aside the archaic pe-

riod which only lasted a hundred years. Five hundred years of Hinayana, five hundred years of Mahayana, five hundred years of Vajrayana, predominance, that is, and during the first five hundred year period, Buddhism in its Hinayana form went to South-East Asia; then in the second five hundred year period, in its Mahayana form, went to China and Japan; and in the third five hundred year period, during its Vajrayana phase, went to Tibet. This is a sort of general key for the understanding of the distribution and subdivision of Buddhism through the centuries and even at the present day.

Devamitra: How, then, did the Mahayana get to extreme South-East Asia, you know, Java and that area?

S: Of course, broadly speaking, Mahayana spread in the East from China, yes? It spread from China to Japan, from China to Korea, from China to Vietnam, but there was also some Mahayana taken directly to Java and Sumatra quite late. I'm not quite sure of the exact dates, you'll have to look that up, but during the fifth, sixth, seventh, even eighth centuries of the Christian era, there was quite a flourishing Mahayana movement in Indonesia. And you may remember that Yuang Chuang's teacher, Dharmakirti, had been the head monk in I suppose we would call it Sumatra. In those days it was called Suvarnadvipa, the main island. And Atisha spent quite a few years in Sumatra studying and teaching before he went to Tibet, so even down to that quite late day there was Mahayana Buddhism, though by that time some Vajrayana had also been imported. So that area doesn't quite fall within the general pattern; that is to say, the Indonesian area, possibly a bit of Malaysia too. That seems to have been missionized, to use that word, directly from India, and to have had a definite connection with Nalanda University. But, of course, that was subsequently Islamized, you know, forcibly converted to Islam by invaders, by the Arabs. At present there is quite a Buddhist movement going on, it seems, in Indonesia. We don't know much about it but we hear echoes from time to time. I used to hear [9] quite a bit when I was in India, but I've heard nothing since, though very recently one of my friends, I forget now who it was, happened to meet a monk from Indonesia who told him something about Buddhist developments there.

Devaraja: That's quite a modern thing, then?

S: That's within the last twenty years.

Devaraja: Wasn't there even a Tara cult in Ceylon, because I've seen pictures of Sinhalese Taras.

S: There was. There was an Avalokitesvara cult, but it was quite short lived and Theravada orthodoxy was sort of very strongly reasserted and established. Actually, there are a few Avalokitesvara temples even now. You never read about them in books on Ceylon Buddhism, there are just a very few. He's usually now called Nartha, and he has his own sort of temple priests, for want of a better term, who are not bhikkhus. But there are very few of these, and in fact they might even have been closed down by now, but when I was in India, there were certainly a few of them left. I heard about them. I know that there's one in Kandy, or was one in Kandy. It might be worthwhile looking into this. But

certainly Mahayanistic and even Vajrayanic cult objects, images, and so on have been dug up in Ceylon.

Devamitra: I've heard also in connection with that in fact that the extreme south of Thailand had that kind of influence, too, because the ...

S: Oh, yes. This is true. There was very definitely a Mahayana phase of Thai history, but at present, apart from Chinese Buddhists it is entirely Theravadin. But, you know, there are some roots there. Not very living ones, perhaps, but if ever Mahayana did revive in those countries, there would be some historical precedent, and sometimes a historical precedent is useful. For instance, I found some references in a book I was reading to the great Greek patristic writer Origen, who had referred - though I wasn't given the exact reference - had referred to Buddhists in Britain. And he lived in the second century AD. So I'm now on the track of the work in which he referred to Buddhists in Britain because if we can establish that there were Buddhists in Britain in the second century AD it might help us, you know, have more Buddhists in Britain in the twentieth century.

Voice: Some people in the Christian tradition.

S. Some people are very much influenced by this precedent. (laughter) All right, let's carry on.

"Why the two Doctrines? In spite of this distinction, the two schools, Hinayanism and Mahayanism, are no more than two main issues of one original source,"

S: You can appreciate that Suzuki's exposition is quite masterly, you know, the way he develops and doesn't waste any words and makes all his main points, and now he is making a very important point indeed: "In spite of this distinction the two schools, Hinayanism and Mahayanism, are no more than two main issues of one original source." And this is one of the things we must never forget. However far they may seem to diverge, sometimes, they do both go back, all schools of Buddhism go back, to the Buddha himself and derive their inspiration from there.

"which was first discovered by Sakyamuni; and, as a matter of course, we find many common traits which are essential to both of them. The spirit that animated the innermost heart of Buddha is perceptible in Southern as well as in Northern Buddhism."

S: Here again there's a little Suzuki-like touch: he doesn't say 'the teaching of the Buddha', 'the doctrine of the Buddha': "The spirit that animated the innermost heart of the Buddha is perceptible in Southern as well as in Northern Buddhism." And this is a very good and very striking way of [10] putting it.

"The difference between them is not radical or qualitative as imagined by some. It is due, on the one hand, to a general unfolding of the religious consciousness, and a constant broadening of the intellectual horizon, and, on the other hand, to the conservative efforts to literally preserve the monastic rules and traditions."

S: Let's go into this a little. "It is due, on the one hand, to a general unfolding of the religious consciousness." What do you understand by that? (pause) I think Suzuki's a bit Hegelian. It might not be directly influenced by Hegel but don't forget in philosophical circles around the turn of the century Hegelianism was still rather in the air, you know, despite Schopenhauer and Hartmann and so on, and Nietzsche. It still lingered on quite strongly, you know, in many universities and philosophical departments, and Suzuki sometimes seems to use somewhat Hegelian phraseology. So, "general unfolding of the religious consciousness." What do you think he means? (long pause) How does the religious consciousness unfold?

Mamaki: I would have thought that it was by (unclear) what is a possibility for something and be able to come out, evolve, or reach consciousness by the teaching that opens that up.

S. Yes, and also tradition accumulates. You've not only got the actual teaching of the Buddha but what people have thought about it, their approach. So something is sparked off in you, not only by what was originally said, but by how somebody responded in the generations before you to what was originally said. You add your response. In that way the whole sort of religious consciousness becomes much more rich. It's not just a sort of intellectual development. That's why he speaks of "the unfolding of the religious consciousness". But more and more people bring out different aspects of what was originally imparted and then the whole tradition becomes richer and richer, and you're involved in something richer and richer, and your own spiritual life, in a way, becomes richer and richer. In some ways you can say that the life of those who live hundreds of years after the Buddha in some ways was richer than the spiritual life of those who were actually with the Buddha. There were very broad aspects, certain very broad principles, laid down, but maybe there wasn't much in the way of nuance, and subtlety, and suggestiveness, and richness. That all had to be brought out, and could only be brought out in the course of a historical development extending over hundreds of years, but once that development has taken place, all that is accessible to the individual in the tradition in the way in which it wasn't accessible to someone coming along very early in that tradition, and in that way the religious consciousness of the individual itself becomes more unfolded and richer; perhaps not essentially more spiritual, it's not quite like that, but certainly richer more many-faceted. Hm? For instance, if you'd lived, say, to give a comparison with Christianity, suppose you'd lived just after Christ, you wouldn't have had any Gospels to read, yes? You might have had little collections of sayings, a few, you know, epistles of St Paul, and the structure of your local Christian group, meeting in your local catacomb, or something like that, but what does a modern Christian have? He can read St Teresa, he can read St John of the Cross, he can read St Thomas Aquinas; he's still got what was originally there. Maybe some of the spirit has gone out of it, maybe, perhaps that's not for us to say, but he's got so many, you know, Christian treasures, like, for instance, St Francis, like Dante and so on, which he can only have by living later on in the history of Christianity. So in that sort of way his Christian life is richer. So it's much the same with Buddhism, too. In a way we are lucky we are living two thousand years after the Buddha, we've not only got the Buddha, but we've also got

Nagarjuna, Milarepa, and we're also living at a time when they're all translated into our own language. Even a hundred years ago, who could have read in his own language all the great Zen masters, Mahayana sutras, Theravada texts, Tantric texts? As I said, Milarepa, Hui Neng, Wei Lang, [11] all these people; who could have read them all? So the possibilities of our spiritual life are much richer, I mean, our Buddhist spiritual life, than at any previous time in history, perhaps, since the days of Nalanda. So we're really quite lucky. But this is richness, this is sort of unfoldment, degree of unfoldment, not necessarily a level of spiritual development. I think that, though connected, is somewhat distinct. But we certainly have the possibility of a very rich spiritual life. Also there's the possibility of confusion. (laughter) I'm going into that at my lecture [untraced, tr.] at the Buddhist Society, so I won't say anything more about it now.

But you can see, or begin to see, what Suzuki is getting at by speaking about the Mahayana as being due on the one hand to a general unfolding of the religious consciousness, I mean, as the centuries went by. It wasn't just a sect of Buddhism springing up, it was the whole Buddhist tradition becoming enriched, and therefore the spiritual life of the individual Buddhist becoming richer, and, you know, it became no longer possible to pattern your spiritual lives after the old original simple pattern. Maybe that was original, yes, but a lot's happened since then. I mean a lot more teachings and explanations and interpretations, and you can't ignore those. Unless you're very unintelligent you can't sort of ignore all the great Christian mystics and just say, 'No, I'm going to stick to the Bible.' It is only the Bible Protestant does that, and we know what sort of person he or she usually is. The Theravadins tend to be a bit like that, you know, want to ignore Milarepa and Nagarjuna and just have the text of some sections of the Pali scriptures, not even all of them - even that's too rich a diet for them sometimes. So you can understand what Suzuki's getting at. "It is due on the one hand to a general unfolding of the religious consciousness." In other words, the arising of the Mahayana was not just an arbitrary founding of a sect, it's just the whole process of Buddhism itself, in the course of centuries of history, becoming richer and richer. This mainly why the Mahayana originated, and, he says, "a constant broadening of the intellectual horizon." I assume you all know what is meant by intellectual horizon, but the intellectual horizon of the average follower of the Buddha, I mean during the Buddha's own time, couldn't have been very broad. I mean, what did he know? A few local traditions, maybe a craft of two, and he vaguely knew that there were these great kingdoms all around and a king ruling somewhere in the capital. I mean his spiritual outlook was very broad, but his intellectual outlook was quite narrow, so maybe he didn't have many intellectual difficulties or questions or doubts, and he could follow the spiritual path quite wholeheartedly. But as people became more sophisticated, as civilization, in the ordinary sense of the word, advanced in India - as social life, as political life, became more complex, more centralized, and you had these great empires springing up, maybe foreign trade, and so on and so forth, great changes taking place in the social life of the day, economically - well, horizons broadened, people became more intellectually alive and alert, more sophisticated, asking more questions, wanting answers in religious terms. So your religious people then have to try and give answers, they have to try and convince these sort of people, the intellectual horizon broadens and people start writing philosophical treatises on Buddhism.

You get the same sort of thing in Europe, too, with Christianity. So this is another aspect of why the Mahayana developed. It wasn't just someone taking into his head to start up a new form of Buddhism. You couldn't help it. In a way it was part of the historical process. This happens to every religion, so it is rather unintelligent to lament the loss of the old original primitive true teaching. Well that's there, and it's an integral part, everything begins from that, everything springs out of that, but you can't ignore the development which inevitably takes place and which places at your disposal further spiritual riches. I mean, the fact that a Nagarjuna or a Milarepa came along doesn't make the Buddha any less, it simply enriches Buddhism and enriches us. I mean we've got the Buddha and Milarepa and Nagarjuna and Wei Lang - how lucky we are! You know, you've got the light reflecting from so many different mirrors, not just from one mirror. So in this way the Mahayana is a richer and more [12] complex thing than is the Theravada, which admittedly does stick more to the original teaching. It just looks at that one original reflector where the light is, you know, very brilliantly reflected, but there are these other reflectors too. The Mahayana takes them all into consideration. And on the other hand, now speaking of the Hinayana, "To the conservative efforts to literally preserve the monastic rules and traditions." All right, let's carry on.

"Both schools started with the same spirit, pursuing the same course. But after a while one did not feel any necessity for broadening the spirit of the master and adhered to his words as literally as possible;"

S: Hm. I'd say there wasn't any question of broadening the spirit of the master; that was surely quite broad enough already. It was broadening the range of expressions and applications of that spirit. I mean, you can't have anything broader than Enlightenment. I think that Suzuki's just writing a bit carelessly. We shall find this with Suzuki: he's not a very careful writer, he's a bit slapdash; he's certainly inspired and sometimes he coins a wonderfully expressive phrase, and some of his expositions are sort of very insightful, but at the same time he's a bit slipshod and this is an example of it, you know. I'm sure if he'd studied this and, you know, gone through and corrected his book he wouldn't have left it. One can't really speak of any necessity of broadening the spirit of the master, but he clearly doesn't mean that literally; it's broadening the expression and range of application.

"whilst the other, actuated by a liberal and comprehensive spirit, has drawn nourishments from all available sources in order to unfold the germs in the original system that were vigorous and generative."

S: Hm. This is in many ways the sort of essence of the matter. The Mahayana draws "nourishments from all available sources" - not so much spiritual nourishment, but sort of cultural nourishment - "in order to unfold the germs in the original system that were vigorous and generative."

"These diverse inclinations among primitive Buddhists naturally led to the dissension of Mahayanism and Hinayanism."

S: So you can see that the Hinayana, very broadly, wanted to stick to and reproduce and hand on exactly what had been transmitted to it: Buddhism in its original form, hmm? Whereas the Mahayana, while preserving the spirit surely, was much more aware of the need to express that spirit in new ways according to the developing religious consciousness, broadening of intellectual horizons, and so on. It wanted to give a full expression to what was sort of latent and germinal in the original teaching, to bring out its full significance so as to exhibit it properly, as it were, to draw it out.

Nagabodhi: Could you say that they are both in a way dependent on each other: that if all Buddhists had decided to go off in the Mahayana spirit and stop concentrating, or if nobody had decided to stay with the original words (unclear) of that approach, that it could have been lost?

S: Well this is true, but you must always remember this: the Mahayana never excludes the Hinayana. The Mahayanist also transmitted their version of, not the Pali canon, but the material on which the Pali canon was based. For instance, the Nikayas: the Mahayana had its Agamas which were their version derived from Sanskrit, not Pali, of that same basic literature. So we mustn't think of Mahayana as exclusive of Hinayana. Hinayana excludes Mahayana, yes, but Mahayana does not exclude Hinayana. So you don't historically need separate Hinayana schools to preserve original material, the Mahayanists are doing that anyway. But anyway, it isn't a bad thing, perhaps, that they're in this almost dialectical relationship between the two. Sometimes it must be confessed the Mahayanists went too far in the direction of adaptation and even lost the spirit. Then of course the Theravadin emphasis was a healthy corrective, and we've got that even today.

Voice: Could you give an example? [13]

S: Well, for instance, with some forms of Zen they seem to go right away from Buddhism itself. So, you know, then it's quite good to have a sort of strict Theravadin Buddhist from Ceylon say, 'Well, what about nirvana? And what about karma and rebirth?' (laughter) 'And what about the Buddha?' and 'We are, after all, Buddhist, you know!'

Devaraja: Can you give an example of what you mean by when Zen goes away from the ...

S: Well it's difficult to give an example because in a way the whole of Zen sometimes goes away, you know. I mentioned the example of karma and rebirth; traditionally this is part and parcel of Buddhist teaching, but, you know, very often Zen people just don't take this into consideration at all. And Enlightenment: I mean, satori, which seems to fall short of Enlightenment, seems very often to take the place of Enlightenment. And what about the ethical teaching? What about the monastic side of Buddhism? This seems sometimes to be lost sight of. Sometimes, for instance, in Nepal, again you see Buddhism very much mixed up with Hinduism - not just assimilating Hindu material, and there through expressing the spirit of Mahayana Buddhism, but getting bogged down in

the caste system, and so on, and losing any feeling of Buddhism. Whereas you can say about the Theravadins that, I mean, they may get pretty far from the spirit sometimes, but they certainly have all the forms and the traditions and the literature, and you can get back to the spirit if you have got those, you know, if you use them in the right way. But once you've lost both form and spirit, you're lost indeed. So with the Theravadins you are more safe, in a way, because, you know, if you've lost the spirit, at least you've got the form, which includes the actual doctrinal teaching. But with the Mahayanists, well, you've lost the form anyway, because you're Mahayanist. If you lose the spirit too, well, where are you? It's very difficult to find your way back then. So I think you're safer off, really, with the Theravada, sometimes.

Devamitra: You said if you're Mahayana you've lost the spirit, er, you've lost the form anyway. Did you mean that just in reference to that Zen example or ...

S: Yes. That sort of thing, yes, or even the Shin set-up. You know the Shin set-up, even more than the Zen, well, you don't have monks; there's no monastic tradition.

Devaraja: The Nichiren sect is a classic example of that.

S: Nichiren, too, yes. That is even better, perhaps. (pause) It seems that at present, especially, you know, as we are situated in the West, there are three sort of traditional forms of Buddhism. There's Theravada available, there's Zen available, and there's Tibetan Buddhism available, mainly Tantric. Unfortunately there's no sort of middle-of-the-road Indian Buddhism available, apart from ourselves, really. We represent more the middle tradition, with links on all sides. But all these are useful, you know. Theravada is useful to us, so is Zen, so is Tibetan Buddhism, and most of all, so is this central tradition of Indian Buddhism. All right, let's go on then.

"We cannot here enter into any detailed accounts as to what external and internal forces were acting in the body of Buddhism to produce the Mahayana system, or as to how gradually it unfolded itself so as to absorb and assimilate all the discordant thoughts that came into contact with it. Suffice it to state and answer in general terms the question which is frequently asked by the uninitiated: 'Why did one Buddhism ever allow itself to be differentiated into two systems, which are apparently in contradiction in more than one point with each other?' In other words, 'How can there be two Buddhisms equally representing the true doctrine of the founder?'"

S: Yes. Suzuki says at the beginning of this paragraph: "We cannot here enter into any detailed accounts as to what external and internal forces were acting in the body of Buddhism to produce the Mahayana system." The external and internal forces presumably include the economic social factors: political developments. Even now it would not be possible to do that; there's so little material available about the history of India compared with the material available, say, for the [14] history of Europe, that it's very difficult indeed, even now, seventy years later, to have at all a clear idea of how the external developments, social and economic and so on, did affect or contribute to the

growth of Mahayana Buddhism. So we're not much wiser now than Suzuki was able to be then. So we can just take what he says. Let's go on to the next paragraph.

"The reason is plain enough."

S: That is, the reason for the two Buddhisms.

"The teachings of a great religious founder are as a rule very general, comprehensive, and many-sided: and, therefore, there are great possibilities in them to allow various liberal interpretations by his disciples."

S: This reminds me of something that was said about St Augustine. Apparently St Augustine had pointed out to him one day by a scholar that his interpretation of a certain passage of scripture contradicted that of another eminent authority. So St Augustine said, "That's all right. The more interpretations the better." So that is very much the Mahayana attitude: the more interpretations the better.

"And it is on this very account of comprehensiveness that enables followers of diverse needs, characters, and trainings to satisfy their spiritual appetite universally and severally with the teachings of their master. This comprehensiveness, however, is not due to the intentional use by the leader of ambiguous terms, nor is it due to the obscurity and confusion of his own conceptions. The initiator of a movement, spiritual as well as intellectual, has no time to think out all its possible details and consequences. When the principle of the movement is understood by the contemporaries and the foundation of it is solidly laid down, his own part as initiator is accomplished; and the remainder can safely be left to his successors. The latter will take up the work and carry it out in all its particulars, while making all necessary alterations and ameliorations according to circumstances. Therefore, the role to be played by the originator is necessarily indefinite and comprehensive."

S: Indefinite in a quite positive way. Indefinite and comprehensive. We really did notice this when we studied the Udana. Everything was there but it was, as Suzuki would say, indefinite and comprehensive. Do you get what he is getting at? It's germinal, it is all there, it includes everything, but one man in one lifetime can't possibly develop all the implications. In fact I would say they're not to be developed theoretically at all, they're to be developed, you know, by individuals, in the course of their own spiritual development. And, you know, one man has his own development, but it doesn't include every aspect, because he is in a particular situation; others in other situations will bring out other aspects just because they are in other situations - I mean other aspects of the same principle, originally laid down by the initiator. So the Buddha is very much an initiator of a tradition, a spiritual tradition, rather than a founder who lays something down once and for all which is then merely reproduced or perpetuated. He starts off something, sparks off something, and other individuals propagate the sparks, and, you know, produce sparks themselves too, all, you know, sparked off by the original spark. It's more like that. So it is, I mean, Suzuki is going on to give a comparison with German philosophy which is rather misleading. It's not just that, it's a question of certain general

principles of thought which the initiator could, if he had a long enough life, say two or three hundred years, have fully worked out in detail, conceptually. It's not just that. There is a sort of spiritual principle which is alive, and that can be assimilated to some extent by different individuals and according to different natures and quality and position, as it were, of their lives, they can bring out more and more aspects, and some of them may be able to bring out aspects that the initiator couldn't bring out, just because his own position was different.

Devamitra: Is it also a question of temperament?

S: To some extent, to a point, but perhaps after you reach a certain stage of spiritual development or individual development, temperament doesn't matter much any more, but certainly for a while it comes.

Nagabodhi: To what extent do you think it would be in the Buddhist mind anyway to be concerned with the establishment of a religious tradition? Or would that have been in the mind of his followers more than his own?

S: Well it depends what one means by 'a religious tradition'. The Buddha was certainly concerned with the sparking off process, you [15] may say. He seems to have taken care that others were sparked off and should spark off again others in turn. In that sense, certainly, he intended to found a religious tradition, but not in the sense of an organized body in a more modern sense. Again one can see this in the Udana; this is why I keep referring to it. Later on, maybe we'll have another Udana study retreat; I think it would be very much worth-while. Meanwhile, of course, there are the tapes of part of that. I'm afraid that on one or two days the tape recorder packed up and we've missed two days, but never mind; later on we'll do it again. Now let's see Suzuki's comparison from German philosophy.

"Kant, for instance, as promoter of German philosophy, has become the father of such diverse philosophical systems as Jacobi's, Fichte's, Schopenhauer's, etc., while each of them endeavoured to develop some points indefinitely or covertly or indirectly stated by Kant himself. Jesus of Nazareth, as instigator of a revolutionary movement against Judaism, did not have any stereotyped theological doctrines, such as were established later by Christian doctors."

S: For instance the doctrine of the Trinity doesn't appear in the Gospels. There's one reference to the trinity, but that is now known to have been an interpolation, so the doctrine of the Trinity, one can say, doesn't appear in the Gospels at all, and certainly isn't put into the mouth of Christ. That isn't to say that it hasn't a value - it's a very sort of rich spiritual and theological teaching - but it is a development.

"The indefiniteness of his views was so apparent that it caused even among his personal disciples a sort of dissension, while a majority of his disciples cherished a visionary hope for the advent of a divine kingdom on earth. But those externalities which are

doomed to pass, do not prevent the spirit of the movement once awakened by a great leader from growing more powerful and noble.

"The same thing can be said of the teachings of the Buddha. What he inspired in his followers was the spirit of that religious system which is now known as Buddhism. Guided by this spirit, his followers severally developed his teachings as required by their special needs and circumstances, finally giving birth to the distinction of Mahayanism and Hinayanism."

S: This really puts it in a nutshell. What he - the Buddha - "inspired in his followers was the spirit of that religious system which is now known as Buddhism. Guided by this spirit, his followers severally developed his teachings as required by their special needs and circumstances, finally giving birth to the distinction of Mahayanism and Hinayanism." He does really express it very beautifully and clearly sometimes, and in this sense I think he isn't really surpassed as an expositor of Buddhism. All right, so that is the first section, or subsection, so let's go on to the next one: "The Original Meaning of Mahayana." Or does anyone want to ask anything about this or comment on this distinction of Hinayana and Mahayana?

Lokamitra: It seems that it's not just as simple as it says there, but that the Mahayana encouraged this speculative interpretation, whereas the Hinayana stayed fixed to a limited one or number.

S: That's true in a way, though there is the Abhidharma among the Hinayanists. That isn't exactly speculative, but certainly you do get the very great development of the analytical approach, which perhaps corresponds to the speculativeness of the Mahayana in the sense that it was largely theoretical, you might say, not directly related to any spiritual needs. I mean, a Mahayanist went in, eventually, very strongly for logic and epistemology, whereas the Hinayanists went in for the development of their Abhidharma. If you read, for instance, a work like the Abhidharmakosa of Vasubandhu, well this is very technical and scholastic indeed, and it seems that in a work like this the Theravadins, sorry, the Hinayanists - for it is a Sarvastivadin work - got rather away from spiritual essentials and, you know, feeling in Buddhism just as the Mahayanists did with their speculations. But one could say the Mahayanists did become a little riotous in their speculation, sometimes.

Devamitra: Could I ask a little about the question of spirit and form? If one is to really found the tradition very well in a geographical area like the west, obviously one needs the form and spirit, but is the form the essential thing to establish first, as it were, or should the two come together, or what? [16]

S: I think the spirit has to come first, but I think if you are going to establish a tradition, a definite form has to come rather quickly after it. There is a passage in the Pali canon, I mean, as handed down by the Theravadins, where the Buddha says that his teaching will endure longer than that of previous Buddhas, hm? He says the teaching, the sasana of previous Buddhas, did not endure very long, but his will endure long, and he asks the

monks, why is this? They didn't know. So he says it is because this Buddha has established a Vinaya. Yes? Now Vinaya nowadays in the Theravada usually means monastic discipline, but as used by the Buddha, especially in its compound, Dhammavinaya, it means more the whole practical, almost organized, side of the teaching, of the tradition. Take the word 'organized' in a good positive sense: something organic. The Dharma represents the sort of deep spiritual principle and spiritual truth; Vinaya is expression in terms of the way of life. So the Buddha says that his Dharma, teaching, his sasana, his tradition, will last longer, because he has formulated more carefully than his predecessors an actual concrete way of life. It's as though you need the form to be the bearer of the spirit. It's as though in the world, the world of men, in the world of culture, of human society, the spirit can't survive realistically - you know, not survive on that level, be accessible on that level - without an appropriate form.

Devamitra: So in fact, are we in the process, in terms of our movement getting - sort of putting the form in its place, as it were - the spirit.

S: Oh, yes. The spirit is there, and the spirit is getting stronger, but we are developing the appropriate form: for instance, the kalyana-mitra system. There's a very good example, yes? And there will be others, no doubt. And also the form, when it's an appropriate form, a living form, and when that form is the true expression of the spirit, it supports the spirit, and helps the spirit to grow, if it isn't there in its fullness to begin with.

Devamitra: So, in time, hopefully the form and the spirit will merge in terms of our own ...

S: Yes. The spirit will find adequate expression in the form, and the form will be an expression of the spirit, not something existing in its own right.

Nagabodhi: Do you feel that a situation like that has occurred in - well, I mean, I don't know - would you say that it hadn't occurred in Ceylon, that idea of merging form and spirit, that maybe has in Tibet? Or could you point at a historical precedent where the merger has successfully happened?

S: I didn't use the word 'merging' myself. I spoke of a complete expression of the spirit in the form, as complete as is possible, under mundane circumstances anyway. In a sense the spirit cannot be fully expressed. It far transcends any possibility of expression, but anyway the utmost expression that is possible on the, as it were, historical, cultural, social level. And that expression, not containing anything superfluous nor anything that is an excrescence, but being simply an expression of that spirit, I think this has happened, you know, at certain periods in the history of Buddhism, and yes, I think, perhaps, Tibetan Buddhism is a good example. I think, in the past, certainly under some kings, the forms of Ceylonese Buddhism expressed the spirit of the Theravada very well in a living way, in a way that was truly Buddhist, even though somewhat limited. [17] I think the Mahayanistic expression, by its very nature, is more various and richer - also, therefore, more liable to confusion. You could say that the Theravadin expression was purer - in the chemical sense, not the moral sense - less cluttered. For instance, if you go into a

Tibetan temple you can easily get the feeling that there's too much junk around, too many dusty images, too many dusty thangkas, and too many flourishes of frills that are a bit moth-eaten; you know, all that. That is perhaps a good sort of symbol. Whereas, you know, in the Theravada temples they're much more bare, there's only one or two kinds of image, there aren't all these decorations. Though sometimes you find Theravada temples, too, looking a bit tawdry and a bit tatty, you know, in other ways. But, you know, they are not sort of too riotously rich, you know, so rich as to be confused. Also one must, you know, realize that when you do get, if you are lucky enough to get this, this perfect expression, as it were, you know, perfect in terms of what is possible, as good as possible, let's say, expression of the spirit of Buddhism in a particular cultural context, you know, it's something which represents a sort of point of balance which can be sustained only with great difficulty.

It's not that you have it and that's that and it can be carried on indefinitely, no. It's very precarious and changing all the time. It's almost like sort of balls balancing, you know, at the top of a fountain, they can fall off any minute, so that perfection is very often just achieved very momentarily, and maybe you're not very sure which is the actual point of perfection, it's shifting and changing all the time, you know, especially when you've got such a vast and complex thing as a whole culture, a whole Buddhist civilization. Which is its richest point? Where? It's difficult to say. It's just like, say, with Christian civilization in Europe. Where was it richest? Where was it truest? You know? Was it with the early Christians in the catacombs? Or the time, you know, of the hermits and the desert fathers? Or was it, you know, in the early medieval monasteries? Or did you find it among the Franciscans or Troubadours? I mean, where was the truest flowering of the Christian spirit? It's very difficult to say. They all have their appeal, and the same way with Buddhism.

Vajradaka: It's so easy to get caught when the balls have been on top of the fountain and they've sort of sparkled and they've been wonderful, you know, and then all of a sudden they fall off and things change, you say, 'ouch', you know, 'lost it', you know, and be all sad, but really there isn't ...

S: And you'd like to sort of freeze the fountain and just have the balls there and ...

Vajradaka: Yes. Yes. (laughing)

S: (unclear) all the time, but if you freeze it, it ceases to be a fountain.

Vajradaka: Right. (pause)

S: All right, let's go on to "The Original Meaning of Mahayana."

"The term Mahayana was first used to designate the highest principle, or being, or knowledge, of which the universe with all its sentient and non-sentient beings is a manifestation, and through which only they can attain final salvation (moksa or nirvana)."

S: This is not quite correct I'm afraid. Suzuki is basing himself on Asvaghosha and on 'The Awakening of Faith', and he's accepting rather uncritically, as was generally accepted then, the belief that the 'Awakening of Faith' was an Indian document, translated into Chinese; an Indian document which was actually written by Asvaghosha, the poet Asvaghosha, and which appeared about the first century of the Christian era. Scholars now know that it is practically certain that it was composed in China, and that it is much later than the first century; that it's I think, fifth century at the earliest; and it's true that the term [18] Mahayana does occur there, not as the name of a school but a principle, but you can't therefore say that that was the original meaning of the term Mahayana, so we have to correct Suzuki here. But in a way it doesn't matter very much because what he says is sort of broadly true out of historical context. So let's carry on.

"Mahayana was not the name given to any religious doctrine, nor had it anything to do with doctrinal controversy, though later it was so utilised by the progressive party."

S: This is not in fact so. Anyway, carry on.

"Asvaghosha, the first Mahayana expounder known to us, living about the time of Christ,"

S: This, of course, is not correct. Suzuki is taking Asvaghosha, that is to say as the expounder or author of the 'Awakening of Faith' and as living at that time, as I said, we now know that that isn't so.

"used the term in his religio-philosophical book called 'Discourse on the Awakening of Faith in the Mahayana' as synonymous with Bhutatathata, or Dharmakaya, the highest principle of Mahayanism."

S: Yes. The title of the book is, 'Discourse on the Awakening of Faith in the Mahayana', so the awakening of faith with which Asvaghosa is concerned is not faith in the Mahayana school of Buddhism as distinct from the Hinayana school, but faith in the ultimate principle, which he calls 'the Great Way'. This corresponds more to the Chinese 'Great Tao' than it does to the Sanskrit 'Mahayana', but Asvaghosa, that is to say, the author of the 'Awakening of Faith', is in fact not a first century AD Indian author coming right at the beginning of the Mahayana development. He's much more likely to be a fifth-century Chinese author coming rather near the end of the Mahayana development. So we can't say, therefore, with Suzuki, basing ourselves on the 'Awakening of Faith', that the term 'Mahayana' was originally used as the name of a principle and not as a name of a school. This isn't correct. Though it is, of course, correct that within the Mahayana tradition generally they're concerned. Well Mahayana means the whole sort of spirit of approach to Enlightenment rather than a particular school as distinct from another school.

Devamitra: I'm a little bit confused here. Was the name of the author of 'The Awakening of Faith' Asvaghosa but possibly a Chinese sort of monk of that name, or was it ...

S: No. What scholars generally agree now, although they're not completely unanimous, is that the 'Awakening of Faith' was composed in China, probably in the fifth century. It was supposed, before that, to have been the work of the first century, composed in Sanskrit, by Asvaghosa, the great poet. It isn't suggested that the monk who composed it in China was called Asvaghosa and became subsequently confused, no. We don't know of any such monk called Asvaghosa in China. But, to begin with, we don't know of any Sanskrit text of 'The Awakening of Faith'. It's never quoted by any Indian author of any period. So, also from internal evidence, scholars have worked out that it is a Chinese product. There are quite a few of these Chinese works which are described as translations from Sanskrit which are, in fact, Chinese compositions, often of great brilliance and originality and profundity, and the 'Awakening of Faith' is one of these. If you believe that the 'Awakening of Faith' is translated from the Sanskrit and belongs to the first century AD then you can take statements that it contains as evidence for the state of Indian Mahayana in the first century AD, but if it's a Chinese work of the fifth century AD, then you can't use it for evidence about Mahayana Buddhism in India in that way. So it's true that in the 'Awakening of Faith' the word 'Mahayana' means 'the Ultimate Principle', but that is how it is understood in fifth-century China. You can't say that because it's found in the 'Awakening of Faith', that was how it was understood in first-century India. So it isn't really correct to say that first of all [19] as exemplified in the 'Awakening of Faith', Indian Mahayana, the term 'Mahayana' meant 'first principle', only afterwards became the name of a school. This is not correct. It seems to have been the name of a school or movement or an attitude from the beginning, but not in a narrow sectarian sense. So Suzuki's sort of writing 'principle', though technically and historically he isn't.

"He likened the recognition of, and faith in this highest being and principle into a conveyance which will carry us safely across the tempestuous ocean of birth and death to the eternal shore of Nirvana."

"Soon after him, however, the controversy between the two schools of Buddhism, conservatives and progressionists as we might call them, became more and more pronounced; and when it reached its climax, which was most probably in the times of Nagarjuna and Aryadeva, i.e., a few centuries after Asvaghosa, the progressive party ingeniously invented the term Hinayana in contrast to Mahayana, the latter having been adopted by them as the watchword of their own school."

S: So what Suzuki says regarding Nagarjuna (?) is quite correct. It isn't preceded by Asvaghosa and his more spiritual understanding of the word 'Mahayana', because that in fact didn't take place then. It's a later Chinese development.

"The Hinayanists and the Tirthakas then were sweepingly condemned by the Mahayanists as inadequate to achieve a universal salvation of sentient beings."

S: Tirthakas. There's a note to that. Let's read that too. "Followers of any religious sects other than Buddhism. The term is sometimes used in a contemptuous sense, like hea-

then by Christians." It's not only used by the Mahayanists, this term. It's used by the Hinayanists too. It's used even in Pali. The tirthaka is literally a 'ford-maker'.

Vajradaka: A ford?

S: Yes, a ford. You know what a ford is? Yes? So you know it is connected with the idiom of, you know, crossing to the other shore. So a tirthaka is a person who makes a ford to help you cross to the other shore; or attempts to make, but it is a term for one who doesn't really succeed in making but only purports to make. In other words almost what we could call a sort of false teacher or someone who starts a tradition that doesn't really work. From the Buddhist point of view, psychotherapy or psychotherapists, as such, are tirthakas. You know, they're ford-makers (unclear).

Devaraja: It seems - I mean, I may be wrong - but it seems that the use of the word 'tirthaka' seems to derive from a certain kind of conflict between Buddhist schools and Jain schools. Would that be correct?

S: No, because the Jains were only one of the schools that in the Buddha's day was described as tirthaka. From the Buddhist point of view they were all tirthaka, but the Jains took up this term in a positive and honorific sense, tirthankara, and applied it to their own teachers. They are a lineage of Jinas(?). All right. Let's go to the next section then. [20]

"Before the distinction ... (to end of para1) ... another name for class."

S: Yana as vehicle, not literally meaning 'class'. Three classes of vehicles really. But he explains what these are, so let's go through them.

"The bodhisattva ... (to end of &2) ... for the sake of their fellow creatures."

S: 'Bodhi' isn't exactly intelligence, or even wisdom; it's something much more than that. It's Enlightenment itself, and according to Suzuki, interpreting the Mahayana, it's reflection of the dharmakaya in the human soul. We won't discuss that now, that'll come up later. So the bodhisattvas are those who direct all their spiritual energy towards realizing and developing their own potential Enlightenment for the sake of their fellow creatures. They're not concerned with their own individual Enlightenment. They want not only to gain Enlightenment themselves, but to spark off others too, so that they, too, may be able to gain Enlightenment. That's the bodhisattva class, as it were.

"The pratyekabuddha ... (to end of para3) ... lacks love for mankind."

S: There's a bit of a difficulty here, a bit of a conflict, mainly traceable to terms. Suppose you say, well, after all, a pratyekabuddha is after all a Buddha, and however he might have gained Enlightenment, a pratyekabuddha technically is one who gains Enlightenment without a teacher and doesn't have disciples after gaining Enlightenment; but he is a Buddha, he is Enlightened, so how could he be cold, impassive, egotistic, etc? It's as

though it's a contradiction in terms, it's quite ridiculous. So this raises the question of the who or what is this pratyekabuddha. He's a very mysterious figure. He sort of flits in and out of the pages of ancient Buddhist literature. You never see him around in modern times or historical times, but nobody seems to know exactly who or what he is. So who is this pratyekabuddha? Anybody got any ideas? Or any thoughts on the subject?

Nagabodhi: Is he a figment in the imagination of the unenlightened mind?

S: No, I don't think it's quite like that except perhaps in the sense that everything is a figment in the unenlightened mind. Maybe (drowned in laughter) too broadly.

Mangala: Does he represent an attitude which a disciple may have in his pursuit of Enlightenment?

S: No. Well he's a Buddha.

Devaraja: Well in a sense it's a reference, surely, to the Buddha's Enlightenment before Brahmasahampati asked him to ...

S: Yes, you could say that.

Devaraja: ... which the Buddha was completely Enlightened, and he thought it would be too difficult to communicate this teaching.

S: But why do you think that? In that case some Buddhas are sort of open to the suggestion of Brahmasahampatis and others, apparently, are not.

Vajradaka: It's a matter of merit.

S: Ah, yes; that's getting quite interesting, and in a sense, close. Yes? Hmm? (laughter)

Devamitra: Well, it sounds as if it's somebody in whom wisdom is fully developed and yet there's no experience of compassion. Yet how can you have the two ...

S: How can you? Yes. Right. What you say is connected with number three class, that is, the shravaka. It's lack of equipment, which is produced by your punya. The lack of a medium. You know, you've got it all here, but you just can't put it across. [21] You haven't, perhaps, got the intellectual equipment, or the cultural equipment, or even a sort of know-how, even psychological, and all that is comprised under the term 'punya'. You've got jnana but you haven't got punya.

Vajradaka: Jnana means wisdom?

S: Yes, whereas the fully enlightened Buddha, especially according to the Mahayana tradition, has got full jnana and full punya, so he's not only in possession of knowledge and wisdom and Enlightenment, but he is able to put them across properly. It isn't quite

that, no. What it really seems to be is - well, it seems to be arising out of a double use of terms. You see, in very early Buddhism, or very early on in the days of Buddhism, terms were used which were in general currency. Obviously, I mean, there couldn't be any other way. Those terms were first of all used more or less in the contemporary sense: the sense that they bore for other people. But some of them developed in course of time a specifically Buddhist meaning which differed from the general meaning. For instance, the word 'Buddha' itself. The word 'Buddha' originally meant just a wise man. But eventually it came to mean the Enlightened man. So there are some Buddhist texts which use the word 'Buddha' just in the ordinary way: the wise man does this, the wise man doesn't do that. But also other texts, other passages even in the same text, use the word 'Buddha' in the full Buddhist sense: one who has attained the ultimate reality. Now 'pratyekabuddha' seems to be a term - pratyekabuddha, 'the privately enlightened one' - leftover from this very early stage when the term Buddha was used more or less in the ordinary sense. Just 'the solitary wise man'; he's the sort of rishi of Hinduism, who just lives in the forest by himself, quietly, rather ascetically, and doesn't bother much about ordinary people. Now if you've got in your scriptures 'a pratyekabuddha', and if, meanwhile, the word 'Buddha' has changed its significance, and you've got no conception of the historical development of language - and after all this whole question of historical development is very late, very recent, very western - then what are you to do? Well, you can only surmise that, well, a pratyekabuddha is a 'privately Enlightened one', and so you're left with a bit of a conundrum. Hm? And we often get this in the history of religions, that if we understand things in the terms of historical development we can solve many puzzles. So actually, strictly speaking, from a Buddhist standpoint, there's no such thing as a pratyekabuddha. The whole thing is contradictory and nonsensical. But classical Buddhists don't understand this because they lacked the key in the form of the understanding of historical development. This is only the old Indian rishi reappearing, you know. It's an artificial problem, really. There's no such thing. But if you are systematizing Mahayana Buddhism, you've got this term 'pratyekabuddha' in your text and you don't know that 'Buddha' did mean once upon a time just a wise man, well, what are you to do? You have to have a third kind of Enlightened person; which makes nonsense of Buddhism, in a way. Someone who is cold and egotistic and without compassion, but who is Enlightened? What nonsense. But you couldn't say that. But we can say it now because we can understand how the whole thing happened.

Vajradaka: Is it generally understood?

S: No, it isn't. There are lots of Buddhists who are still puzzling over who is a pratyekabuddha. And Theosophists too: they've got a curious theory: that say that the pratyekabuddha is on the administrative ray, not the teaching ray, and he is concerned with the spiritual administration of the universe. The Theosophists are rather keen on organizing the universe and they have got a sort of divine or spiritual bureaucracy, and the pratyekabuddha is on this. He's sort of working behind the scenes, in this sort of way. Well, it's quite ingenious, and in a way, plausible. The Tibetans have got a theory that there's a particular kind of pratyekabuddha who doesn't teach, no, not verbally, but he teaches through magical transformations, and they are trying to make some sort of sense out of this traditional teaching of traditional terms. And that is also quite good: why should

teaching be just verbal, it can also be through signs, miracles, and so on and so forth. Symbolical. [22]

Devamitra: Couldn't it also just be through sheer presence?

S: Yes, it could be that, but then we have that in the form of the Buddha too. The Buddha often just sat there; didn't say anything. So, really, as I said, from the Buddhist point of view, taking into account these historical considerations, there is no such Buddhist entity as a pratyekabuddha Buddha. I mean, in the course of Buddhist history, do you find ever someone aspiring to be a pratyekabuddha? Do you hear of a pratyekabuddha? Never! It's always in the remote legendary Indian past, you know? And these are the old rishis, really.

Lokamitra: You wouldn't hear of them, because no one would know about them if they had no ...

S: Well, the Buddha would know. So when the Buddha is relating Jataka stories he refers to pratyekabuddhas, so that's what they were, presumably: just the old rishi-like figures.

Vajradaka: I had a friend who really considered himself that he was going to be a pratyekabuddha, and then he went off and lived up in Scotland or (unclear)

S: Well, someone, nowadays, who wanted to be a pratyekabuddha wouldn't be a Buddhist, because, you know, the whole idea of a pratyekabuddha really contradicts the spirit of Buddhism. You can have wisdom and Enlightenment without compassion? I mean, how ridiculous! Whatever might be your misunderstandings before you get there, when you get there, perhaps to your surprise, now that you are Enlightened you are also compassionate. Maybe you didn't expect it, but surely it will be there, you know, once you are Enlightened. You can't possibly hold on to an Enlightenment without compassion. Whether you teach verbally or not - that's another matter, that's a question of what is appropriate.

Mangala: The term 'Buddha' existed before 'pratyekabuddha'?

S: Well it was a general Indian term taken over by the Buddhists, and it first of all meant just a wise man, and the Buddhists gradually sort of upgraded the term until it meant someone who was Enlightened in the full sense.

Lokamitra: So where in the Lotus Sutra, in the parable of the Burning House, when he talks of the three vehicles, one of which is the pratyekabuddha-yana, it's more than just saying there are these three yanas but this one is the best; it's a real trumpet-blast of saying this is beyond any sort of idea of a wise man you may have had; it's something way, way above.

S: Yes. Yes. But of course if you take the term literally, the pratyekabuddha isn't just a wise man, he's an Enlightened man, and then of course you get into difficulties theologically, in explaining how your Buddha can be sort of cold, egotistic, impassive, and lacking in love for all mankind. I mean, what sort of Buddha is that? Even the wretched shravaka isn't like that! Anyway, let's go and see what is meant by shravaka.

"The shravaka, ... (the whole of paragraph 4, to) ... his mediocre intellect."

S: Of course you must also bear in mind that all the Mahayanists are also shravakas, hmm? I mean, you realize this? Because they are following the tradition of the existing Buddha. Yes? So one would have to say then that even all the Mahayanists are of mediocre intellect, which is obviously not true. But there is a very important thing to be borne in mind here, that is, that to make for the first time a really great spiritual discovery is a tremendously difficult thing, hm? I mean, even in other spheres of knowledge, using the word 'other' very analogically. For instance, quite a few people could understand what Newton discovered about the theory of gravitation, some might even understand what Einstein discovered [23] about relativity, but could they have discovered it for themselves? And they may not be people of mediocre intellect at all, they may be people of great intellectual penetration, even genius, but short of that. So it's just the same with the Buddha. At a time when the path to reality is not known, it doesn't just take someone with an extra powerful intellect to discover that way, to get in touch with that ultimate spiritual principle; it requires far more than that and it is only someone who is absolutely exceptional who can make that complete breakthrough.

And then, after he has made it, well, he can communicate that to others. It isn't just a case of telling them about it, there's his actual presence and all that that means to spark them off. Maybe they aren't very far behind, but certainly there's no disgrace in being a shravaka, and you need not be of mediocre intellect in the ordinary sense. I mean, Sariputta was a shravaka. He wasn't of mediocre intellect, nor was Moggallana, nor were any of the earlier disciples. And one can even say that the Mahayana great thinkers themselves were shravakas in the sense that they were following the teaching laid down by Gotama the Buddha. Of course, in the Mahayana sutras, yes, but they didn't think it all out for themselves. So, strictly speaking, Mahayanists are not bodhisattvas. A bodhisattva would be one who would be voyaging in some remote world all by himself, having been inspired by some Buddha millions of lives before and working his way towards Buddhahood in some distant world millions of lives ahead. Even the Mahayanists aren't bodhisattvas in that sense. Even Mahayanists are shravakas in a way. They don't find it all out for themselves, they get it from sutras, from the teachings of Buddhas, from their own gurus, and so on. So, in a sense, everybody's a shravaka. So we mustn't take this too literally. This is a bit, I'm afraid, almost of Mahayana sectarianism creeping in, or even Japanese Buddhist sectarianism, and I think Suzuki himself is being a bit naive here, and we can't take what he says at all literally.

Devamitra: In a sense, I mean, Gotama was a shravaka in previous lives.

S: Right. Yes.

Devamitra: So that nobody's excluded from the sravakayana.

S: At some stage or other of their career; right.

Lokamitra: He gives the impression that, in that paragraph - maybe it's just his clumsy way - that it is a matter of the intellect.

S: Almost he does, yes, you're quite right.

Lokamitra: Whereas in the previous paragraph he's just ... he's condemning that attitude.

S: I think he's using the word 'intellect' very loosely. Again, it's his loose terminology. And he's very loose in his terminology, very often. Of course, in European thought, the word 'intellect' has got a very respectable history. It's been grossly debased, you know, in modern times. 'Intellect' originally meant the supra-individual higher faculty for the apprehension of truth. It didn't mean just rational thought. Even the word 'reason' meant something like intellect, a supra-individual faculty, which was in direct contact with the truth, and Kant initiated a distinction between what he called the reason and what he called the understanding. The understanding, as he called it, is what, roughly, we now call intellect, or reason, and we just haven't got a term for that higher faculty at all now. It has dropped out of our vocabulary. At best we say intuition, which is very ambiguous and very unsatisfactory. So you could, if you take the word 'intellect' in its original sense, well, Suzuki's OK, but it wouldn't be taken by the average reader.

Vajradaka: So, to go back over the meaning of 'intellect', it's a supra-individual [24] faculty in communication with the truth?

S: Or capable of comprehending the truth, or for the apprehension of the truth. I'm being very approximate and general. You could look it up in a good dictionary, but that is roughly what it was.

Devaraja: Well, would (unclear) be a better phrase than intuitive wisdom? (unclear) the current, er, sort of ...

S: Intuitive wisdom, hmm. Or simply fall back on capitals.

Vajradaka: Yes. Right.

S: Wisdom with a capital W. That's probably the best we can do. It is a great pity that this word 'intellect' has become so debased.

Devaraja: Well - I'm just interested in clarifying terms, really - what do you think would be a correct use of the word 'intuition', or understanding of the word 'intuition'?

S: Oh, I don't know. I think the word 'intuition' is so - well, again, there is a technical use. Kant, if I remember rightly - I may not be quite correct here, but if I remember rightly - Kant uses the word 'intuition' for direct apprehension of something which does not require demonstration. For instance, if I say two and two make four, you can understand this directly. Kant would say that it is intuitive. In other words, without going through any rational process. But this is not on that higher intellectual level. Yes?

Devaraja: This is still rooted in individual experience.

S: Yes, but it is direct. It is not mediated by any rational process. You don't go through any steps. It is direct and immediate. This is what he would call intuitive knowledge. Yes? Or when, for instance, you perceive something, it's intuitive. Huh? This is the older usage of the term.

Devaraja: Yes. There's not a sort of a logical process gone through to perceive it.

S: No. And it isn't sort of going through the logical process more quickly than usual; it isn't even that. But nowadays, you know, the whole word, again, has become debased and ambiguous. You know, we speak of feminine intuition, which is very often, you know, just looking at things in a novel sort of angle. Maybe just that. Or sometimes we use the word 'intuition' in the sense of a sort of telepathic picking up of something. Yes? But the classical usage, sort of up to and including the time of Kant is this. But I won't be really sure of the exact definition, but it is roughly something like that.

Mamaki: I suppose it's because we don't have any particular regard for this in the everyday world that we haven't got a word that we can use that means just precisely that.

S: Right. Yes.

Mamaki: This was something that Eliot was worried about, wasn't it? T.S. Eliot. That if you start losing the words of things, and words becoming imprecise. You've lost your tools, then. [25]

S: Yes. Right. Yes. It's almost like having a sort of very rough instrument, which could be a hammer and which could be a screw-driver, but doesn't particularly serve either purpose very well. (laughter) You could, with a great deal of effort; knock a nail in with it, and you might even sort of drive a screw in with it, but you couldn't knock in a very small nail, or screw in a very delicate screw. It's a bit like that.

Devaraja: There seems to be a general sort of degeneration. I remember the Buddha saying his sasana would degenerate. Well, it seems to happen like with our language and everything. It seems to be always happening like that process.

S: Well, you see, it's mainly because of the decay of Christianity. I mean, in Christian philosophy these terms are there, and they are used very precisely, and they are used in theological seminaries by Catholic theologians even now. They use the word 'intellect'

in its full traditional sense, but then, so far as ordinary speech is concerned, ordinary terminology, Christianity just is out, so we don't use the terms of that translation and we haven't replaced them by anything.

Devaraja: Perhaps that should be ... really one of our functions is to restore a correct and precise usage of these terms.

S: But again, we have to be very careful because we don't want to restore with their Christian connotations. For instance, in Buddhism, the distinction is very clear between *prajā* and *vijāna*. *Vijāna* is not so much 'consciousness', it's this whole rational-cum-conceptual level of knowledge and understanding, and *prajā* is the more intellectual in the original sense. And it's the same, you know, with our sort of classification of the human being. In traditional western thought - that is Platonic, Neoplatonic and even Christian Catholic, afterwards - there is a threefold classification of man into body, soul, and spirit. Well, spirit has been sort of dropped out, or [become] equated with soul, and you've just got body and soul. Then you become rather doubtful about soul and think it might be just a product of body, and you are virtually left with body, and your terminology reflects that. So what are you to do? So, as Buddhists, we are in quite a different position. It might be good if we just used the Sanskrit terms for a while, or reliable English equivalents: speak of *prajā* or wisdom with a capital W in the sense of *prajā*, or knowledge with a capital K in the sense of *jñāna*, and so on.

Vajradaka: Will we be going into *prajā* and *vijāna* later on in this book?

S: I should think we shall, if we get a move on. I think, really, to be quite frank, this whole classification of the bodhisattva, the pratyekabuddha, and the shravaka is rather academic. It doesn't really relate to Buddhist life at all and it's a pity that it's embedded in some of the scriptures. I think we just really need to scrap it. I mean it never comes up in our own sort of discussions or anything of that sort, does it? Not as a live issue, at all. If anything, people sort of read about it in a book and then get all confused. We have to deal with it then, but it's really quite irrelevant, this classification, I feel. It's part of, you know, just lumber that has come down to us from the past due to a misunderstanding, and it's not very much use to us. All right. Let's carry on.

"To a further elucidation of bodhisattvahood and its important bearings in Mahayana Buddhism, we devote a special chapter below." [26]

S: The whole conception of bodhisattvahood, just by itself and on its own merits, is of tremendous importance. But bodhisattva, as distinguished from pratyekabuddha, as distinguished from shravaka: this threefold classification isn't at all helpful. If anything, it's confusing.

"For Mahayanism is no more than the Buddhism of bodhisattvas,"

S: In a way this is true, in a way.

"while the pratyekabuddhas and the shravakas are considered by Mahayanists to be adherents of Hinayanism."

S: Yes. Well actually, in the Hinayana, whether you find any shravakas or not, you don't find any pratyekabuddhas.

"Mahayana Buddhism defined. We can now form a somewhat definite notion ... (two sentences) ... intellectual endowments could be saved."

S: Hmm. I don't quite like the word 'saved', but anyway, that's again just, you know, terminology, the English language.

"Let us be satisfied ... (to end of para1) ... in the pages that follow."

S: All right. Carry on then.

"It may not be out of place ... central Asiatic nations,"

S: He means, I think, South-East Asian nations.

"and whose literature is principally written ... (to part way through the third sentence) ... at the sacrifice of its true spirit, but ..."

S: Suzuki seems to do that a little bit.

Devaraja: Just a point - I read the other day, or I seem to remember reading, that the actual language that the Buddha spoke was probably Prakrit. Is that true? And that Pali is really not even the original language of the ...

S: No. The position here is a bit complex. The Buddha spoke Magadhi when he was in Magadha, and apparently Koselese when he was in Kosala. You know, he used the vernacular of his time and place. Pali is not, strictly speaking, the name of a language at all. The word 'Pali' means a row, a row of letters, the text, hmm? Now the commentators of the Theravadin scriptures refer to 'it is written in the Pali', or 'according to the Pali', meaning 'the text', as distinct from their commentary, but Western scholars took it to mean the name of a language, or started using it as the name of a language, just because that was convenient, and that is what it now means. It means the language in which the Theravadin scriptures are written, hmm? Still, if it isn't Pali, then the question arises then what is that language? Most scholars now believe that the recension of the scriptures that we find handed down by the Theravadins originated in north-western India and reflect the dialect there of about the time of Asoka. There were four main canons handed down in the Hinayana. There was a Sanskrit canon, which was handed down by the Sarvastivadins, that is, a Sanskrit version of the same sort of material that we find in the Pali scriptures, handed down by the Sarvastivadins and much of it subsequently taken up into the Mahayana and becoming part of their scriptures. Then there was an Apabhramsa version or recension, a Pisachi version or recension, and the one

that we call Pali. I'm not sure whether there was a Prakrit one. I think Apabhramsa and Prakrit are very roughly the same, but you couldn't say, except in the very broadest sense, that the language of what we call Pali scriptures is Prakrit. You could say that only when you use the word 'Prakrit', as sometimes it is used, simply to characterize all the dialects which are not classical Sanskrit. [27] But then it would apply to Pisachi and Apabhramsa too. So 'Prakrit' is too broad, really. So you can say that the Theravada scriptures are based on the version of the teaching, presumably an oral version, circulating in north-western India around the time of Asoka. Now what makes scholars think that? They've got clues in Asoka's inscriptions, and the inscriptions are in local dialects all around India, and the dialect of the Pali canon, as we call it, seems to be closet to the dialect of those inscriptions in the north-western area. So: a little piece of scholarly detective work. That's just the broad outline of it, it's much, much more complex than that but this is broadly the conclusion, broadly the position. All right, let's carry on.

"but the reader must not think that this work has anything to do with those complications. In fact, Mahayanism professes to be a boundless ocean in which all forms of thought and faith can find it's congenial and welcome home; ..."

S: Hmm. I'm rather doubtful about this. I think he's going a bit too far in that Mahayanistic direction: 'all forms of thought and faith'? Well, not unassimilated, surely. And some, I think, just couldn't be assimilated; would have to be rejected.

"why then should we make it militate against its own fellow doctrine, Hinayanism?"

S: True enough. I think here we had better pause for tea... (tea happens) ... Who is next?

"Is the Mahayana Buddhism the Genuine Teaching of the Buddha? What is generally known ... (to end of sentence) ... of the teachings of the Buddha."

S: This applies more to the English-speaking orientalist, not to the continental ones.

"They insisted ... (to end of sentence) ... degenerated form of Buddhism."

S: There are very few Western scholars now, if any, who would adopt this approach. Maybe in the Theravada countries, but certainly not in the West.

Vajradaka: Is Maurice O'Connell Walshe still one of those?

S: Yes, but you couldn't regard him as a scholar; he hasn't published anything of a scholarly nature. I mean historians of Buddhism, for instance. No one would adopt this limited approach now; it's quite unthinkable.

"Owing to these unfortunate hypotheses ... (to end of paragraph) ... prejudiced."

S: This is a bit out of date now. I mean the main authority, the one that most people would have access to, and is being reprinted, is Edward Conze, and he certainly draws upon all sources, and I think every other scholar now who is writing. So we can see that there has been a great improvement since the time when Suzuki wrote this book. All right, let's carry on.

We might even feel that he is rather labouring the case, but when he wrote these things they really needed to be written, really needed to be said; they were quite new, and it is partly because of the influence of this book, and Suzuki himself in general, that there is a broader attitude on the part of scholars. [28]

"No Life Without Growth. This is very unfair on the part of the critics ... (to end of first paragraph) ... to the surrounding conditions)"

S: Yes. What Suzuki says is substantially correct, but I think we have to be rather wary of this organic analogy. For instance - there is the organic analogy as applied to the state, to civilization: that it's like an organism, that it grows and develops and gets old and declines. This is only an analogy, and a very dubious one at that. The same with religions: to think of them in collective terms as organisms, which are of course living, and that they must grow and develop because they are organisms: this a rather shaky sort of argument. It isn't really quite like that. Even though, yes, substantially, what he says is correct, the mode of expression, using this analogy of the organism, with regard to Mahayana in general, or religion in general, isn't really satisfactory. It's certainly open to criticism. But I think we need not go into that in detail because we take his point, in general.

"Take, for example, Christianity ... (to end of paragraph) ... coming kingdom."

S: Well, some would, and they seem to be growing rather stronger these days. It just goes to show.

"Again, think of Jesus' view on marriage and social life ... (to end of paragraph) ... about two thousand years ago."

S: I think the comparison, or the parallel, is clear enough.

"The same mode of reasoning holds good ... (for 3 sentences) ... Roman, Babylonian, Egyptian, and other pagan thoughts?"

S: Obviously, of course, it isn't just an amalgamation. This isn't a very happy word, and certainly Mahayana Buddhism isn't an amalgamation. It is more a question of Suzuki's 'assimilative energy' that he was talking about earlier on. That's a much more happy expression.

"In fact every healthy and energetic religion is historical, in the sense that ... (to end of paragraph) ... copy of the prototype."

S: Hmm. What do you feel about this comparison between the Mahayana and Christianity in this sort of way? It's probably not very relevant nowadays, because Christianity itself is in such a different position from what it was in at the beginning of the century.

Vajradaka: I don't feel very happy about it.

S: Well, in what way?

Vajradaka: Well, I feel that the way that he, this last sentence particularly, how it seems almost to infer that it's important that the ... how Christianity is now should be a faithful copy of the prototype, or that should resemble some of the original importance and essence and spirit, whereas I think with Mahayanism that the spirit is there still, or now.

S: Hmm. Yes, it's as though - you know, speaking entirely as a non-Christian - I feel, on the whole, that the spirit of Christianity is more with Catholicism and, you know, the orthodox church, rather than with the extreme Protestant sects that profess to go, you know, right straight back to Jesus and the New Testament or Bible in general. Of course, he was writing in America, and the book was, as far as I recollect, published originally in America, which was then mainly Protestant, so it is, you know, a bit of an argument from that sort of a point of view. It's as though the people that he was addressing would be Protestants, mainly, and thinking that they represented the original Christianity, more or less, and perhaps he was a bit influenced by that. He lived for many years in America and wrote this book there.

Lokamitra: He seems to be trying to appeal to those people throughout the book, [29] especially talking about the dharmakaya and perhaps giving way a bit too much.

Vajradaka: Hmm, yes.

S: Hmm, yes, maybe. But he had to get a hearing, of course, for Mahayana Buddhism at all, you know, and no one had really considered it seriously perhaps. This was certainly the first serious book in English on the Mahayana as a whole. All right, we need not waste too much time over this sort of comparison, because it is a bit out of date and, you know, doesn't really mean very much to us, and isn't likely to be helpful to anyone, you know, who comes into contact with us. Anyway, carry on.

"Mahayanism a Living Faith. So with Mahayanism. Whatever changes it has made during its historical evolution, its spirit and central ideas are all those of its founder."

S: This is, of course, very true. You know, sunyata, so developed and expanded, not just as an idea but as an experience, by the Mahayanist, but it's there in the original teaching, as far as we can make out. The conditioned co-production, karma, the mind, meditation: all these things are there. All the ... I mean, the spirit is there, and the central ideas in Mahayana Buddhism are certainly all those of the founder, though greatly developed.

"The question whether or not it is genuine entirely depends on our interpretation of the term 'genuine'. If we take it to mean the lifeless preservation of the original (S: i.e. original form) we should say that Mahayanism is not the genuine teaching of the Buddha ... (to the end of paragraph) ... the significance of Mahayanism."

S: This is the least that he's sort of asking for, that those who desire to have a complete survey of Buddhism cannot ignore the significance of Mahayanism. Certainly no one would ignore it any longer, so he has gained his point, which certainly needed to be gained in those days.

"It is naught but idle talk ... (to end of paragraph) ... the genuine teaching of the Buddha?" (general laughter)

S: There are one or two points here. One is, of course, that, institutionally speaking, and culturally speaking, since Suzuki's day the Mahayana has lost a great deal of its influence and tremendous changes have taken place. In Suzuki's day, China was much more Buddhist than it is today. Suzuki was writing in the last days of the old Chinese empire and I think even in Japan great changes have taken place. Japan is now a fully industrialized, [30] not to say over-industrialized, nation. I think Buddhism is being squeezed into odd nooks and corners, like Kyoto and Nara and so on. And of course Tibet has been completely overrun and there's very little of Buddhism left there it seems. Burma is under a sort of semi-socialist government. Of course Burma is Theravadin. So, generally speaking, Buddhism, and especially the Mahayana, has lost a great deal of, one can't say of its spiritual influence - presumably that is there, somewhere - but certainly of its cultural influence and accessibility in the course of this century. So a very great change has taken place since Suzuki's day.

As for the final rhetorical question, "What does it matter, then, whether or not Mahayanism is the genuine teaching of the Buddha?" I think it does. I don't think we can dismiss it quite so lightly as that, even though we do, you know, fully agree with Suzuki's general conclusion. We do want to know whether we are getting the genuine article, even though we are quite prepared to examine what is meant by 'genuine', and have the 'genuinely genuine' and not the 'ungenuinely genuine', huh? (sounds of amusement) In other words, have the spirit of Buddhism, not just the letter, and if the Mahayana does go back to the Buddha and does faithfully represent the spirit of the Buddha, well, it's genuine and we need not quibble about that. But it does matter that we have the genuine, but it must be the real genuine, not the factitiously genuine. All right, on we go then.

"Here is an instance ... (for two sentences) ... through various stages of development like theirs."

S: Of course it is a fact that Protestants condemn Catholics, just as Theravadins condemn Mahayanists, and in much the same sort of way, on much the same sorts of grounds.

Vajradaka: I think it's still quite popular among Christian theology classes dealing with Buddhism to seriously distort the teaching. I came across an example recently. I was talking to a theology student. I couldn't recognize what he called Buddhism. (Sounds of agreement from Devaraja, Mamaki, and S.)

S: Oh, ah, did you tell him this?

Vajradaka: Oh, yes.

S: Oh, good! (laughter) What did he say?

Vajradaka: He said, 'oh'. (more laughter)

S: Well, they very often say, of course, the poor Western Buddhist is at a disadvantage, or you don't really understand it, you know. [31] That, you know, is the eastern Buddhism that I'm concerned with, that you've given your own sort of Western version, you know, which isn't true to Buddhism as it actually exists; you've given an idealized version. They often say something like that. Did you have any further discussion or did that terminate the conversation?

Vajradaka: We then went on to talk about ordination, and the comparison between the way that we do it in the kalyana mitra system, and the way that they do it. He didn't want to talk any more in that confronting way. I just told him I, you know, didn't like what he had said, and didn't feel that it was true.

S: What did he in fact say, in substance?

Vajradaka: That the Buddhist completely destroys his will to live, his desire to live.

S: Well, yes and no. That's so ambiguous, isn't it? Yes? What do you mean by will to live; what do you mean by destroy? Yes? Again, you're putting it in Western terms. I mean, you could say, then, that the Buddha was one in whom the will to live was destroyed. Hm? You could do. But, well, what was the Buddha doing? He didn't sort of sit around all the time, he was sort of very sort of radiantly active, very positive, very creative.

Devaraja: Quite interesting. In Conze's commentary on the Heart Sutra, he talks about how the bodhisattva substitutes the bodhicitta for the will to live.

S: Ah yes, right.

Vajradaka: Yes.

S: Well, you see, it's rather like the conclusion of Schopenhauer's 'World as Will and as Idea'. He says, in effect - these are not his exact words, but more or less, he says - and of course, you know, Schopenhauer believes in the negation of the will, the will to live,

and it's negation in what he calls 'nirvana' - and he says - in conclusion to this great work, he says: for one to whom the will to live is everything, nirvana is nothing. Yes? So if he thinks of the will to live in that way, it really means he's considering the will to live as everything. If he's thinking of it as, you know, the negation of the will to live, as essentially just negative, and thinking of Buddhism in those terms, he just is unable to see beyond the negation of the will to live that there [32] is anything. I mean, with what do you negate the will to live? Presumably it's an even stronger force. What is that force? It's what we would call the bodhicitta.

Vajradaka: But he didn't see it in that way. He saw it as being nothing: a sort of black death.

Devamitra: It's practically an annihilation of the interpretation of Buddhism.

S: Or you might say, you know, applying it to Christianity, well, you know, when sin has been got rid of, well, what's left? You say that man is just, you know, completely sinful. All right, you get rid of sin, you get rid of man. How negative! How dismissive! Hm? But we know that would be a sort of caricature of the Christian position. This ... it's very ... What was his sort of overall attitude? Do you think he was trying to understand and just hadn't succeeded, or?

Vajradaka: I think he was at this Christian college and that it was part of his curriculum to study all these different schools. He wasn't really interested. But they had some father or padre or whatever there sort of just giving them and he wasn't really very interested. He was far more interested in knotty theological points about Christ.

S: Hmm, hmm. (pause)

Devaraja: Fair enough. (small laughter)

S: Fair enough, yes. (pause) All right, let's go on then.

"It is of no practical use ... (to end of paragraph and section) ... by some unenlightened Buddhists themselves."

S: Hmm. I think we'd better be among the 'unenlightened Buddhists' because, you know, if we are confronted by different forms of Buddhism, it is certainly a reasonable thing to ask ourselves, well, you know, are they all genuine? Which is genuine? Which is not genuine? What do we mean by genuine? I think we are quite entitled to ask this question. But obviously, I think we'll, you know, we'll answer it according to, you know, a 'genuinely genuine' conception of what is genuine. And it may well be that we make up our minds about some forms of what are historically Buddhism rather negatively. I mean we may not be particularly enamoured of the Nichiren school. Dr Conze says quite roundly that it just isn't Buddhism, that they've lost the spirit, they're so narrow, so doctrinaire, so dogmatic, that they cease to be Buddhists. Well we may conclude similarly; that particular school or form of Buddhism is, in fact, not [33] genuinely Buddhist, even

though it calls itself such, and we want to have nothing to do with it. We may arrive at that conclusion, hmm? Or may we arrive at the conclusion that one particular form is more genuine than others in the sense that it more completely or more faithfully embodies what, as far as we can see, is the spirit of Buddhism. So the question certainly isn't nonsensical. I think he's going much too far in saying this. Any comment or query on that? Anyone want to say anything? Or is it all obvious? (pause) All right, let's carry on, then. "Some Misstatements about the Mahayana Doctrines." This is only going to be a bit of historical interest, but anyway let's go through it because it's, in a way, quite illuminating.

"Before entering fully into the subject proper of this work, let us glance over some erroneous opinions about the Mahayana doctrines which are held by some Western scholars, and naturally by all uninitiated readers, who are the blind led by the blind."

S: Hmm. Very much so.

"It may not be altogether a superfluous work to give them a passing review in this chapter and to show broadly what Mahayanism is not." (long pause)

S: Carry on then.

"Why injustice is done to Buddhism. ... (first paragraph)".

S: Carry on, then. I think this is all quite clear, quite well put. Perhaps it doesn't need to be laboured.

"This strong general indictment (for two sentences) ... shall work on till the day of the last judgement, if there ever be such a day."

S: You notice he is using the Christian idiom, but is not quite got comfortable with it. (laughter)

"To see what these thoughts and sentiments are ... (to end of paragraph)."

"Examples of injustice. ... (the paragraph. And section)".

S: And as we've heard, Waddell is being reprinted, you know, so he's still around, and, you know, doing, perhaps, a certain amount of harm. The other two gentlemen aren't being reprinted, as far as I know. But of course, they might be. All right, let's see what Monier-Williams [34] has to say.

"Monier Monier-Williams. ... (first paragraph.) ..."

S: He seems to confuse them with the devas who are quite happy in heaven and don't want to develop further, not realizing that the bodhisattvas don't want to enter nirvana

just so that they can remain active on Earth, helping people. It's not a question of wanting perpetual residence in the heavens. Anyway, I think Suzuki deals with it sufficiently.

"This remark is so absurd ... (to end of paragraph.) ... all their efforts."

S: Well, we needn't say anything about that. (amused noises)

"This view of the Buddhist heaven as interpreted by Monier-Williams is nothing but the conception of the Christian heaven coloured with paganism." (laughter) "Nothing is more foreign ... (to end of the paragraph.) ..."

S: Anyway that disposes of Monier Monier-Williams. Now we come on to "Beal".

"Samuel Beal ... (to end of first paragraph) ... dharmakaya."

"Then, alluding to the Buddha's instruction ... (to end of second paragraph.)

"To interpret dharmakaya as the body of the law is quite adequate ... (for two sentences) ... Body of the Law has no meaning to them."

S: The expression 'dharmakaya', by the way, is found in the Pali texts, but Theravadins interpret it as the collection of the teaching contained in the Tipitika; they don't give it any mystical or metaphysical significance.

"The idea is distinctly Mahayanistic ... (to end of paragraph. and section.)"

S: There's a whole chapter on the dharmakaya later on in the book, so we need not go into it now.

"Waddell. Let us state ... (to end of paragraph.) ... in the background".

S: Hmm, right, carry on.

"And again: ... (to end of second paragraph.) ... which admitted of no definition".

Devaraja: What does "sophistic" mean?

S: "Sophistic" means pseudo-logical. You know, pretending to be logical, but in a tricky sort of way: just going through the motions of being logical but not being truly logical.

Devaraja: A sort of dishonesty.

S: Yes. Of course, the word 'sophism' comes from the Sophists, the wise [35] men who were teachers in Socrates' day, and most of them were exposed by Socrates, so nowadays sophistry means sort of pseudo-wisdom, or pseudo-reason, a false logic. Sophistic

means making some sort of show of logic, sort of to blind the eyes of the beholder, as it were, but without any real substance or meaning in it. (pause) Let's go on, then.

"It may not be wrong ... (two sentences) ... to seek salvation through the intellect alone?"

S: He used the word 'intellect' in the debased, modern sense.

Lokamitra: Is he referring to the Abhidhamma?

S: No. The Madhyamika.

"Could a religious system be called a nihilism ... (to end of paragraph.) ... neither void nor not-void."

S: You see, the reference is, clearly, to Nagarjuna's Madhyamika, because it is that that Waddell was originally referring to.

"I could cull some more ... (to end of paragraph) ... impartial judgements."

S: So you can see what Suzuki was up against at the beginning of the century, and why this book really needed to be written, and why these things really needed to be said. And, you know, there's a general air of misunderstanding still around even though modern scholarly books won't quite say the things that these three people said, but there's quite often a subtle and even pseudo-scholarly distortion on the part of some people who write about Buddhism, you know, with their own religious loyalties lurking in the background. Well they're quite entitled to their own religious loyalties, but they do lead them to distort and misrepresent Buddhism. I sometimes think that we have to be much more militant about Buddhism in this sense, and challenge misrepresentations much more vigorously than we have done in the past.

Devamitra: Could you give any examples?

S: Well, I'm thinking, for instance, like Professor Zaehner, who tries to prove that Buddhism is only natural mysticism, not supernatural; that only Christianity, only Catholicism, contains supernatural mysticism. You know? There's a tremendous sort of display of learning and scholarship in this connection. In fact, 'all oriental religions - including Vedanta, Buddhism, Taoism - are just natural mysticism. They never come in contact with ultimate reality; only Christianity does that'. And he occupies the Spalding Chair of eastern Philosophy and Religion at Oxford! You know, he [36] is in the same sort of position now that old Monier Monier-Williams was a hundred years ago. He also was an Oxford Professor. And these people have the seats of authority - as it were - from the establishment point of view, and what they say carries weight, is listened to! They are the authorities; we are not the authorities on Buddhism, make no mistake about that(!) The wretched miserable people who believe in Buddhism and try to practise it and understand it, they are not authorities on Buddhism(!) Someone who is not a Buddhist,

and has never tried to practise it, and does not believe in it, and who has studied it only incidentally, he is the authority on Buddhism. And ninety-nine people out of a hundred will take his word for what Buddhism says rather than yours, or even mine. We are prejudiced because we are Buddhists(!) Yes, this is what they say! 'You're prejudiced because you are a Buddhist, We are objective, we are scholars, we are impartial.'

Nagabodhi: A friend of mine wrote to get to Oxford to do his Ph.D. on mysticism and shamanism under Zaehner, and, well, my friend was very sympathetic towards Buddhism, and after a while his Ph.D. was reduced to an M.A., and finally Zaehner sent him off to an anthropologist and wouldn't have anything to do with him. I've seen the first draft of his thesis, and the thing I enjoyed was a note in the corner. My friend mentioned Alan Watts at one point, and Zaehner wrote in the corner, 'What an authority!' (laughter)

S: Well if that's true, but then we could say, against Zaehner, 'What an authority,' as far as Buddhism is concerned. Tut.

Mamaki. A lot of the teachers of comparative religions are 'the reverend' someone or other.

S: Hmm, yes, right.

Mamaki: I read one of these, doing a bit on Buddhism - this is some time back - but it was such a distortion. And how can it be otherwise? If you are a reverend in the Christian religion how can you possibly ...

S: And even if you are a Buddhist, and with the best will in the world, you have to be careful not to distort the teaching.

Mamaki: It's like a Buddhist, who didn't, perhaps, grow up in a Christian country, teaching Christianity.

S: But it's also the superior, self-assured attitude of merely profane and pseudo-scientific understanding. This is what it really is. It's quite Luciferian, in a way.

Vajradaka: What does that mean? (sounds of amusement) [37]

S: Well, like Lucifer, the angel who fell through pride and conceit. (pause) Anyway, enough said. But I think Buddhists must be much more militant in defending their religion from misrepresentations, or defending themselves. You're not defending some abstract thing called Buddhism, but you are being misrepresented - or your views, or your philosophy, is being misrepresented - when these things are said or written.

Devamitra: It's very difficult though if these works are published and widely distributed and read.

S: Well, yes, this is why sometimes we might have even to go to the extreme of a demonstration, huh, or to write and protest, or something like that. Huh? (pause) What about a ceremonial burning of books? I mean that would be a ... (unintelligible owing to explosions of laughter) ... that's symbolical. And let it be known that the Buddhists of England have burned the books of Professor so-and-so, (laughter) they're so disgusted with them. (laughter)

Devaraja: When shall we do it? (laughter)

Devamitra: It could be a good fund-raiser!

S: Right. Yes.

Ratnapani: You'd have to buy the books first.

S: Ha ha! We'll ask him to donate one. (laughter) You might say, would you please send us a copy of such and such book of yours for religious purposes. (laughter) ... and after you sent it write back you say thank you very much, we're going to burn it ceremonially. (laughter) Here is your invitation. (laughter) We promise not to burn you, because Buddhists don't burn, you know, heretics, they only burn their books, (laughter) unlike the Christians who burn the heretics, too, just to make sure. (amusement)

Mangala: I think, though, in a way, like, I could see how this comes about, you know, because, um, like I mean, I think I, I think. (unclear) ... learn more from Christianity from you than I would, sort of, trust your judgement more than I would trust some fanatical Christian, and I ...

S: Yes. Well, I think a Buddhist has this sort of objectivity, because he's a Buddhist. I mean I wouldn't deliberately distort or misrepresent. I might, certainly, fail to understand certain things, just [38] because I wasn't a Christian, but then I'd put my cards on the table and say, well, look, I'm not a Christian, but this is how I understand it. And I'd try to understand, even though I would obviously, understand it as a Buddhist, and have, in the end, to relate it to my understanding of Buddhism itself. But if someone is to ask me, say, what is the difference between Catholicism and Protestantism, between Quakers and Unitarians, I think I could give a quite sort of objective account of that; more so, perhaps, than the Protestant or the Catholic, the Quaker or the Unitarian. But this is part of your Buddhism, and an attitude you develop as a Buddhist: to be objective, to be fair, to be sympathetic. Hm? (pause) All right then, let's go right on.

"The Significance of Religion. (first and second paragraph)"

S: Well, fair enough, in a general way. I mean, it could be criticized, you know, this sort of expression, if you go into it very deeply, but I think we don't need to do that. It's all right, just for the time being, and for this particular purpose.

"No revealed religion. It admits of no doubt that religion, as everything else under the sun, is subject to the laws of evolution,"

S: Hm. There's a bit of, you know, contemporary modes of thought coming in there. What does one really mean by "religion subject to the laws of evolution". That is rather sort of abstract. Organized religion, yes, in a way, the organic analogy holds good, but what about the individual? Surely your attitude towards religion, your understanding, evolves, progresses, but it's not as though, you know, the law of evolution is somewhat impinging on you, or anything like that.

"and that, therefore, there is no such thing as ... (to end of sentence) ... modifying itself in accord with the surrounding conditions."

S: There isn't a sort of deposit of truth, as some Protestants sometimes call it, delivered for all time to the faithful and simply handed down, generation to generation. The Theravadins sometimes think of Buddhism rather like that, but Suzuki's protesting against this sort of primeval revelation, which is then just handed down, sort of word perfect, from one generation to another.

Vajradaka: Didn't the Theravadins think, also, that could be disseminated, dissipated, with time? [39]

S: Oh, yes. But purely by way of degeneration and loss; not any sort of development or anything of that kind.

"Unless people are so blinded by a belief in this kind of religion ... (to end of paragraph) ... which remains eternally the same."

S: I'm not happy about Suzuki's rejection of the whole idea of revelation. It depends what you mean by revelation. He is taking it, here, in a very special sense indeed. It has been said that all knowledge is a species of revelation. [S.T. Coleridge, tr.] Hm? You could say that when the Buddha sort of dawned on the horizon, and when he had his first contact with his disciple, that was a sort of revelation. I mean, what do you mean by revelation in this sort of sense? It's something coming from a higher sphere altogether. Here was the Buddha's message coming from his enlightened mind, his enlightened consciousness, his enlightened being, and sort of impinging on the consciousness and the beings of the unenlightened, and this, surely, can be spoken of as a revelation. It's the impact of the more highly developed on the less highly developed, and the perspective that that opens up. You could speak of this as a revelation, but obviously there's not a 'thing' that is revealed and that is then handed down unchanged. So I think we have to separate these two parts of Suzuki's criticism. You can speak of Buddhism in terms of revelation, but there isn't anything unchanging which is handed down. It's the spark which is transmitted, if you like. Even that is a bit misleading if you think of a spark as something unchanging. It's more like the flame of a lamp which is lit again and again but the flame is changing all the time; it's not something static. Like a relay of torches; it's more like that. And sometimes it can dwindle to a tiny spark, sometimes there can be a

great big blaze, you know, when Buddhism becomes very widespread - I mean Buddhism in the true sense - and so on. So I'm not happy about Suzuki's view of revelation. He's thinking of revelation in the sense of revelation of a particular dogma, which is then faithfully handed down. What the Buddha reveals in a way is himself. Hm? And by revealing himself to his disciples, his Enlightened self, he stimulates the disciple into being his Enlightened self. Nothing is sort of transmitted, in the strict sense, and, you know, Zen traditionally emphasizes this very strongly, and very truly, but it applies to all forms of Buddhism, all forms of spiritual life, really. (pause) All right, let's go on.

"When this discrimination is not observed ... (to end of paragraph) ... a disposition towards bigotry." [40]

S: Well this very much needed to be said in Suzuki's day, and still needs to be said in some quarters. I don't know what you're encountering in Glasgow: whether you find the Scots Christians or Presbyterians or Calvinists a bit difficult, or have you not met any of them, perhaps?

Vajradaka: I've met a few and had some really spectacular meetings, especially in different places like art galleries, where people have come up to me and said, 'Are you saved?' and I say of course, yes.

S: Oh, right! (laughter) And then what did they say? Jesus?

Vajradaka: Yes!

S: And what did you say? No?

Vajradaka: No!! (laughter)

S: And what did they say? What did they do?

Vajradaka: 'Oh, then you're not saved.'

S: Oh, they said that straight out? And what did you say?

Vajradaka: Oh yes I am. (very loud laughter)

S: They must have found that really disconcerting. (laughter continuing)

Vajradaka: I really enjoyed it. It lasted for about two hours.

S: What? Just yes and no, yes and no? (laughter)

Vajradaka: No. Just sort of, after a while...

Sulocana: Did they want to know?

Vajradaka: Oh yes. This particular person did. She said, quite categorically, right at the beginning, 'I want to convert you.'

S: Hm. Ah.

Vajradaka: And I said, OK and I don't want to convert you.

S: Ah.

Vajradaka: And she was quite taken aback. And then, I was feeling quite direct at that time, and I just started taking apart her arguments bit by bit, and we talked about living and dead god, and the way that she asked her questions about Buddhism were very kind of tricky, you know, like kind of forcing oneself into a sort of position of sort of whichever way one answered the questions, it would be false. [41] So I just wouldn't answer any of her questions. I would just say, this is how I see it, you know, I'm not going to answer that question, because it's based on false premises.

S: So what sort of impression do you think you left her with? Or in what sort of state?

Vajradaka: I think that after a while she forgot all about her Christianity and just got turned on sexually.

S: Ah, that's quite significant. It's almost as though the assertion of the Christianity is the outlet for a certain kind of self assertion. Yes? (sounds of uncertainty) It's almost a sort of aggressiveness. Yes?

Vajradaka: Right. The only other time that I've come into contact with Christians was the other evening I had dinner with the archdeaconess, who is very much involved with bringing ...

S: Just a minute. Is she an archdeaconess in the sense that she's an archdeacon, or is she the wife of an archdeacon?

Vajradaka: No, she is an archdeacon.

S: Ah. In which church?

Vajradaka: Presbyterian. She is the leader of the 'Sharing of Faiths', and so is very much involved, and her whole attitude and her policy and belief, personal belief, is to understand as deeply as one can, and tolerate all other religions. And that was good, because she really listened.

S: Good.

Vajradaka: She'd lived in India for quite a long time. (pause)

S: OK then. On to 'The Mystery'.

"Religion is the inmost voice ... (to end of paragraph) ... is called agnosticism."

S: Which, of course, was very much around in scientific circles at the turn of the [twentieth, tr.] century, following Huxley, and... (pause) All right, there's no need to linger over that.

"By this hypothesis ... (to end of paragraph & section) ... of the human heart." [42]

S: All right, then. Let's go on to 'Intellect and Imagination'.

"The human heart is not an intellectual crystal. When the intellect displays itself in its full glory, the heart still aches and struggles to get hold of something beyond."

S: Again, intellect is being used in the debased modern sense of the term.

"The intellect may sometimes declare ... (to end of paragraph 1) ... is perfectly right."

S: I sometimes think Suzuki's a bit one-sided, as though religion has to do with the heart and not with the intellect sort of thing; which is not, in a way, very Buddhistic. I mean there must be, obviously, this integration of heart and head as one develops spiritually, but religion, if we use this term at all, is concerned with some x-factor which cannot really be defined either in intellectual terms or in emotional terms, and, you know, which in a way is equally accessible and equally inaccessible to both heart and head; something, as it were, transcendental; something accessible really only to prajā, wisdom, knowledge, in the true sense. Wisdom and knowledge have got, you know, rather intellectual connotations, but [they're] not really so.

Vajradaka: If one started using the word 'intellect' in the original way again; this meaning, 'the understanding of Truth', with a capital T, then presumably this x-factor wouldn't be beyond the intellect.

S: No. And that intellect stands above and between the head and the heart. It has no more connection with the head than it has with the heart. Well, it's connected with both, it's rooted in both, grows out of both, and transcends both, transcends the individual, not to speak of these different aspects of the individual, but to a modern mind or modern consciousness. Even with a capital I, 'Intellect' would sound a bit one-sided; we haven't got a sort of common term which is neither really intellectual nor emotional, which can bind and blend and goes beyond. We haven't really got that. 'Wisdom' is perhaps the nearest.

Lokamitra: In a way, isn't intelligence a combining of the two; the sort of sensitivity coming from the heart ...

S: It is, yes.

Lokamitra: ... and making use of that with the head? [43]

S: Hmm. That is true, but 'intelligence' is not sort of used very much in a religious or philosophical context. Perhaps it's significant that it isn't.

Devaraja: Can you say anything about the significance of that? I mean, why do you think that it isn't used? Because it seems like a highly suitable word that could be applied by ...

S: Hmm. Hmm. You speak about animal intelligence. But you wouldn't use an expression like 'spiritual intelligence', though it would be quite a good expression. But you never see it used.

Devaraja: Sounds excellent. Ha ha.

S: Well, I've only just invented it. (laughter)

Devaraja: Well, give the credit to him! (more laughter)

S: Well, we both invented it. (more laughter)

Nagabodhi: ... the connotation of word intelligence with IQ: intelligence quotient.

S: That's true. (sounds of agreement)

Nagabodhi: If anything, that's worse than 'intellect'. 'Intellect' will, I mean, connote a degree of refinement which 'intelligence' doesn't.

Devamitra: It's funny, but it has a totally different meaning to me. 'Intelligence' implies it has an emotional aspect as well as a sort of a clarity of objectivity.

S: And, as Lokamitra said, sensitivity. I think of intelligence: I didn't think of IQ at all, but obviously many people would.

Mamaki: There's also the idea of higher intelligence, which is often used as a kind of godlike, not 'being' perhaps, but something which ...

S: Yes. Right. Yes.

Mamaki: ... keeps this world going, or ...

Devaraja: Suprapersonal.

Mamaki: Yes.

S: Milton uses the term 'intelligence' for an angel.

Nagabodhi: There's a line in Blake, which I only know the line because I've got to set it up in print: 'A tear is an intellectual thing.' [44]

S: That's right, yes. He's using the word in the old sense. Hm. Yes. Hm. I know the poem, but I can't remember it at the moment. [The Grey Monk, tr.]

Vajradaka: I think the whole basic misunderstanding, current misunderstanding, comes from the non-use, in our society, of the distinction between psychological and spiritual and transcendental. And those levels: the head and the heart being purely psychological, and spiritual being ...

S: The unification of the two, but not going beyond, huh?

Vajradaka: Yes.

S: Yes?

Vajradaka: Right.

S: And the transcendental being not merely the unification of the head and the heart, but a going beyond the head and the heart, though without actually leaving them behind, if you know what I mean.

Vajradaka: Without leaving them behind.

S: Well, not that they are abandoned, and there they are below and the transcendental soaring up there; they're sort of assimilated into, but it sort of goes beyond as well.

Vajradaka: Would you say that it is accurate to say that on the psychological level the heart is like the emotion, and the spiritual and transcendental becomes feeling?

S: You could say that, yes. (pause) Well let's leave it there. (laughter)

"But religion cannot fabricate whatever it pleases ... (for two sentences) ... religion must guard herself against unrestrained flight of imagination."

S: I don't think we need to guard ourselves against it now, huh?

"Most of the superstitions fondly cherished by a pious heart are due to the disregard of the intellectual element in religion."

S: That's also true. (short pause)

"The imagination creates: the intellect discriminates."

S: Kant would say that it's the understanding that discriminates; the intellect perceives. It perceives truth, on a supra-individual level. So here we've got this same impoverishment of vocabulary that I spoke of. [45]

"Creation without discrimination is wild: discrimination without creation is barren."

S: He's sort of parodying Kant, here, you know. Kant has a famous sentence. He says - what is it - 'Percepts without concepts are blind. Concepts without percepts are ...' something else; I've forgotten what that bit is. It's very frequently quoted. Ah, 'empty', I think. 'Concepts without percepts are empty. Percepts without concepts are blind.' So it's a little bit like that. [correct, in Critique of Pure Reason, A 51/B 75, tr.]

Vajradaka: What are percepts?

S: Perceptions. So, 'Creation without discrimination is wild.' You know, like the young creative artist. And 'discrimination without creation is barren.' It means just a merely critical approach, just like T.S. Eliot in his old age. All right. Let's carry on.

"Religion and science, when they do not work with mutual understanding, are sure to be one-sided.'

S: I don't think you can sort of pair religion and science in this way; I think this is quite mistaken on Suzuki's part. But anyway, we won't quarrel with him. This is all his sort of, you know, aside.

"The soul makes an abnormal growth at one point ... (two sentences) ... claim the whole field of soul-activities as well as those of nature."

S: That is of course, true. Though in the case of the religionists it isn't a question of any opposition between religion and science; it's an opposition between science and science: between modern science, which seems to be true science, and false science, which has somehow got incorporated with religion, historically speaking. It's not really an opposition of science and religion, but of up-to-date science and out-of-date science. And the fault of the religionists consists in thinking of their out-of-date science as being in fact religion, which it isn't at all. But really science and religion occupy such different spheres they can't even really be compared; not in this sort of way, anyway. Not that you've religion catering to your emotional, and science looking after your intellect: this is just absurd.

"I am not in sympathy with either of them: for one is just as arrogant in its claim as the other. Without a careful examination of both sides of a shield, we are not competent to give a correct opinion upon it." [46]

S: That's true except that religion and science are not different sides of a shield. If anything, they're just two different shields, or two different objects altogether. Anyway, let's go on.

"But the imagination is not the exclusive possession of religion,"

S: Well, thank him for that, anyway. You can have imagination and science; there's no scientific discovery been made without imagination, what to speak of music? What to speak of poetry? You know; what to speak of so many other things?

"nor is discrimination or ratiocination the monopoly of science."

S: In other words, his whole sort of pairing off of religion and science, you know, in that sort of way - religion catering for the heart; science for - it really breaks down.

"They are reciprocal and complimentary: one cannot do anything without the other. (for six sentences) But the human soul ... asks for the ultimate principle underlying all so-called scientific laws and hypotheses."

S: This, of course, is not the human soul, just in the sense of the heart as distinct from the head that has been satisfied by science: even when you get into science, you go in with the whole of your being; you're emotionally involved, surely, just as much as intellectually. And so in the same way when you go into religion, and you're concerned with the ultimate, it's with the whole of yourself, intellectually and emotionally, at one, and even beyond that. So not after intellect has been satisfied with science, your heart or your soul is dissatisfied and with all those soulful feelings, you then go into religion. It seems to suggest something like that, and this runs rather through all his thinking, even up to his Zen essays, when Zen is sort of identified with this soul or heart side, and the intellect plays rather the role of the villain. I think this is not quite right. But I don't think we need to go into it too much at present.

"Science is indifferent to the tele..."

S: Teleology. The ultimate purpose.

"teleology of things: a mechanical explanation of them appears its intellectual curiosity."

S: This is no longer true; if it was true then.

"But in religion teleology is of paramount importance, it is one of [47] the most fundamental problems, ... (to end of paragraph & section) ... for it fails to give consolation to the human heart."

S: I must say I don't like this split-off at all: that religion is something that gives consolation to the human heart as distinct from the intellect. Surely it is something in which the

whole being is involved and at its sort of highest possible stretch, hmm? So I'm not at all happy about this aspect of Suzuki's outlook.

Mangala: And is teleology of paramount importance in religion, you know, like ...

S: Well, no, not now, I would say, no.

Mangala: Like I was just thinking, I mean ...

S: I mean, for instance, in Zen: is teleology of any importance in Zen? None whatever.

Nagabodhi: The parable of the man with the arrow in ... (sounds of general agreement)

S: Yes. Right. Yes. Yes.

Mangala: And Buddhism is very much, in some sense, a scientific system as much as, you know, just a ...

S: ... appeal to the heart.

Mangala: thing to be.

S: And even this whole idea of teleology, I mean, is a very Western concept. You could question whether it did apply - the whole idea, the whole concept - to any sort of Western system or Eastern teaching. Hm? Because, you know, in Eastern teachings are cyclical, whereas, you know, in Western philosophy and Western religions, you know, you're leading up to the glorious final catastrophe, you know, and therefore history's oriented towards that, life is oriented towards that. That's what you mean by teleology. But when there's a cyclical movement, and then a transcendental which transcends all phases of the cycle, where is your teleology?

Devaraja: Yes, because the cyclical in a sense doesn't relate to the teleological. It's like it has to be a complete jump.

S: Yes.

Devaraja: So it can't be thought of in terms of final catastrophe. [48]

S: Right. Yes. Exactly.

Vajradaka: Would you say that jump was the jump from samsara to nirvana?

Devaraja: Well, I mean, I don't know ...

S: Yes. Sure. Yes. Right. Exactly. I mean, in the most classical possible Buddhist terms, yes. I mean, however long the wheel goes round and round it won't carry you to nirvana;

you've got to jump of it, hmm? Or, as the Shin people say, make the cross-wise leap. Or just say, stop, halt!

Anyway, let's carry on. The next section. We're getting near the end of the chapter.

"The Contents of Faith vary. The solution of religious problems ... (to end of paragraph 1) ... the essentials which underlie them."

"The abiding elements of religion come from within, and consist mainly in the mysterious sentiment that lies hidden in the deepest depths of the human heart, ..."

S: 'Heart' is very ambiguous, isn't it? If it means, you know, the deepest part of the human psyche, for want of a better term, where, in a way, intellect and imagination, or reason and feeling... Coolness? Well, fair enough. But if it's the heart against the head, well, that isn't good enough.

" ... and that, when awakened, shakes the whole structure of personality ... (to end of paragraph 2) ... by individual and aesthetic feelings."

S: Right. Carry on.

"True Christians and enlightened Buddhists may ... find their point of agreement in the recognition of the inmost religious sentiment that constitutes the basis of our being, though this agreement does by no means prevent them from retaining their individuality..."

S: I think it might rather be the opposite way round, you know, there's quite a bit in common when you come to ritual, and a fair amount when you come to dogma, but the closer you get to the individual experience the greater the difference. Though that doesn't mean that you may not be concerned about the same fundamental reality, ultimately. But the more individual, in a way, the more different. Do you get what I mean? (pause) Anyway, carry on.

"in the conceptions and expressions of faith."

S: Not just conceptions and expressions, you know, but retain their [49] individuality itself.

Vajradaka: Could you read a little bit slower.

"My conviction is: if the Buddha and the Christ changed ... (to end of paragraph) ... Gautama might have been a Christ ... and Jesus a Buddha,..."

S: I'm very doubtful about that, but then, one can't really know, and I don't think anyone has any business having any conviction about it. (laughter) It's one of the things one can speculate about, but one can hardly have any conviction.

Devamitra: I feel a lot of the time he's speaking to a Christian audience, and trying to, as it were, soften them up. You know?

S: Right. Yes. This could well be so, and it might well be the right thing to do at the time, because maybe for a Christian even to imagine the Buddha appearing instead of the Christ, preaching Buddhism, and Christ appearing as the Buddha and preaching Buddhism in India - even to imagine that - must have been quite liberating for an orthodox Christian, hmm? Even just to imagine that possibility, hmm? in those days. So, you know, very likely Suzuki was quite justified, from that point of view, in writing as he has done, but taking it sort of very literally it seems a bit almost absurd, one could say, but it might well be part of his softening-up process, and it is, after all, in the Introduction.

Devamitra: Can you say a little bit more about - you were saying about the individual experience being different - I feel personally that there's far too much of a sort of almost a false universalism ...

S: Well, put it in this way: when you get to know somebody more and more deeply, what happens? You get closer and closer, you're more aware of them as an individual, yes? But do you find that they are more like you, or you are more like them, the more you get to know them?

Devamitra: No.

S: No. If anything, you're more aware than ever that they are they and you are you - two absolutely irreducible individuals, or individualities - but the closer you get the more you seem to see that, and vice versa. Not that the closer you get, the more your individualities are cancelled out into something common to you both; no. You may have interest in common, you may be very much in harmony, or you may be, in a word, close. But your individuality becomes sharper than ever, [50] clearer than ever, you know, more distinct than ever, hmm?

Mamaki: One can express things in words, and one can only express it in terms which ...

S: Which are shared, huh?

Mamaki: Yes, in the ...

S: ... the common language.

Mamaki: So how can one possibly say whether they're alike or not?

S: Hmm. Yes.

Mamaki: There's no way of talking about anything without language.

S: Right. Hmm. This is what I feel when people compare one religion and another. Whether they say that they differ or whether they even say the same, really both statements are beside the point. And therefore a sort of slick universalism - for this Brahma means God, and God means Trikaya, and so on and so forth - it is so sort of - what shall I say? - so superficial and does so little justice to any of the traditions.

Devamitra: Just a waste of time.

S: So it is really, in a way, beside the point to say that all religions add up to the same thing, or that they don't - really. Or maybe it's perhaps a bit better to say that they are all fundamentally the same. It makes you rather more tolerant and sympathetic, but perhaps not any nearer to the truth. Maybe, in the West, we've had so much of religious bigotry and sectarianism, maybe it is quite good that there should be more sort of universalist feeling, even if it does mean, you know, maintaining that all religions are the same. Well, maybe that's not bad for the time being, it's a bit of an improvement, but we shouldn't even rest in that, even that isn't very adequate. In a sense, what does it matter? Hm?

Devamitra: You say that in a sense ...

S: You have to have intellectual agreement? Is that so important? Can't we be different? Hm?

Devamitra: You could almost say that it's really, kind of, if any, to seeing the difference that any real sympathy and being appreciating, as it were ...

S: For instance, in India, again and again with Hindus I heard, well, oh Buddhism, oh yes, sure, that's the same as Hinduism. It shows [51] absolute incomprehension and lack of interest, lack of concern for Buddhism, you know? Almost a sort of, you know, imperialistic attitude: just incorporating Buddhism into Hinduism.

Lokamitra: Without that last sentence there, it seems much more acceptable.

S: Hmm, yes. He's going very much too far there.

Lokamitra: But what do you think of 'the recognition of the lowest religious sentiment'?

S: Hmm. I'm not happy about that. I think if you got really close to a Christian - as you've apparently been trying to get with that archdeaconess - I think you could get close and have a genuine sort of exchange, but you might end up by recognizing that your viewpoint was quite different from hers, and you couldn't reduce them to any sort of common denominator. But you would have got close to her, you would have understood her, and there would have been in some strange way something in common that couldn't be expressed in terms of either of your doctrines. Yes? More like that. So it's got to go beyond that level and be maybe felt or experienced in this sort of way. But maybe it can't be ex-

pressed, and maybe it doesn't need to be. (pause) But you can have a sort of a profoundly satisfying exchange with someone with whom you profoundly disagree, yes?

I have a little saying. Ananda asked me for some of my sayings for a little booklet he's publishing. I don't know if I provided this one or not, but one saying I wrote down some time ago was that it was not enough (I haven't got it quite right, probably) it's not enough to sympathize with anyone to the point of agreement; you must be able to sympathize to the point of disagreement. Yes? So it's a bit like that. I'll think of a proper wording for it some time. But you can sympathize to the point of disagreement, because even if you disagree, after all you are two human beings talking to one another and communicating, even about your disagreement. (pause) Anyway, come on. In the next paragraph, Suzuki is guilty of some real howlers, but anyway, it's a very young Suzuki - only 39 or so - let's see.

"However great a man may be, he cannot be but an echo of the spirit of the times."

S: Oh dear. All right, carry on. (laughter) [52]

"He never stands, as is supposed by some, so aloof and towering above the masses as to be practically by himself. On the contrary, 'he', as Emerson says, 'he finds himself in the river of the thoughts and events, forced onward by the ideas and necessities of his contemporaries.' So it was with the Buddha, and so with the Christ."

S: His youthful confidence is, you know, really very encouraging! (laughs)

Mamaki: He was younger than that actually. His thought feels younger than that.

S: Hm. Yes. He's about 38 or 39. He was a late starter and his books on Zen he started publishing when he was about 56 or 57. He died at 94 or maybe a bit more.

Mamaki: (laughing) He took a long time to grow up.

S: (laughing) Well, that's good. Don't want to grow up too quickly, with all these precocious ten-year-olds around (unclear) rather terrified! (laughter from all)

"They were nothing but the concrete representatives of the ideas and feelings that were struggling in those times against the established institutions,"

S: Oh, dear! "Nothing but"!

Ratnapani: Sounds like Marxism.

S: "Nothing but"!? I mean, this is really going really astray; I mean, there are great men who, you could say, have got nothing of true individuality, are merely the mouthpieces of their age, and have the forces of history behind them, but they are not spiritual individuals. You could even say that Hitler was a bit like that, even Napoleon, but certainly not

anyone like the Buddha, and not anyone like Christ, you couldn't say that they were "nothing but the concrete representatives of the ideas and feelings that were struggling in those times" etc, etc. I think you have to distinguish very much the two kinds of great person or great individual in history: one who is merely the mouthpiece of ideas generally current and who derives all his force and energy from mass movements, as, for instance, I said Hitler did, or even Churchill, to a great extent; and others who are really individuals and who exert an influence on the mass, even changing its direction, reversing its direction, and certainly not being affected by mass movements, not in their inner being anyway. Spiritual individualities are of that kind. [53] There's some rather debased pseudo-Hegelianism here I'm afraid. Anyway, not just because Emerson... All right.

"which were degenerating fast and menaced the progress of humanity."

S. Hmm. We've got progress of humanity, too, you see. That's very suspect. (drowned by laughter) ... march of time.

"But at the same time those ideas and sentiments were the outburst of the Eternal Soul, which occasionally makes a solemn announcement of its will, through great historical figures or through great world events."

S: I mean, that seems to be an amalgam of debased Hegel, weak and watered down Emerson, and distant echoes of Carlyle (laughter) but anyway, you know, I think it's sufficiently obvious what is happening. I think Suzuki's being a bit carried away, getting a bit too immersed in his western medium, getting a bit away from his real Mahayana Buddhism; but so, he's a very young Suzuki, and probably being in New York - you know - (laughter) America, American University (I think he went to Chicago) has gone a bit to his head. [He was a visiting professor at several universities, but mainly at Columbia, tr.] Anyway, let's carry on. We are near the end of the chapter.

"Believing that a bit of religio-philosophical exposition as above indulged"

S: "indulged" is the word. (laughter)

"will prepare the minds of my Christian readers sincerely to take up the study of a religious system other than their own, I now proceed to a systematic elucidation of the Mahayana Buddhism, as it is believed at present in the Far East."

S: I like the way he omits his preposition. Certainly, yes, he's pulled out all his stops, you see: his quotation from Emerson, his bit of, you know, Hegelian terminology, and probably he's hoping he's really impressed the Christian reader. Now he's going to launch into his exposition of Mahayana Buddhism. Well, fair enough, and it was all necessary in those days. Reading through the Introduction myself, I can't help feeling he's got a bit lost in clouds of Western thought and terminology and the Mahayana Buddhism is perceived only dimly at times. Anyway, let's hope he emerges from the clouds in Chapter 1, which we'll be doing tomorrow, we do get just Mahayana Buddhism. [54]

Devamitra: I noticed a quite interesting thing: he really peppers everything with the definite article, and that's very Japanese, because I can remember Zengo doing that all the time, you know, everything. I don't know if that's maybe something to do with Japanese grammar or something?

S: Well, I don't think they have a definite or indefinite article and I think they are afraid of leaving it out and not using it, and they over-use it; I think this is what happens. In India, of course, they leave it out. They say, 'Man came to see me today', or 'Take dog for walk' or 'Give me cup of tea.' Anyway any general comment on the introduction? Queries?

Devamitra: I've just got one rather side point, actually, and that was about the Sukhavati schools in China. Which, in fact, were the schools? Was the T'ien-T'ai anything to do with ... (unclear)

S: Well, yes and no. There is quite a big difference between Chinese and Japanese Buddhism, in the sense that in China you didn't have such a specialized development of schools, mutually exclusive, as you have subsequently in Japan. You certainly have traditions and lines of teachers and monasteries where special things were studied, and all that sort of thing, but you didn't have the rather tight organization into schools, much less to say sects. The T'ien-T'ai school was a great sort of umbrella-like school, which sheltered almost everything, every kind of study and practice, but they had their own particular synthesis, and quite a bit of Zen went on under their umbrella, and also the various Pure Land devotees gathered under their umbrella, and the Pure Land school - to the extent that it was a school - in China was often called the White Lotus school. And there were many groups of devotees studying the three sutras - that is to say the Large and Smaller Pure Land or Happy Land Scriptures, and the Scripture of the Meditation of the Buddha of Infinite Light - and practising accordingly. There wasn't a sort of organized school or sect, and often they were sort of connected with the T'ien-T'ai movement, occupying one of their monasteries, and very often, of course, they were lay people just meeting at the nearest temple or monastery and didn't mind whether it was a Zen temple or a T'ien-T'ai temple or what not. They just met there and discussed, studied the sutras, and recited the name of Amitabha and so on. Or sometimes they did it in their own homes. It was as though it was a definite method but it wasn't associated with a particular sect. [55] In Japan, of course, Buddhism became organized quite strongly into sects, and sometimes even the sects were subdivided, and there, of course, you do have a Pure Land school or the Pure Land sect, with various subdivisions; but basically the Pure Land School or Pure Land tradition relies on those three sutras. So in China you've got devotees specializing in these sutras and their practices. And also you've got people who belong, say, to the T'ien-T'ai group, even the Zen school, also studying them. So you've got quite a lot of overlapping, not any exclusive or mutually exclusive schools. But that sectarian development did take place in Japan. (long pause) Anyway, Suzuki's very interesting. He's always alive, you notice, a very lively writer, very much with what he is saying, even though perhaps he ought sometimes to have thought a little more carefully before actually writing, but I think he's quite good on the whole.

Vajradaka: He must have been pretty much on his own.

S: Indeed, yes.

Vajradaka: Did he have his own teacher?

S: Well, back in Japan, but I don't think he had much contact with actual practical Buddhism. I don't think he practised much, if at all. Later on in life he was made an honorary abbot, but I don't think that means very much.

Devamitra: So he was more of an academic than a ...

S: He was more of an academic, certainly, yes; with, you know, a very definite understanding and sympathy and insight, but he certainly wasn't a roshi or anything like that.

Devaraja: I can't remember in which it is of his books that he talks about satori experience - he just mentioned it in passing - do you know?

S: No, I don't know.

Devaraja: He said something about ... er, what was it? ... something like he looked at himself when he wasn't there, and he looked at the trees and they appeared to be there. Something like that.

S: Well, of course, you can have a satori experience connected with study of the sutras; it doesn't necessarily arise simply in connection with meditation. Though he might have done some meditation too. He very likely did, but he certainly didn't do very much of it.

Devaraja: This little thing occurred when he came away from his teacher. Just [56] after having an interview with him.

Devamitra: I think I heard somebody say once, in fact, his own particular leanings were towards the Shin tradition, though he wrote a lot on Zen. Is that so?

S: Not quite. He did write in fact, somewhere, that he thought there were probably more Enlightened people within the Shin tradition, in Japan, than within the Zen tradition. He did say that; in fact he wrote it. But his own broad sympathies seem to have been with the Zen tradition in a broad context. He certainly has great respect for Shin. Perhaps he didn't find it all that complicated, not in earlier life, he was very clearly preoccupied with the more philosophical approach and studied Western philosophy, too.

You'll also find, later on, there are little pieces of socialism lying undigested in the midst of the tracks of Mahayana. And, as Conze points out in one of his writings, referring to Suzuki, they never appear again, they only appear in this book. None of his other volumes has any reference to socialism at all, but it pops up every now and again in this volume. We'll deal with that when it comes round. Probably reach it on - oh, not on elec-

tion day, I think we'll be finished by then. We are running up to the general election so perhaps it will be quite appropriate to have a little socialism in the midst of the Mahayana, too.

Vajradaka: Do you think that all this bringing in Hegel and Kant and socialism is just another aspect of the bodhisattva's mastering all dharmas?

S: Well it could be, certainly, indeed, but of course there are so many dharmas to be mastered that if you really think now and again, you can't, you know, master the whole lot. Even, I think, the most brilliant bodhisattva couldn't. So you have to, say, master, really, modern science, so that you could speak to the scientifically-minded, and also comparative religion, and western philosophy - ancient, medieval, and modern - and then all about the arts and sciences so that you could speak to the artistically-minded, and maybe be able to paint and to play instruments - well, one just can't do it all. Huh? Hm? So I certainly think that within an order you can embrace all the approaches; it's as though the Order has to be the collective bodhisattva, not that I like the word 'collective', but the Order has got to add up to at least one bodhisattva, you know, in terms of all these different skilful means. Within the Order there has got [57] to be someone who knows western philosophy, someone who has studied comparative religion, someone who is well up on science, and so on and so forth, so that we pool all our intellectual and cultural recourses. But for everybody to try to master everything is hopeless. You certainly wouldn't have time for your meditation then; wouldn't even have time for Order meetings or Council meetings; you'd be going to evening classes all the time! (pause) But there should be, I think, a good array of talent within the Order; it is really essential. You know, the Rotary Club principle, as far as I understand it. (laughter) On a more sublimated level, of course. What is their principle? Does anyone know?

Nagabodhi: The Rotary Club? They have one businessman for every trade in the town; well, not everyone (unclear) ... the more prestigious.

S: Hmm. One architect, one doctor, and a vicar, they don't usually have butchers or bakers or ...

Nagabodhi: I know a baker in the Rotary Club. (laughter) And the vicar. ... (unclear) profession.

S: Well, you know what I mean. A sort of round table of talents, as it were. So suppose we get an invitation from some, say, art college: they want a lecturer on Buddhism, preferably send along someone who knows a bit about art, at least about the history of art; it's helpful, it's part of a language. I mean, not that another Order member who didn't know about art couldn't succeed - he might well succeed - but, you know, of course, if you have a choice, send along the sort of person who can speak that sort of language if necessary.

End of day 1 and Introduction [58]

"Chapter 1

"A General Characterization of Buddhism

"No God and no soul

"Buddhism is considered by some to be a religion without a God and without a soul. The statement is true and untrue according to what meaning we give to those terms."

"Buddhism does not recognize the existence of a being, who stands aloof from his 'creations,' and who meddles occasionally with human affairs when his capricious will pleases him. This conception of a supreme being is very offensive to Buddhists. They are unable to perceive any truth in the hypotheses, that a being like ourselves created the universe out of nothing and first peopled it with a pair of sentient beings that, owing to a crime committed by them, which, however, could have been avoided if the creator so desired, they were condemned by him to eternal damnation ; that the creator in the meantime feeling pity for the cursed, or suffering the bite of remorse for his somewhat rash deed, dispatched his only beloved son to the earth for the purpose of rescuing mankind from universal misery, etc., etc. If Buddhism is called atheism on account of its refusal to take poetry for actual fact, its followers would have no objection to the designation."

S: Usually I prefer the term 'non-theistic' rather than 'atheistic' because 'atheistic' has a definitely sort of anti-religious connotation, not anti-theistic connotation, so I usually prefer to say that Buddhism is non-theistic rather than that it is atheistic. Suzuki says in one of his later works, speaking of attempts to interpret Buddhism in terms of, well, in a sense, pantheism, or to say that it is not theism, or that it is atheism; he says that it would be truer to say that Buddhism places itself in a position where none of these terms has any meaning, because even when you are saying that Buddhism is non-theistic, you're defining it or describing it in terms of something other than itself, which may not be very helpful. But we could certainly say, in a little introductory way, you know, explaining Buddhism to people in the West and trying to communicate something of it, that it is non-theistic. If you say atheistic, well it suggests Marxism and militant atheism, a militantly anti-religious attitude, anti-spiritual attitude, or even materialistic attitude. So if I talk about it at all, I prefer to use the term 'non-theistic'. There is a book by Helmuth von Glasenapp, isn't there? 'Buddhism: A Non-Theistic Religion'.

Sudatta: Could one talk of Buddhism as being pantheistic, in that everything one does perceive or not perceive is the ineffable totality, or however you like to call it?

S: If you use pantheism in that sense, yes, you could; but you'd have to make it very clear, first of all, that 'theos' in your pantheos or pantheism was the Buddhistic conception of sunyata. You'd have to put that across first. And if you had succeeded in putting that across, well, probably you wouldn't need a western term any more. [59] Anyway, you'd be putting across the sarvadharmasunyata. But one could define pantheism in that sunyavadin sort of way, but one could use that term, but still there is that 'theos' in

it, etymologically and historically, that could still cause confusion. (pause) And also that would be true of the Mahayana but it wouldn't be true of, say, Theravada; you couldn't say that the Theravada was pantheistic in that sense. You could say, perhaps, that the Mahayana was pantheistic in that sense, but you couldn't say Buddhism was pantheistic, because it would exclude the Theravada, which doesn't accept the sarvadharma-sunyata of the Mahayana.

Mamaki: It has connotations, too, of sort of primitive religion and believing in lots of different gods and spirits in a way which would completely put off anyone who was looking for something that was perhaps more accessible in society.

S: Because, usually, in not very strict sort of philosophical parlance, pantheistic means, as it were, the whole universe being pervaded by one and the same spirit; not spirit in just a primitive sense, an animistic sense, but spirit in a much more spiritual sense; or that everything is god, as it were, as in Spinoza's philosophy. But what sense people attach to the term pantheism nowadays I just don't know; it isn't much in current use, is it?

Mamaki: Well, kind of primitive, you know, tribal.

S: Hm. Yes. Ah. Yes.

Vajradaka: Doesn't it mean having lots of gods?

S: No, it doesn't; that's polytheistic. Pantheistic is saying - well, there are two ways of looking at it - one: that everything is god; that everything you see, everything you perceive, is a transformation, in one way or another, of one single absolute principle. Hm? This is one interpretation. The other: that God is everything - which is slightly different. So you can have a materialistic pantheism, as it were - a materialistic monism, perhaps, would be a better term: that everything is the transformation of one absolute principle which is material, or that everything is the transformation of one absolute principle which is spiritual. But the fundamental idea behind pantheism in all these various forms is there is one basic substance, as it were, which assumes different forms, and that everything that you can perceive in the universe is basically that. This is, in fact, the Upanishadic doctrine, putting it in this sort of way, which wouldn't be acceptable to Mahayana Buddhism. [60]

Vajradaka: Not even in the sense of the dharmakaya?

S: You know, the dharmakaya is not a substance. You could say that pantheism is a form of substantialism: that there is one being, one principle, which actually exists, and undergoes various transformations. But sunyata is neither existent nor non-existent, and Guenther has gone into this frequently: that Buddhism is not a substantialism, and that sunyata is not to be interpreted as a metaphysical substance. So in that way, Buddhism could not be pantheistic, hmm? because sunyata is not that sort of substance-principle, as it were, hmm? But if you just wanted to use the term very loosely, well, probably you

could, just to give a very general idea. But sunyata is not one transcendental 'thing' which manifests as all the dharmas: that is not the Mahayana Buddhist point of view. This is Spinoza's point of view. For instance, there is one absolute substance, which he says is God, and this substance has infinite attributes, and two of these attributes are space and time. We know everything under the form of space and time, but there are infinite other attributes we do not know at all, of this one infinite substance which he calls God. But that is substantialism. But sunyata is not a substance, so you can't take this sort of analogy - one thing becoming many - very literally: that is more the Upanishadic teaching.

Sudatta: Can one in fact say that sunyata is or is not?

S: No. No. No.

Sudatta: Can you strictly say it is non-substance?

S: No. I mean, as we saw yesterday, I think there was a quotation, that sunyata is to be defined neither as existent nor as non-existent.

Sudatta: But is sunyata the infinite?

S: Well, yes and no. It is neither finite nor infinite.

Sudatta: If it is the infinite, you can't define it.

S: So you can't even define it as substance.

Sudatta: You're completely at the end of language ...

S: Right. Yes. But I think that the Buddhist language is much subtler and therefore it continues longer and your silence comes a bit later than in the case of perhaps relatively naive substantialism or pantheism.

Devamitra: Though there is, perhaps, it would be possible to say, sunyata has a kind of quite a substantial, that it's not a totally passive, inactive thing: that it has a creative function, it has a creative aspect.

S: You can say that: but even there one has to be very cautious, because [61] even sunyata is not a substance and not a thing, even a spiritual or metaphysical or transcendental thing, then language almost compels us to speak about it as though it was, hmm? In other words speaking about sunyata at all, we have to do continual violence to language. And when we stop doing violence to language, then we're no longer speaking about sunyata - when we start taking what we say about sunyata literally. But the basic point, made by the Madhyamika people and Mahayana tradition generally, is that sunyata is not to be thought of in terms of existence or non-existence. And you're left with that: that's as far as you can go, intellectually, perhaps, and you're just left with that sort

of statement. You have to transcend it, as it were, intuitively, you know, with your wisdom, and just see, as it were, what sunyata is. Though you can't even say 'is'; it's as much 'not' as it is 'is', hmm? But don't think of sunyata as something that is, and also not fall into the opposite trap of thinking of it as something that is not. But all forms of pantheism and substantialism assume that in fact it is an existent something or other, but this is exactly what the Mahayana denies. Hm?

Nagabodhi: This is one of the places where it's so easy to bring our prejudices and pre-conditioning.

S: And also it is very easy to allow the intellect to become sort of merrily active: sunyata is this that and the other, and it isn't this and it isn't that, and really to play around with it, you know, in the way that some pseudo-Zen people do, and not to be really basically serious about it. But perhaps we can say that the sunyata teaching is just an attempt, in a rather sophisticated intellectual way, to bring us up against the absolute limitations of our, well, intellect, to use the word in its modern debased sense, when it is confronted by what we can only call reality; and to make us feel and experience some other faculty has come in to operation within us to be able to recognize and see above and beyond those limitations, for the ordinary mind just cannot do it. So the doctrine of sunyata is in a sense not intended to make it clear from an intellectual point of view what sunyata is, so that you've got it all neatly tied up and think we know it; it's meant to baffle the intellect, to cut it off, to cut off every avenue of escape, as it were, so that the intellect is really brought up against an absolute wall and, as it were, sort of collapses, and realizes, well, 'I can't make any impression'. That's why it's said in the Zen tradition the Absolute, or whatever, is just like a great ball of steel, and the [62] intellect trying to sort of penetrate and pierce it is like a gnat, just trying to sting this great ball of steel as big as a house, and of course the gnat with its little proboscis can't make any impression on this ball of steel at all. And that is us, you know, with our mind, trying to understand the Absolute, sunyata, dharmakaya, you know, call it what you will. So we can say that the main purpose of these teachings about sunyata and so on is to force us to realize the limitations of the mind, the rational mind.

Devamitra: Yes. In other words, really, the teaching of sunyata could be said to be a means rather than a statement about a sort of metaphysical statement that could be almost said to be really a means.

S: There are no metaphysical statements in Buddhism, according to Guenther. So if with your ordinary mind you think, 'Ah, yes. Now I understand what sunyata means. That's very clear. Yes. Now I've understood.' You haven't! You've understood something, you've understood those words or that particular meaning, but they've got nothing to do with sunyata. Hm?

Nagabodhi: But in order to realize the value, in a sense, we have to try.

S: Oh yes indeed. Yes. And not only to realize the value of the means but to realize the value of the means in the sense of realizing the importance of the mind. But that means

we've got to fully stretch to mind, and I think, in the case of Buddhist philosophy, for want of a better word, they stretched the mind rather more than it's been stretched in the West and therefore transcended the mind more effectively and clearly as it were.

Devamitra: Could you say, then, that all these doctrines are just sort of elaborate koans? Could you draw that parallel?

S: You could say that, but, well, I think one has to be careful about saying it, as it were, prematurely. Hm? Otherwise, if you think that it's just a koan, you might not even try and understand; like if someone, say, tells you the koan about the goose and the bottle, well, when you know it's a koan, you're not going to try and puzzle it out, you know it can't be, so you just don't do anything about it, so it doesn't work for you. So if you think, 'Oh, it's all only a koan,' you're not going to bother to try to understand it. You only realize it is a koan when you try with all your might to understand it when you can't - then it sort of dawns on you that it's a koan, and you get a glimpse of something beyond, but if you sort of understand it intellectually beforehand, then you end up rendering the [63] whole thing inoperative.

Devamitra: But surely the people who work with koans understand that they are working with a koan.

S: Well I should hope not, otherwise they wouldn't get anywhere. In a vague sort of way, perhaps, but not really.

Devamitra: So, well then, for instance, what is the point, I mean I know that people in the Rinzai group at the Buddhist Society, for instance, one or two of them there have been given koans, you know, I mean, they quite clearly understand what the koan is; it's the koan that they're working with. I mean, from what you've just said, it seems that that's silly.

S: Well of course it is, huh, but that might be the koan, and it's that that they've got to wake up to! Huh? (laughter) They're working on a koan, but they think it's the koan of the goose and the bottle, but the koan is of them working on the koan of the goose and the bottle! (laughter) I mean if the person who gave them the koan is really, you know, smart, he knows all this. Hm? (pause) But we do find that koans do arise in sort of life situations in an existential sort of way, and those are the real koans, and not the ones that you know you read about in books on Zen. Right. Let's carry on.

"Next, if we understand by soul atman, which, secretly hiding itself behind all mental activities, directs them after the fashion of an organist striking different notes as he pleases, Buddhists outspokenly deny the existence of such a fabulous being. To postulate an independent atman outside a combination of the five Skandhas, of which an individual being is supposed by Buddhists to consist, is to unreservedly welcome egoism with all its pernicious corollaries. And what distinguishes Buddhism most characteristically and emphatically from all other religions is the doctrine of non-atman or non-ego,

exactly opposite to the postulate of a soul-substance which is cherished by most religious enthusiasts. In this sense, Buddhism is undoubtedly a religion without a soul."

S: Do we actually find, nowadays, that religionists cherish the idea of a soul substance?

Ratnapani: (unclear) trying to hide it; get it out of the way.

S: It seems to me that - I mean, though this is the Buddhist tradition and though this is, you know, Buddhist doctrine, and though it is, again, perfectly true - the way in which it is put doesn't seem sort of very relevant, very valid. For instance, Subhuti was asked at the Buddhist Society Summer School to speak on anatman, and he seems to have felt it all rather unreal - an unreal exercise, as it were. The question doesn't arise, that, for instance, if you're practising meditation, studying Buddhism in a general sort of way, and trying to develop spiritually, you aren't suddenly seized by doubts about atman; you get these questions only from books about Buddhism. It doesn't seem to be anything really related to your own actual spiritual life and development and growth. So [64] what is this? What sort of relevance does it have? What do we mean, really, in terms of our own experience, by this anatman teaching or doctrine?

Mamaki: Perhaps the reason why he's brought it up ... it comes up with Christians who are worried because Buddhism says there is no soul?

S: Yes, well, this is where he starts from: that Buddhism is considered by some to be a religion without a god and without a soul, because when the orthodox Christian first encounters, or at least contacts, Buddhism - this wouldn't perhaps be true any longer - the first thing he notices is there is no god. This sort of familiar object is missing. And then, perhaps, he notices there is no talk of saving the soul, huh?

Mamaki: That's happened to me. A lot of people have been worried about this aspect. I mean, Christians who ask me about Buddhism feel that there is something desperately lacking in Buddhism: that there is no soul.

S: Hmm. But how do they conceive, then, this soul?

Mamaki: Well, a something that is an inner part of oneself. That by leading a spiritual life you are, so to speak, developing this soul, and that this will go on living after you have died. So that for Buddhists to deny this, I think they feel, then, what incentive is there to follow a moral life? What incentive is there? I think they are afraid that there are no controls, no ...

S: So in the light of that, what do you think Buddhists are denying when they deny the soul?

Mamaki: Well, I've taken it to be that they are denying that there is an essential part of themselves, oneself, that isn't individual, and, so to speak, comes into the person when they're born - or conceived, perhaps; I'm not quite sure where the soul begins - and that

this goes on in the essential spiritual essence of the person, that when a person dies, this goes on having an individual life. As far as I can see, Buddhists feel that there isn't that kind of individual thing, but what one thinks of as 'ego' is a twisting together, or a kind of complex of feeling, craving, desire, energy - that sort of thing - which attaches itself to the idea of a body, and then begins to feel that it has an existence, and cannot conceive of its own dissolution. [65]

S: Hm. Do you think classical anatta doctrine is a very happy way of putting this, at least in a Western context?

Mamaki: No.

S: No, it seems like that, actually. Because I think that the key is to be found in these words of Suzuki's. He says "To postulate an independent atman, etc etc, is to unreservedly welcome egoism with all its pernicious corollaries." This is what Buddhism is really getting at. Hm? That the atman that is being denied is your present being, your present mode of existence and experience, as an individual, conceived as something ultimate, which will never be transcended, beyond which there is no sort of wider or higher possibility: that that is you, and that, as it were, you were never going to transcend that; I mean, you as you exist now are sort of forever and change is just sort of peripheral, with this present existence you remaining at the centre, as it were in control, all the time. It's this that Buddhism denies, and the anatta doctrine in fact says that beyond you, beyond the individual as he at present experiences himself, there are other dimensions of being and consciousness to which we can be open, into which we cannot expand, which we can even feel, in a sense, as us, in a way that our present individuality, sense of individuality, can't even conceive.

So the anatta doctrine is sort of trying to get us to see that our present individuality is not ultimate. It's not denying anything sort of deeper. In fact, in a way, it's affirming something deeper, but which we do not as yet experience, because we shut ourselves off from it by saying, 'No, this is me. Not that.' So the anatta doctrine, badly and literally stated, doesn't in fact convey much of this sort of meaning to a Western mind, so it almost seems as though the anatta in its classical Indian presentation isn't very useful or helpful, and almost confuses the issue. It's much better to speak in terms of growth, hmm? And I mean if a Christian enquirer says, 'Well, we believe in something that grows,' say, 'Yes, so do we.' I mean we can sort of cut out the metaphysics of the 'thing', whether there is a thing that grows or not, afterwards, but certainly we can say for the time being that, yes, we also accept growth and development, of course there is something that grows, and we believe that this process of growth and development can continue even after death, even in other bodies, or in higher realms; we believe that this is at least reasonable, even if it cannot be completely certain, but that is our principle, of an infinite expansion of consciousness and being [66] which is possible. But to think of 'me' as I am now being the 'real me', and that is never going to change, well, this is a delusion, we would say, and the anatta doctrine is aimed against this delusion.

Mamaki: I was talking to a group of Quakers, it was at a weekend thing, about this thing about how that ego ... and a lot of people talked to me afterwards and said that they had come to the point of feeling that they needed to get through something, but they were so frightened, that left ... you know, they had come to the feeling that they had got to let go of something, but they were so frightened because what seemed beyond that seemed frightening, and perhaps this is partly because of the feeling of the soul being permanent; they felt perhaps that they were going to lose their soul rather than ...

S: Well, you know, like the monk who was quite bewildered by something the Buddha said about the atman or there not being an atman: he said, 'before I had a self, but I don't have it any more now.' (laughter)

Lokamitra: So perhaps the emphasis, then, on anatta would be because of the brahminical position, really, and so it's not really completely relevant to us here in the West.

S: No. I think the Buddha was denying the Brahminical atma doctrine because that could so easily be understood just in terms of the ego. And, for instance, you get expressions like, well, the self, the atman, is undying, is immortal, unchanging. Well, that's all right if it's some sort of transcendental principle, but it is so applied to just one's own self, because you are that, atman, and then you can take it as your sort of ordinary empirical self, and not make any sort of effort, but I mean this is unlikely now, so in that particular classical Indian form the anatta doctrine seems almost obsolete, or irrelevant, or beside the point, hmm? I think it's much better to speak in terms of growth and development of consciousness, and mention, when it seems appropriate, that that may mean, or will mean, transcending our present individualities, as we now experience them, altogether. They just become something which is much larger, hmm? And I think there are two analogies that are very helpful: one is the analogy [67] of dreams: that when you dream, there is a certain consciousness of you, but it's not the ordinary you, it's you in a very odd sort of dimension, not your ordinary everyday recognized sort of self, but it is you, another side of you, you could say, which is suspected in the waking state. And then again, there are drug experiences. For some people, these can indicate the existence of some dimension of consciousness and of oneself outside the ordinary waking empirical consciousness, and you can say, 'Well when you're on a drug trip, that is also you.' But it's not the ordinary consciousness then? So there is another dimension, another facet, something beyond. These are only analogies and I'm not saying that the dream experience is like the Buddhist expansion of consciousness, nor the drug experience either, but they are analogous, and sometimes people can understand things with the help of that: that our present experience, our present consciousness, our present sense of personal identity, is not ultimate; it can be transcended, and must be transcended, in the spiritual life. Hm? So it's this that we're trying to get across, and which the anatta doctrine is trying to get across. But so far as Western people are concerned, not very successfully.

Devaraja: I was just thinking that what Mamaki was saying about people being frightened, it occurred to me that perhaps that's why so much emphasis is placed on taking refuge in the Triple Gem, as a kind of a vehicle to carry one sort of through that.

S: Well this is why I've said - I don't know if everybody has heard - that the six element practice, where you reflect that there is the earth element in me, that doesn't belong to me, it comes from the earth element in the universe, I give it up, I give it back - this should not be introduced to beginners, it should be done, strictly, only within the Order, that is to say, with people who have gone for refuge, because unless you have that sort of spiritual support and spiritual conviction, you can interpret or even experience this particular six element practice as just sort of psychologically disintegrating, and it then can have a rather negative sort of effect; not just sort of unpleasant, but not very helpful in your spiritual development. (pause)

But of course the term 'soul' has got not just a theological meaning, even a debased theological meaning, but a sort of poetic connection. When you speak of someone's being soulful, or [68] you speak of the soul of things, the heart of things, sometimes it does represent that whole sort of deeper, more emotional side of one's existence. And to seem to deny that would put Buddhism in a very false light indeed. Hm?

Lokamitra: The Buddha talks in some of the Pali texts of the higher self, doesn't he, quite often?

S: What do you mean by the higher self?

Lokamitra: Well, he, there is ...

S: Give me the Pali term.

Lokamitra: ... translated as higher self.

S: Well, higher self can be used to translate maha atta or atman, or paramatman. Paramatman only comes in Hindu texts. As far as I know, paramatman doesn't come in any Buddhist text. Maha atta, I think that is great self, comes twice in the Pali canon.

Lokamitra: True self, I think.

S: There's no such expression as true self anywhere in the Pali canon, nor, I think, anywhere in the Mahayana scriptures. These expressions are avoided quite deliberately.

Vajradaka: That's very interesting, because there is a kind of a popular trend of saying 'the real self', which is ...

S: Well you get this in the Zen literature, translating certain Chinese or Japanese terms, but the expression 'true self' just doesn't come in Buddhist literature.

Lokamitra: There's one story where a group of three men and three women go and see the Buddha, and one is with a concubine and she runs off and they come across the

Buddha sitting beneath a tree and he says something: 'Why do you run after her when you could be running after the true self?'

S: Ah, no, he simply says yourself, sa atta. 'Why run after somebody else, you should be in search of yourself.' There's no metaphysical implication here.

Vajradaka: But he does use the word 'maha'?

S: Not in this passage.

Vajradaka: No, but in ...

S: In the Pali canon there are two passages where the term 'maha' occurs. [69] According to scholars, only one, but I found a second, (laughter) so we'll say two.

Devamitra: Is it likely that they could be interpolations?

S: I don't think it is necessary to go as far as that, because the Buddha's language in the archaic period - you know, when he was actually himself teaching - was very free and fluid, and he might well have - he did - use Hindu expressions, because, you know, they were around. He used them, perhaps, with a slight flavour of his own, or sometimes with a very different flavour, but he certainly made use of many of these sorts of expressions, so we have to take the general trend of the teaching and not just pick out terms and take them very literally, same as that in any case occur only once or twice or thrice. But the expression 'true self' does not occur in Buddhist literature, not Indian Buddhist literature, and that is, perhaps, rather significant. You get the expression 'pudgala' and you get the whole school of pudgalavadins, the personalists, the person, but that is a rather a different development, rather technical, perhaps. That is true individuality, you could say: the pudgala. But many Buddhists were not happy with that expression; they thought even that could be misunderstood. (pause) In a way, one of the great difficulties which confronted the Indian Buddhists, that confronts all people trying to develop, is to give some idea, at least to the rational mind, about some higher level of consciousness which can actually be experienced by you in the future, which can, in a way, become you, which even is you, without it being possible for the ego to appropriate that and use it as a designation of itself. This is the great difficulty. Suppose you say, 'well, you are God' - you know, some Vedanta's say that: 'You are God.' So what does that mean? It doesn't mean that if you break down your present individuality you will emerge into a dimension which is God but which is nevertheless you. That would be a quite valid way of expressing it. But that 'Yes, I, you know, am, in some respects, God.' It is the ego which cannot but appropriate that attribute. So what is really the substance, from this point of view, in this sort of context, becomes simply an attribute, yes? Of the self, yes? Of the ego. And then there's a sort of mild inflation. And in India you can find this with some Hindu followers, and even teachers. They're just mildly inflated by, you know, this sort of conception. They haven't broken through into a higher dimension which you could refer to as the [70] higher self; they're just mildly inflated. Maybe

they've got, you know, a bit of energy and enthusiasm too, and this is what happens! One can meet many such.

Many of the sort of minor teachers are of this kind, just as you can meet Christians who believe they are guided by the Holy Ghost, but they are just naturally exuberant, and you know, not very self critical, and they think it's the Holy Ghost, the spirit of God. And you, as a Mahayana Buddhist, might be just all energetic and a bit pushy and you might think it's the bodhicitta, but no, it's just you. But at least Buddhism safeguards against these misunderstandings very carefully. But it would be a pity if we use expressions like 'no soul' and that just gives people the impression that there is no sort of greater depth, no sort of dimension beyond. I certainly don't think we should use the expression 'no soul'. I think that the best translation - or best interpretation - is that the empirical self is not ultimate. This is what anatta really means: the non-ultimacy of the empirical self. In other words, that is fully in harmony with your Christian friends' understanding that there must be growth and development - sure, we agree with that - but perhaps for us, growth and development mean something more radical than it means for them. I mean, even if you take purely Christian terms, you know, take the terms generally, it is pretty radical, because Christianity speaks in terms, you know, of a new birth; some of the mystics speak in terms of dying to oneself, and so on and so forth, dying to the flesh, dying to the world, dying to one's own self. This is very drastic language, and this certainly isn't a sort of soul theory in the theological sense.

Mamaki: What one of the people was concerned about was that she had met a number of people that she said had some kind of experience of loss of ego, but what had happened to them was that they had got into a state which she called a kind of sentimental simmer, you know.

S: Ah, hmm. I know what you mean.

Mamaki: You know, a lovely sort of friendly attitude towards everybody which didn't really take into account the other person. It was like something put over.

S: Ah, yes! 'I'm going to be nice to you whether you like it or not!'

Mamaki: Yes. Yes. Yes.

S: Ah, hmm. Yes. [71]

Mamaki: She was afraid that this kind of breakthrough, unless you knew what you were going to break through to, you might sort of break through into that.

S: Well, that sort of thing is just complacency. Well, anyway you have a bit of it in Buddhism if you're not careful. 'Oh, isn't it beautiful' sort of thing, 'Everything's lovely'. Well, everything is lovely, but not quite in that sort of sloppy way! (laughter) Anyway, let's carry on; we've lingered long enough over that. In this sense, Buddhism is undoubtedly a religion of without a soul. (laughs)

"To make these points clearer in a general way, let us briefly treat in this chapter of such principal tenets of Buddhism as Karma, Atman, Avidya, Nirvana, Dharmakaya, etc. Some of these doctrines being the common property of the two schools of Buddhism, Hinayanism and Mahayanism, their brief, comprehensive exposition here will furnish our readers with a general notion about the constitution of Buddhism, and will also prepare them to pursue a further specific exposition of the Mahayana doctrine which follow."

"Karma. One of the most fundamental doctrines established by Buddha is that nothing in this world comes from a single cause, that the existence of a universe is the result of a combination of several causes (hetu) and conditions (tratyaya), and is at the same time an active force contributing to the production of an effect in the future. As far as phenomenal existences are concerned, this law of cause and effect holds universally valid. Nothing, even God, can interfere with the course of things thus regulated, materially as well as morally. If a God really exists and has some concern about our worldly affairs, he must first conform himself to the law of causation. Because the principle of karma, which is the Buddhist term for causation morally conceived, holds supreme everywhere and all the time."

S: One must be a little careful here not to think of karma itself as causation, or causation as karma. I usually speak in terms of conditionality - that is the basic principle - and karma, in the ethical sense, is one form of conditionality. So the principle is conditionality, or, in Suzuki's terminology, causation. Karma is only one form of conditionality or causation. So it is not the law of karma that holds supreme everywhere and all the time. It's conditionality. And karma is simply one form of that, or one aspect of that. It's quite important to understand that distinction. Sometimes, in very popular accounts of Buddhism, you get the statement, 'According to Buddhism everything is due to karma.' Well, that isn't true. Everything arises in dependence on causes and conditions, yes, but karma is only one particular kind of cause or condition, so you can't say in that sense that everything is due to karma. Even some quite informed Buddhists sometimes speak as though karma was responsible for everything, but this is very misleading indeed. Right. Let's go on.

"The conception of karma plays the most important role in Buddhist ethics. Karma is the formative principle of the universe."

S: Suzuki, I think, is getting a bit vague here. It would be best to [72] say 'conditionality' and include karma in that.

"It determines the course of events and the destiny of our existence."

S: Even the use of the word 'destiny' is suspect. It is obviously used in a very loose, general sense, but in a discussion of Buddhism I think that perhaps we shouldn't introduce it at all.

"The reason why we cannot change our present state of things as we may will, is that it has already been determined by the karma that was performed in our previous lives, not only individually but collectively."

S: The idea of collective karma we also have to be a little cautious about: it doesn't appear in the Pali canon, at least. It does to a slight extent in the Mahayana, but in modern times, collective karma, even national karma, is an idea that has been popularized by the Theosophists and its probably quite a legitimate development, I'm not saying that it isn't, but we certainly don't find it very much in Buddhism, and certainly not in the Pali literature. There is no term for collective karma at all. I think that there is such a thing as collective karma, but in early Buddhism, at least, the emphasis is - the attention is directed to - karma conceived as the karma of the individual.

"But, for this same reason, we shall be able to work out destiny in the future, which is nothing but the resultant of several factors that are working and that are being worked by ourselves in this life."

S: I rather disagree with that 'nothing but'. I mean, what happens to us in the future is not entirely determined by simply, you know, what we are doing here and now; there's also the rest of the universe to consider, of which we are part and parcel.

Vajradaka: It also has a conditioning factor as well.

S: Yes. Yes. It has an effect on us, certainly. I mean, in a sense, irrespective of our karma, hmm? In other words, that karma, in that sort of personal sense, is not the only determining factor.

Devaraja: He's using it more broadly than he's established first. He says its causation morally conceived, but he's using it in a much more broad [73] sense, because, in a broader sense, you could say that it was karma: everything was the result of our karma, as if it's like a statement on the position that we're in, which is related to everything.

S: I find this whole paragraph, the one that's just been read, not properly thought out. He should have thought and written much more carefully. He hasn't stopped to consider. (pause) All right. Let's go on to the quotes.

"Therefore, says Buddha:
'By self alone is evil done,
By self is one disgraced;
By self is evil left undone,
By self alone is he purified
Purity and impurity belong to self-
No one can purify another.'"

S: Of course, this quotation does not, in fact, exactly illustrate what Suzuki has just been saying, huh? This verse does not, in fact, say that everything is due to karma, hmm? All right, what's the next quote? From the Dhammapada, of course.

"Again:

'Not in the sky
Nor in the midst of the sea,
Nor entering a cleft of the mountains,
Is found that realm on earth
Where one may stand and be
From an evil deed absolved."

S: Again, that doesn't exactly illustrate what he just said. (pause) Let's go on.

"This doctrine of karma may be regarded as an application in our ethical realm of the theory of the conservation of energy. Everything done is done once for all; its footprints on the sand of our moral and social evolution are forever left; nay, more than left, they are generative, good or evil, and waiting for further development under favourable conditions. In the physical world, even the slightest possible movement of our limbs cannot but affect the general cosmic motion of the earth, however infinitesimal it be; and if we had a proper instrument, we could surely measure its precise extent of effect. So is it even with our deeds. A deed once performed, together with its subjective motives, can never vanish without leaving some impressions either on the individual consciousness or on the supra-individual, i.e., social consciousness."

S: It's rather interesting that he regards the social as supra-individual. Well, it's certainly non-individual, but I'd hardly say supra-individual. Anyway, he is making a very valid point, and he is describing a very definite aspect of karma, or what karma is from a certain point of view. Karma is the process of our own self-modification: that everything we do, everything we think, everything we say, modifies the sort of person, the sort of being, the sort of individual, the sort of consciousness we are, and that that remains with us. We permanently modify ourselves, or at least indefinitely modify ourselves, by everything that we do. So that change that we bring about in ourselves due to what we think and do is conserved, and this conservation is the law of karma, or at least one aspect of it.

Vajradaka: Is it possible to say where it is conserved?

S: Well I think that's in a way an unreal question, because how can you say where with regard to something which is mental, hmm? It's only a manner of speaking. Well, you can say it's conserved in you, but that doesn't [74] really sort of say anything. It slightly amplifies the original statement, but to ask where is it conserved is, in a way, a sort of sub-philosophical question. It's a sort of common-sense question, but it doesn't have any real meaning. You can have an answer, as when you say, 'well, it's conserved in you', and, you know, people who ask where is it conserved, you know, might be quite

satisfied with the answer, 'well, it's conserved in you'; but it isn't really an answer, because it wasn't really a question. (laughter) See what I mean?

Vajradaka: Yes.

S: But sometimes people do take things so literally that they really want to know, well, where is it conserved? But if you say, 'Well, it's conserved in you' they are quite satisfied; or if you said, 'Well, it's conserved in the all-conserving consciousness, which we call the alaya': 'ah, yes, now I understand!' But you haven't really said anything, and they really haven't understood anything. Yes?

Devamitra: Actually there's a whole point about people taking things very literally, as you say, in reference to doctrines and so on and so forth. I find it's very difficult to get round it because people are very persistent in this way. I mean, I just don't know how ...

S: Well, you have to be literal-minded along with them, as it were, as when you say, 'Well it's conserved in the mind'. And that is true, you know, on that particular level, and if you are going to answer their question in their terms on their level, that is all that you can say.

Devamitra: But it doesn't seem to be getting them any further, in fact, if you just, you know, answer them on that level.

S: Well, it does, because it gives them a basis from which to proceed; that if they do accept that when they, say, make an effort in meditation, the results of that are going to be conserved, at least for a time, and conserved in them, or in the alaya, well, it could give them a stronger basis actually to practise. But a lot of people's questions are of this sort. In a sense, all questions, up to enlightenment, are of this kind really: you know, however 'real' they may seem to us, now. (pause) All right, let's go on.

"We need not further state that the conception of karma in its general aspect is scientifically verified". [75]

S: That is, conditionality, you could say.

"In our moral and material life, where the law of relativity rules supreme, the doctrine of karma must be considered thoroughly valid."

S: Relativity is not quite the same as conditionality, but we'll let that pass.

"And as long as its validity is admitted in this field, we can live our phenomenal life without resorting to the hypothesis of a personal God, as declared by Lamarck when his significant work on evolution was presented to the Emperor Napoleon."

S: A little anecdote he's referring to. Anyone know this anecdote? Hm? Laplace, Lamarck. Was it Lamarck? Laplace, surely, huh? hm? presented his nebular hypothesis to

Napoleon - the book, that is, in which he had written about it - and Napoleon sort of glanced through it, and, you know, he: yes, it must have been Laplace; was explaining the origin of the solar system, and, in fact, the whole cosmos, with what we now call the nebular hypothesis, so Napoleon asked, surprised, at Laplace, "Where does God come in?" and Laplace said; "Sir, I had no need of that hypothesis!" (laughter) Lamarck is, of course, the biologist, isn't he? So it's Laplace. Shall we make a note of that? [Yes, it was Laplace, although Lamarck's ideas also upset Napoleon, tr.]

Devaraja: Maybe Lamarck ...

S: Homer is nodding! (laughter)

Mamaki: It's a long time, isn't it?

"But it will do injustice to Buddhism if we designate it agnosticism or naturalism, denying or ignoring the existence of the ultimate, unifying principle, in which all contradictions are obliterated."

S: Yes, this is the great difficulty, you see. You could say, 'Well in Buddhism there's no God, in Buddhism there's no soul,' and have a [76] really great time knocking down all these ninepins, as it were, but then, if you're not careful, you leave the person with a Christian background with the impression that since it dispenses with what is for him or for her are at least symbols of something above and beyond the material and the mental, therefore Buddhism has nothing beyond the material and the mental: it is just a sort of materialist or philosophism or a psychology or an ethical system or something of that sort. So we have to be very careful not to leave people with this sort of impression.

"Dharmakaya is the name given by Buddhists to this highest principle."

S: Ah. That's not correct. It's given by Mahayana Buddhists, not by Buddhists. The Theravadins would never give it. This sort of statement we also have to be very careful about: not making statements about Buddhism as a whole which are true of only a particular school or group of schools. Dharmakaya is a name given by Mahayana Buddhists to this highest principle.

"Dharmakaya is the name given by Buddhists to this highest principle, viewed not only from the philosophical but also from the religious standpoint. In the Dharmakaya, Buddhists find ..."

S: That is, Mahayana Buddhists.

"... find the ultimate significance of life, which, when seen from its phenomenal aspect, cannot escape the bondage of karma and its irrefragable laws."

S: Any general question on that section about karma? It's probably clear enough as it stands. He isn't attempting to go into it comprehensively or in detail.

Vajradaka: Does this last section mean that the dharmakaya is also included in conditionality?

S: No, no, the dharmakaya is not included in conditionality.

Mangala: But on (unclear) phenomenal aspect.

S: You could say, if you want to use the traditional illustration, the dharmakaya is like the water of the ocean, and conditionality is like the waves. The relationship of conditionality takes place between the different waves, or all the waves, or even all the waves, sort of as waves, and the water. But in the water itself there's no such thing as conditionality, water is just water, the same all the time, as it were. It doesn't change. This is just an analogy, you know, [77] a very crude and inadequate one, but one that is often used. You mustn't take it as substantialism, not that the dharmakaya is a thing, as water is a thing, a sort of spiritual element, as it were, or spiritual equivalent of water. But you can't help using these sort of expressions if you want to convey any meaning at all. All right. Go on to avidya.

"Avidya. What claims our attention next is the problem of nescience, which is one of the most essential features of Buddhism. Buddhists think, nescience (in Sanskrit avidya) is the subjective aspect of karma, involving us in a series of rebirths. Rebirth, considered by itself, is no moral evil, but a necessary condition of progress towards perfection, if perfection ever be attainable here."

S: That is not the Buddhist view, in fact, at all. This is regarded by the Buddha in the Pali canon as a sort of heresy. I don't know how it has crept into Suzuki's mind. Rebirth, considered by itself, is a moral evil, huh, in Buddhism. Because what precipitates rebirth? It is ignorance and craving, huh? So, the rebirth is a moral evil in a sense that it is an expression, or embodiment, of these tendencies, huh? The only time when rebirth is not a moral evil is when the bodhisattva voluntarily allows himself to be reborn to continue his work. But the idea that rebirth is a sort of educative process is again Theosophical; it is not Buddhist, hmm? From the Buddhist point of view, rebirth is definitely a lapse, or a renewed lapse. The Buddha, in the Pali canon, rejects the view of one of the contemporary teachers that man is automatically purified by passing through a long succession of births of different kinds, 84,000 in all. This was the view of one of the contemporary teachers: that you were automatically purified after passing through the whole series. The Buddha said no, there is no automatic purification in this sort of way. But the Theosophists have developed the idea that rebirths are sort of desirable, that they enable you to develop different things, and it's also educative. This is not the traditional Buddhist view.

Nagabodhi: I've often heard it said that you're born in a certain place at a certain time in order to undergo certain trials that you need in order to just...

S: This is not the Buddhist view at all. There's no trace of this doctrine in Buddhist literature. The result of karma, yes, hmm? To work out something or, as it were, expiate something, yes. But not more than that. And of course, it's good if we look upon the situation in which we find ourselves as an opportunity for learning, [78] but this is rather a different thing.

Nagabodhi: The choice is ours, like in the wheel of life: we choose to go up or down.

S: Right. But the whole process of being embodied and reborn is regrettable, and we're making the best of a bad job, of the sort of rather unpleasant situation we've got ourselves into. So it can't be compared to an educative process in the sense of going to school. It isn't like that. It's more like being sent to prison. You shouldn't have got yourself sent there in the first place; but while you are there you can at least do something to improve your present condition and ensure you don't get sent there again, hmm? But prison itself, as an institution, is not educative, it's more retributive; in the same way, re-birth.

Voice: I am always getting a bit confused in this area. I think the confusion is between what appears to be a sort of an nihilistic thing of - to quote an Order member - that nirvana should be voluntary euthanasia (laughter) - as one Order member would put it ...

S: Well, in a sense, but euthanasia of which self? (silence)

Voice: So our aim, then, really, is rebirth as bodhisattvas?

S: Yes. That would be best, sure, yes.

Vajradaka: Can you say that again?

Voice: I was saying our aim is rebirth as bodhisattvas.

S: Well, put it this way: our aim is enlightenment, and to be enlightened in the fullest possible sense is the enlightenment of a Buddha, which means that we aspire to be bodhisattvas, and if that means accepting difficulties including difficulties like rebirth, well, we accept, quite positively and happily, hmm?

Same voice: I suppose my confusion is between this separation into Buddhas and bodhisattvas, and that I feel that there is no enlightenment without developing as a bodhisattva, but that's my personal feeling about it, and that it's ridiculous to talk about one being a Buddha and not deciding to be a bodhisattva and choosing rebirth. It's a kind of a non-statement.

S: It is a non-statement, sure, but, you know, you have to make some sort of a statement, even a non-statement, in trying to put it across to people and explain what Buddhism teaches, or what one's view was, but it certainly isn't you literally (?) your [79]

own nirvana and decide to be reborn instead. It is sort of something that happens. In a sense, you don't even know about it, in a sense.

Nagabodhi: The analogy of the school and the prison - I like it but it ... again I find it a bit of a non-answer to a non-question, because it sounds a bit like one's fallen from a state of grace, you know, that there was a soul entity that fell out of grace to be punished.

S: Well, in a sense, yes. I'm going to go a bit into that in my lecture at the Buddhist Society, so: hint hint! (laughter)

Mangala: I think there is somebody at the front door.

Sulocana: Yes, I heard the bell. (laughs)

S: Well if we hear tiny footsteps, it's all right, but if not ...

Sulocana: I think it's some of Jane's children.

S: What were you going to say?

Devamitra: I was going to say how do you understand the whole principle of rebirth?

S: Oh, I think that's such a vast question I'd rather not go into it now. I think we have to take our stand very firmly on conditionality and then try to see different ways in which it works, including the way we call karma, the way which we call rebirth.

Devamitra: The only reason I ask is that I recently got quite confused talking about it with Subhuti who was going through a great deal of conflict about rebirth and really struggling with it and trying to get to grips with it somehow, and we talked about it a lot on the Summer School together and, you know, I just kind of accepted the whole thing as being the most likely order of things, at least in my own limited understanding of what rebirth actually is, but he couldn't do this and it's like I picked up on his conflict, and ...

S: This isn't one of the things he talked about with me, by the way. He didn't seem to be feeling that conflict at all when he came up.

Devamitra: On rebirth? I thought that was one of the things he came up to talk about!

S: I don't think it was mentioned. (laughter)

Vajradaka: Maybe he did come up to talk about it. (more laughter)

Devamitra: Oh.

S: I don't recollect it being mentioned, but we did talk rather vigorously [80] for three days and covered quite a lot of ground, so perhaps he was just satisfied with that.

Devamitra: Well there were two main points: one was the distinction between samatha and vipassana, and the other one was the whole idea of rebirth.

S: We touched slightly on samatha and Vipassana, but apart from that we were concerned entirely with other matters. Yes we did talk about vipassana in the sense of distinguishing between the vipassana of traditional Buddhism and the so-called vipassana of some modern vipassana methods. We talked about that quite a bit. We didn't talk much about samatha. But, as I say, I think the essential thing is to begin at the beginning and understand what is meant by conditionality, and the two main forms of conditionality: the reactive and the creative, you know, the round and the spiral, and then after that come on to karma and rebirth.

Vajradaka: Will we be talking about this later on?

S: I don't think so, no, I don't think so. We'll be covering quite a lot of ground but I don't think we'll be coming to that. Oh, there is a section on the workings of karma, but that is rather brief. We might go into it a little bit there.

Devaraja: Could I ask, would it be correct to say that rebirth is an inevitable process? That there is no such thing as - I know it is probably because I am trying to approach it from the wrong angle, but it's more to sort of clear up a point where people ask you questions on rebirth and answering on a physical level - rebirth as an inevitable process. It's as if we could, well, it appears that one can transform us and make it rebirth as a bodhisattva, in other words, a conscious process of rebirth.

S: Yes. One can say that.

Devaraja: So there's really no such thing as annihilation on a physical level?

S: One could even say that.

Devaraja: Annihilation really only applies to an ego concept.

S: To the defilements, or to the ego concept, yes. You could say - I mean, this is not actually said, at least not in so many words, but you could say, in a way - that rebirth is never annihilated. Not that it is inevitable, but that what is annihilated is the involuntary rebirth of those factors that make for involuntary rebirth. But the bodhisattva is quite happy for the rebirth process to continue because it enables him to function. It may, of course, continue at [81] a lower or at a higher level; it can continue at any level.

Devamitra: It's not necessarily inevitable?

S: The involuntary rebirth is not inevitable, in the sense that the ignorance and the craving can be annihilated, yes?

Devamitra: But the actual fact of rebirth: would it be correct to say that that is inevitable?

S: No. For instance, within the Hinayana perspective, within the Theravada perspective, when you are enlightened, as an arahant, rebirth ends. Hm? Or one could even say, putting it more precisely, although it isn't quite put in this way by the Theravadins themselves, that it is the involuntary rebirth which is ended. There's no question of any further involuntary rebirth.

Devamitra: So what happens if there's not an involuntary rebirth?

S: Ah, but you could say that the Theravada does not go into all that. It is quite happy leaving you just Enlightened, and not presuming to say what happens as a result of your Enlightened state. What happens will happen. The Mahayanists, in a way, you could say, do presume a bit and they do go on to say, well, you couldn't just rest in that, it will manifest itself as compassion, you will continue to be reborn but voluntarily, not involuntarily. The Theravadins, in a way, are a bit more respectful about the state of Enlightenment. They don't say very much about it from the standpoint of non-enlightenment. They are quite happy to get you there, and after that, as it were, you look after yourself; what happens, happens; you function how you function. But one thing they do say: that once you're Enlightened, there is no involuntary rebirth, in the sense of a rebirth motivated by craving and ignorance; that is finished once and for all. Whether there is any further kind of rebirth, another kind, voluntary, due to compassion, this they do not say; the Mahayanists do say.

Devamitra: But if you say a voluntary rebirth, then that implies there's an element of choice in it.

S: Yes. And therefore that way of expression is inadequate, because you're thinking then of an individual consciousness which chooses, which decides. But the Enlightened consciousness is quite different from that. Hm? So perhaps it's best to say, well, you end up as Enlightened consciousness, it's full of wisdom, full of compassion, it will manifest as it manifests. We can't sort of say, well it will [82] manifest in this way, or it will manifest in that way. That is a bit presumptuous. We can't even say, really, that there must be a future rebirth due to compassion. We can't even really say that because that is very limiting, that statement: that it must function in this way, it must function in that way. There's no must: it's completely free.

Lokamitra: Rebirth itself is not a very good expression.

Devamitra: Manifestation might be a better word.

S: Well, another birth takes place, so one could presumably say rebirth, hmm? It seems a pretty harmless expression to me.

Mangala: Rebirth, I think, needs redefinition.

S: Oh, yes, it needs a bit of definition, but even 're-manifestation': manifestation of what? Who? Why? (laughs) It is a re-manifestation, sure; a rebirth is a re-manifestation.

Devamitra: What I'm getting at is that, in the Enlightened consciousness, is one of the attributes of the Enlightened consciousness a desire to express itself? That's what I think I'm trying to get at. Therefore that implies some sort of manifestation.

S: I would say no.

Devamitra: So it's not ...

S: Because that implies a limitation.

Devamitra: ... an attribute of the Enlightened consciousness?

S: When you say expression, there's a difference between what is to be expressed and the expression. Well surely in the Enlightened consciousness that just isn't there. You can also say the Enlightened consciousness is infinite, it is already in all things, it is already ubiquitously expressed and expressing and expressible. I would say, no, that's a really analogical way of thinking about it: 'has a need to express itself' or anything of that sort. I wouldn't be personally at all happy with that way of putting things. It suggests the analogy of the creative artist, but I wouldn't be at all happy with that analogy. It definitely implies a certain 'need' or 'want' limitation. It seems more applicable to trsna, craving, than to Enlightenment.

Devamitra: Perhaps I am using the wrong word there.

S: It is not an inactive state; we can say that. Not that it's active as opposed to inactive, but we mustn't conceive of it as something static, in which you once and for all come to rest. There is activity and that activity is called compassion, but it's not an activity which is distinct [83] from rest. Not that it's inactive and then it starts functioning, as it were, no. The rest and the activity, the quiescence and the functioning, are not mutually incompatible. I mean, it is a state of consciousness that we can't really conceive of unless we actually experience it. I prefer to sort of express it in terms of the bodhisattva, you know, on his Enlightenment, participates in the universal compassionate activity of the dharmakaya. But how he does that - continuing to be, as it were, a bodhisattva, but not that individual bodhisattvahood is annihilated - is something which it is perhaps quite impossible for us to conceive. But I prefer to think of the bodhisattva, on his complete Enlightenment, becoming, as it were, a part, or an aspect, of that, you know, universal compassionate activity of the dharmakaya. Not that there was any deficiency, at least from the Absolute point of view, before his Enlightenment, before his arrival on the Enlightened scene, as it were, hmm?

Perhaps, from our side, there's again one more Enlightened being, one more bodhisattva, but not from that. But, you know, that's something that we can hardly think. We'd perhaps better leave it there, then.

"It is an evil only when it is the outcome of ignorance."

S: Yes. We've lost the thread, haven't we. Rebirth. "Rebirth, considered by itself, is no moral evil, but rather a necessary condition of progress towards perfection, if perfection ever be attainable here." Yes. That's not the Buddhist view. "It is evil only when it is the outcome of ignorance." Well, it's always the outcome of ignorance, except in the case of the bodhisattva. "Ignorance as to the true meaning of our earthly existence."

Carry on then.

"Ignorant are they who do not recognize the evanescence of worldly things and who tenaciously cleave to them as final realities; who madly struggle to shun the misery brought about by their own folly; who savagely cling to the self against the will of God, as Christians would say; who take particulars as final existences and ignore one pervading reality which underlies them all; who build up an adamant wall between the mine and thine: In a word, ignorant are those who do not understand that there is no such thing as an ego-soul, and that all individual existences are unified in the system of Dharmakaya. Buddhism, therefore, most emphatically maintains that to attain the bliss of Nirvana we must radically dispel this illusion, this ignorance, this root of all evil and suffering in this life."

S: So in this sense, in this very radical sense, well everybody is ignorant except those who are definitely on the bodhisattva path and actually progressing along it. (pause) Right. Let's carry straight on.

Mangala: It says that Buddhism emphatically maintains that to attain the bliss of nirvana we must do this. Would you say Buddhism emphasizes that more than anything else? I mean, that seems like ...

S: Buddhism most emphatically maintains that to attain the [84] bliss of nirvana we must radically dispel the illusion. Yes. You could say this is the main thing. Yes.

Mangala: It would seem to me that was a bit like, you know, emphasizing destroying the self, again.

S: Well it's the destruction of an illusion, rather than destruction of a thing, though we experience that illusion as a thing; we can't help doing that. Though in a way it feels like destruction of us - and, in a sense, it is, but then one mustn't emphasize just that negative destructive side too much, as that could have, you know, just the opposite effect from what was intended. It's perhaps more helpful and encouraging to speak in terms of growth and development, growing beyond the self rather than destroying it. Or refining it, of the sense of making it more and more refined until you can hardly see that it's there. All right, let's go on.

"The doctrine of nascence or ignorance is technically expressed in the following formula, which is commonly called the twelve nidanas or the pratyaya-samutpada,"

S: Usually prativityasamutpada, not pratyayasamutpada.

"That is to say chains of dependence. (1) There is ignorance (avidya) in the beginning; (2) from ignorance action (sanskara) comes forth;"

S: Usually the translation which is more accurate is: 'In dependence upon ... arises ...'

"(3) from Action Consciousness (vijāna) comes forth;
(4) from Consciousness Name-and-Form (namarupa) comes forth;
(5) from Name-and-Form the Six Organs (sadayatana) come forth;
(6) from the Six Organs, Touch (sparsa) comes forth;
(7) from Touch, Sensation (vedana) comes forth;
(8) from Sensation Desire (trṣṇa) comes forth;
(9) from Desire Clinging (upadana) comes forth;
(10) from Clinging Being (bhava) comes forth;
(11) from Being Birth (jati) comes forth; and
(12) from Birth pain (duhkha) comes forth."

S: I think most people know that this is the traditional list, in its most expanded form. Because again and again it comes in Pali and in Sanskrit texts in the Hinayana and the Mahayana, and that these twelve links are distributed over three lives. This is the usual breakdown, as it were. I think that everybody's aware of that, yes? And that the first two pertain to the previous existence, the middle eight to the present, and the last two to the future life. This is generally known, I think.

Vajradaka: Is this meant literally?

S: Yes.

Vajradaka: If one presumes that one is always being reborn, continuously, then, in fact, one is always with the middle eight. [85]

S: Yes. All are there all the time, on different levels, as it were. For instance, in the past, there was ignorance, and actions based on ignorance. On account of those, you are precipitated into a new life with a new manifestation of individual consciousness. Well, that ignorance and those actions are still present continuing in the present existence, too. So it isn't that they are there in the past but not in the present, but you're just considering the whole thing in the present in a more detailed way, but it is in a sense the same old ignorance and activities based on ignorance. So you can have a little chart, where you've got the twelve links distributed over three lives on three levels. You see what I mean? Because the present life is present only as regards the present; it's the past life as regards the future. Hm? So as the past life, the future life, it'll consist of ignorance and the sanskaras, which summarize the other eight links, considered as pertain-

ing to the present. Yes? Can someone do a chart, sometime today, to make that clear? Is it clear? And the future, that is to say, the birth and the dukkha, these are the future of the present. But the present was the future of the past. So you can also express the present in terms of the birth and the dukkha. So there can be a chart setting all this forth, so that in each of those three lives you've got each of these three sections present, because each of the lives can be considered either as the future, or as the present, or as the past. It's all relative.

Devamitra: Suzuki's enumerated avidya as the first, and he says "in the beginning".

S: That's a bit misleading. You mustn't think of that avidya as a sort of cosmic first principle from which everything springs forth; it's quite definitely the individual that that series is concerned with. And the ignorance, of course, recurs constantly, and the Buddha clearly says, in the Pali canon, that however far back you go you cannot come to a point where you perceive an absolute first beginning of things; you just go back and back into the past indefinitely.

Nagabodhi: If you see the twelve links from birth, rather than saying 'from birth, pain comes forth', from birth the other eight come forth, which holds whole thing seems, from the point of view our experience, is painful. It's not as if the pain is a separate step.

S: No, right, [86] not just a sort of separate phenomenon called pain. I think the whole series, and its threefold distribution, needs to be reflected upon at length, maybe with the help of a chart. Of course there is this exercise, this practice, which is one of the five basic methods reflecting upon the chain of conditioned co-production, or dependent origination. I hope we can do that in a retreat sometime. We never have done this, and we ought to do it. It might throw some fresh light on the whole subject.

Vajradaka: I'll do the chart.

S: OK, let's go on.

"According to Vasubandhu's Abhidharmakosa, the formula is explained as follows: Being ignorant in our previous life as to the significance of our existence, we let loose our desires and act wantonly. Owing to this karma, we are destined in the present life to be endowed with consciousness (vijāna), name-and form (nāmarūpa), the six organs of sense (sadayatana), and sensation (vedana). By the exercise of these faculties, we now desire for, hanker after, cling to, these illusive existences which have no ultimate reality whatever. In consequence of this 'Will to Live' we potentially accumulate or make up the karma that will lead us to further metempsychosis of birth and death."

S: In other words, it's the whole process which is illustrated in the Wheel of Life.

"The formula is by no means logical, nor is it exhaustive, but the fundamental notion that life started in ignorance or blind will remain veritable."

S: I'm not quite sure what he means by saying "The formula is by no means logical". What does one mean by the formula being logical or illogical? That seems to be rather a non-statement. It certainly consists, and perhaps he means it isn't, as stated, sort of proved. It certainly isn't; it is merely stated as a doctrine. But it is self-consistent: it's logical in that sense. It isn't self-contradictory. And, true, it probably isn't exhaustive, but the fundamental notion that life started in ignorance, or blind will, remains veritable; it remains true. Right. Any query about that? (pause) He's using, of course, the Western expression, 'the will to live'.

"Non-atman. The problem of nescience naturally leads to the doctrine usually known as that of non-atman, i.e. non-ego,"

S: He's previously rendered it as 'no soul', but now he says 'non-ego'. That is probably better, in a way, I think.

"to which allusion was made at the beginning of this chapter. This doctrine of Buddhism is one of the subjects that has caused much criticism by Christian scholars. Its thesis runs: There is no such thing as ego-soul, which, according to the vulgar interpretation, is the agent of our mental activities. And this is the reason why [87] Buddhism is sometimes called the religion without the soul, as aforesaid."

S: We have discussed this already, so I think we need not go over that ground again.

"This Buddhist negation of the ego-soul startling to the people, who, having no speculative power, blindly accept the traditional, materialistic view of the soul. They think, they are very spiritual in endorsing the dualism of soul and flesh, and in making the soul something like a corporeal entity, though far more ethereal than an ordinary object of the senses. They think of the soul as being more in the form of an angel, when they teach that it ascends to heaven immediately after its release from the material imprisonment."

S: I am not quite sure who these people are, but what Suzuki seems to be saying is that perhaps the anatta teaching was intended to negate a rather crude conception of the soul, of the atman, perhaps which was current in certain circles in the Buddha's day. But this doesn't seem to be very important. Carry straight on, then.

"They further imagine that the soul, because of its imprisonment in the body, groans in pain for its liberty, not being able to bear its mundane limitations. The immortality of the soul is a continuation after the dismemberment of material elements of this ethereal, astral, ghost-like entity, -very much resembling the Samkhyan Lingham or the Vedantic suksama-carira. Self-consciousness will not a whit suffer in its continued activity, as it is the essential function of the soul. Brothers and sisters, parents and sons and daughters, wives and husbands, all transfigured and sublimated, will meet again in the celestial abode, and perpetuate their home life much after the manner of their earthly one. People who take this view of the soul and its immortality must feel a great disappointment or even resentment, when they are asked to recognize the Buddhist theory of non-atman."

S: Carry straight on.

"The absurdity of ascribing to the soul a sort of astral existence taught by some theosophists is due to the confusion of the name and the object corresponding to it. The soul, or what is tantamount according to the vulgar notion, the ego, is a name given to a certain coordination of mental activities. Abstract names are invented by us to economize our intellectual labours, and of course have no corresponding realities as particular presences in the concrete objective world. Vulgar minds have forgotten the history of the formation of abstract names. Being accustomed always to find certain objective realities or concrete individuals answering to certain names, they - those naive realists - imagine that all names, irrespective of their nature, must have their concrete individual equivalents in the sensual world. Their idealism or spiritualism, so called, is in fact a gross form of materialism, in spite of their unfounded fear of the latter as atheistic and even immoral - curse of ignorance!"

S: I'm not quite sure about his syntax there, but anyway, he's still going on about the type of atma theory or doctrine which he imagines, perhaps, the Buddha was refuting with his anatma teaching, and he seems to have found something like it in spiritualistic and Theosophical circles in America, at that particular time.

"The non-atman theory does not deny that there is a co-ordination or unification of various mental operations. Buddhism calls this system of coordination vijāna, not atman. Vijāna is consciousness, while atman is the ego conceived as a concrete entity, a hypostatic agent which, abiding in the deepest recess of the mind, directs all subjective activities according to its own discretion. This view is radically rejected by Buddhism."

S: He is also getting at something quite important, this: that you give a name to a certain collection or co-ordination of activities, and then you start imagining the name refers to something quite separate to all those activities - so that means you reify your concept - you give your concept a real existence, apart from the actual processes that it is meant to describe, and the Buddhist anatma doctrine is also aimed against this sort of misunderstanding.

"A familiar analogy illustrating the doctrine of non-atman is the notion of a wheel or that of a house. Wheel is the name given to a combination in a fixed form of the spokes, axle, tire, hub, rim, etc.; house is that given to a combination of roofs, pillars, windows, floors, walls, etc., after a certain model and for a certain purpose. Now, take all these parts independently, and where is the house or the wheel to be found? House or wheel is merely the name designating a certain form in which parts are systematically and definitely disposed. What an absurdity, then, it must be to insist on the independent existence of the wheel or of the house as an agent behind the combination of certain parts thus definitely arranged!"

S: Do you see this reasoning? Do you understand the reasoning? You first of all have the word 'house' just to indicate that particular collection [88] of materials arranged in

that particular way, but suppose you use the word 'house' to represent a sort of 'house entity' standing behind all those things, standing behind a concrete house. This is what you sometimes do with the self, or the atman. Really the word 'atma', or self, just applies to all our activities, our thinking, our seeing, and our feeling, and our imagining, and our willing, as empirical individuals; all these collectively, in their multiple coordination, are referred to as 'self', 'individual'; but if then you think 'self' or 'individual' represents something behind all these, different from them, distinct from them, as if it were controlling them and operating them, then that is incorrect. But this is the sort of thing we tend to do. And it is certainly the sort of thing that some people in the Buddha's day tended to do. So, then, the word 'atma' represents this fictitious self, which was originally a term used to describe all the activities of the individual, but has now become a sort of entity imagined to be behind them and separate from them. But that sort of atma the anatma doctrine denies, in its simple, almost common-sense form. And it is this form of the anatma doctrine that is most common and current in the Pali scriptures: simply the denial of a self distinct from the activities that in fact make up the self, on all its levels and in all its aspects.

"It is wonderful that Buddhism clearly anticipated the outcome of modern psychological researches at the time when all other religious and philosophical systems were eagerly cherishing dogmatic superstitions concerning the nature of the ego. The refusal of modern psychology to have soul mean anything more than the sum-total of all mental experiences, such as sensations, ideas, feelings, decisions, etc., is precisely a rehearsal of the Buddhist doctrine of non-atman."

S: Of course there is a danger here. It is not that Buddhism says that behind all your activities, feelings, thought, imaginings, etc, there isn't something else. There is another dimension of consciousness, of being, there's even Enlightenment, but it is not to be designated as self. The word 'self' is reserved as the term indicating the sum total of all your sensations, thoughts, etc. So you mustn't then turn and place it as if it were behind all those activities and understand it as something distinct from them and activating them, as still a self in that sort of sense.

Vajradaka: Would Buddhists then say that the self is designated by the five skandhas?

S: Yes. Right. You could say that behind the five skandhas is nirvana which you can realize, as it were, but nirvana is not, in the Pali tradition at least, ever spoken of in terms of the self. That would create too much misunderstanding. [89]

"It does not deny that there is a unity of consciousness, for to deny this is to doubt our everyday experiences, but it refuses to assert that this unity is absolute, unconditioned, and independent. Everything in this phenomenal phase of existence, is a combination of certain causes (hetu) and conditions (pratyaya) brought together according to the principle of karma; and everything that is compound is finite and subject to dissolution, and, therefore, always limited by something else. Even the soul-life, as far as its phenomenality goes, is no exception to this universal law. To maintain the existence of a soul-substance which is supposed to lie hidden behind the phenomena of consciousness, is

not only misleading, but harmful and productive of some morally dangerous conclusions. The supposition that there is something where there is really nothing, makes us cling to this chimerical form, with no other result than subjecting ourselves to an eternal series of sufferings. So we read in the Lankavatara Sutra, III:

"A flower in the air, or a hare with horns,
Or a pregnant maid of stone:
To take what is not for what is,
'Tis called a judgement false.
In a combination of causes;
The vulgar seek the reality of self.
As truth they understand not,
From birth to birth they transmigrate."

S: I think it's sufficiently clear what this non-atma doctrine is in fact getting at, hmm? It isn't as we said earlier on, very relevant in that particular classical form, in sort of presenting Buddhism or spiritual life today, but we can begin to see why it was important and relevant before and why what in fact it is saying, in effect, is still very important, in fact highly important and relevant. But perhaps its classical form isn't any longer the best expression of what that teaching actually means. So far I think, in this connection, two main points have emerged: that the anatman doctrine prevents us from resting in our present experience of individuality as something ultimate, thus preventing any breakthrough into a higher dimension, and, two, it makes us aware of the fact that the self in the empirical sense is simply the sum total of all our mental activities and is ?[not that you'll] be sort of abstracted from them and set up as an entity in its own right: it's simply a descriptive term for all those activities together. These are really the two main points.

"The Non-atman-ness of things.

"Mahayanism has gone a step further than Hinayanism in the development of the doctrine of non-atman, for it expressly disavows, besides the denial of the existence of the ego-substance, a noumenal conception of things, i. e., the conception of particulars as having something absolute in them. Hinayanism, indeed, also disfavours this conception of thinginess [sic], but it does so only implicitly. It is Mahayanism that definitely insists on the non-existence of a personal (*pudgala*) as well as a thingish (*dharma*) ego."

"According to the vulgar view, particular existences are real, they have permanent substantial entities, remaining forever as such. They think, therefore, that organic matter remains forever organic just as much as inorganic matter remains inorganic; that, as they are essentially different, there is no mutual transformation between them. The human soul is different from that of the lower animals and sentient beings from non-sentient beings; the difference being well-defined and permanent, there is no bridge over which one can cross to the other. We may call this view naturistic egoism."

"Mahayanism, against this egoistic conception of the world, extends its theory of non-atman to the realm lying outside us. It maintains that there is no irreducible reality in

particular existences, so long as they are combinations of several causes and conditions brought together by the principle of karma. Things are here because they are sustained by karma. As soon as its force is exhausted, the conditions that made their existence possible lose efficiency and dissolve, and in their places will follow other conditions and existences. Therefore, what is organic today, may be inorganic tomorrow, and vice versa. Carbon, for instance, which is stored within the earth appears in the form of coal or graphite or diamond; but that which exists on its surface is found sometimes combined with other elements in the form of an animal or a vegetable, sometimes in its free elementary state. It is the same carbon everywhere; it becomes inorganic or organic, according to its karma, it has no atman in itself which directs its transformation by its own self-determining will. Mutual transformation is everywhere observable - there is a constant shifting of forces, an eternal transmigration of the elements, - all of which tend to show the transitoriness and non-atman-ness of individual existences. The universe is moving like a whirl-wind, nothing in it proving to be stationary, nothing in it rigidly adhering to its own form of existence."

"Suppose, on the other hand, there were an atman behind every particular being; suppose, too, it were absolute and permanent and self-acting; and this phenomenal world would then come to a standstill, and life be forever gone. For is not changeability the most essential feature and condition of life, and also the strongest evidence for the non-existence of individual things as realities? The physical sciences recognize this universal fact of mutual transformation in its positive aspect and call it the law of the conservation of energy and of matter, Mahayanism, recognizing its negative side, proposes the doctrine of the non-atman-ness of things, that is to say, the impermanency of all particular existences. Therefore, it is said, "Sarvam anityam, sarvam sunyam, Sarvam anatman." (All is transitory, all is void, all is without ego.)

"Mahayanists condemn the vulgar view that denies the consubstantiality and reciprocal transformation of all beings, not only because it is scientifically untenable, but mainly because, ethically and religiously considered, it is fraught with extremely dangerous ideas, - ideas which finally may lead a "brother to deliver up the brother to death and the father the child," and, again, it may constrain "the children to rise up against their parents and cause them to be put to death." Why? Because this view, born of egoism, would dry up the well of human love and sympathy, and transform us into creatures of bestial selfishness; because this view is not capable of inspiring us with the sense of mutuality and commiseration and of making us disinterestedly feel for our fellow beings. Then, all fine religious and humane sentiments would depart from our hearts, and we should be nothing less than rigid, lifeless corpses, no pulse beating, no blood running. And how many victims are offered every day on this altar of egoism! They are not necessarily immoral by nature, but blindly led by the false conception of life and the world, they have been rendered incapable of seeing their own spiritual doubles in their neighbours. Being ever controlled by their sensual impulses, they sin against humanity, against nature, and against themselves. We read in the Mahayana-abhisamaya Sutra (Nanjo, no, 196):

"Empty and calm and devoid of ego

Is the nature of all things:
There is no individual being
That in reality exists.

"Nor end nor beginning having
Nor any middle course,
All is a sham, here's no reality whatever:
It is like unto a vision and a dream.

"It is like unto clouds and lightning,
It is like unto gossamer or bubbles floating
It is like unto fiery revolving wheel,
It is like unto water-splashing.

"Because of causes and conditions things are here;
In them there's no self-nature (i.e., atman).
All things that move and work,
Know them as such.

"Ignorance and thirsty desire,
The source of birth and death they are -
Right contemplation and discipline by heart,
Desire and ignorance obliterate.

"All beings in the world,
Beyond words they are and expressions-,
Their ultimate nature, pure and true,
Is like unto vacuity of space."

Suzuki goes a little off the track in this section, but what he is concerned with, essentially, is the quite important Mahayana teaching - especially important historically - of the twofold *nairatmya*, or the twofold *anatma*. We've already seen that according to one aspect of the *anatma* teaching the word 'atma' is only a label applied to the sum total of all mental activities, etc. The word 'atma' is not intended to indicate an entity, an unchanging entity, behind those activities and distinct from them. It's merely the collective term for them. This is quite clear, I think, now.

So this kind of 'anatma' the Mahayana designated '*pudgalanairatmya*', that is to say, the *nairatmya* of the self or the individual. That is to say that standing behind the individual there was no unchanging selfhood distinct from the processes that made up the individual, and these processes, of course, are governed by the law of cause and effect, the law of conditionality, *pratityasamutpada*. The wise pass away in accordance with that law.

Now the Mahayanists, says Suzuki, went a step further. They said not only is there a *pudgalanairatmya*, there is a *dharmanairatmya* too. Now what is meant by *dharma*?

Very broadly speaking, dharma means object, or thing. So the Mahayana says that just in the same way that the term 'self' is only a label for the sum total of mental processes, in the same way, the word 'self' also, or the word 'thing', is only a name for a sum total of processes: it does not indicate - the word 'thing', for instance tree or house and so on - does not indicate something standing behind the sum total of phenomena making up the thing designated by that label; it's only a label applied to the collectively of those particular items. This is what they call dharmanairatmya. Is this clear?

So they say there's a general tendency both as regards the subject and as regards the object: the self, so-called, and 'thing' - to use words not just as a descriptive labels for very composite, not to say complex phenomena, but to use those words to indicate something standing behind those composite phenomena and somehow directing and guiding them and themselves not changing. I think this is very unlikely to be a mode of thought today, just because of the influence of modern science. We've become so accustomed to so-called things being broken up into constituent processes. You know, we've looked through microscopes, we've looked through telescopes, we know all about the electron and the atom, and so on and so forth. So I think this sort of teaching is quite acceptable to the modern Western mind and it hardly needs [91] emphasizing. But perhaps in the time of the Mahayanists it was a quite revolutionary sort of thing and opened up a quite new perspective. But we're not likely, in a sense, to need this teaching, not in this particular way or on this particular level, and this is where Mahayana does, in a way, link up with modern science. Science has revealed that there is process, whereas before we had thought that there was just a thing, you know, static and unchanging.

So this is the twofold nairatmya. Not only that things, not only that the self, is empty - by saying that the self is empty meaning that there is no unchanging self apart from the sum total of those changing processes, that the term 'self' is only a label for those processes, a collective label - in the same way the term 'thing', or the term, for instance, 'tree', 'house', 'man', 'dog', 'cat', 'jug', etc, is not designating a thing but only a whole collective of processes brought together in a certain way, and there is no unchanging jug-entirety, or house-entirety, standing behind those processes and constituting its real nature. This is the twofold nairatmya teaching of the Mahayana. So therefore the Mahayana eventually comes up with its sarvadarmanairatmya teaching or sunyata teaching: that all things are void of self. In other words, in a way, all things are such as they are, there is nothing standing behind them, not anything which can be designated by any term originally designating the collectivity of their parts.

Yes, there is something standing behind them, but of a quite different nature; not an individual thing at all. That's, yes, the reality, that's the one mind, that's nirvana, but don't apply to that the word which you've just used for something of a very different nature. So this is the classical and standard Mahayana teaching of the twofold non-selfhood, the twofold nairatmya: pudgalanairatmya, dharmanairatmya. And this comes up again and again in Mahayana teaching.

Devaraja: Point 1: How do you spell 'nairatmya'?

S: N-A-I-R-A-T-M-Y-A. Nairatmya.

Devaraja: Point 2: Can we say that behind Sakyamuni, i.e. the mundane form, there is the form of Avalokitesvara? And behind Avalokitesvara is the dharmakaya?

S: One can certainly say that.

Devamitra: Well, is it possible to apply that to a tree - the same principle?

S: You can, but this is poetry, this is not metaphysics, though poetry has its on truth, huh? [92]

Devamitra: So when the poet talks about seeing the tree in a tree, would that be ...

S: Well, the Buddhist would say - I mean, the Zen Buddhists would say - well why not just see the tree? Why to see the tree behind the tree? Isn't the tree itself enough? The tree-ness is in the tree, not separate from it. Certainly Zen brings this out very well, sometimes. You know, you don't have to add anything to the tree: some supreme archetypal ideal tree which it is embodying; no. The tree is quite complete and adequate in itself. You don't need to bring in an archetypal tree which is manifesting in this miserable individual tree, and, you know, you, the poet, is seeing that. [That] he's not seeing the inadequate actual tree, he's seeing though to the spiritual tree, the real tree; no. This is not the Buddhist or Zen attitude at all. The tree itself is the ideal tree, if you like to put it that way. Hm? Mountains are mountains, you know, as the saying says. At the beginning mountains are mountains and trees are trees; in the middle, well, mountains are no longer mountains, trees are no longer trees, they're the embodiments of something ideal, and etc, etc. But in the end trees are just trees and mountains are just mountains, huh? (laughs) It's like that.

So I would say, in a way, sure, behind Shakyamuni there is Avalokitesvara, behind Avalokitesvara, Amitabha. That's quite a valid way of thinking and feeling, but it isn't metaphysics, it's not sort of philosophy, as it were. That doesn't mean it's anything less, but we just have not to confuse these two things. I think we have to beware of this purely mental positing of the true tree behind the actual tree. It can become just a mental operation, you know, because you read about it in some book about Zen, or Mahayana philosophy, and so on. But Buddhism would say, and I think Zen would say too, just see the actual tree as it stands there. It doesn't need any ideal tree behind it supporting it; the tree is quite enough in itself. (pause) Anyway, let's go straight on to the dharmakaya then.

Mangala: Can you say something about the use of the term 'dharmas' in this connection; things being merely a collection of dharmas?

S: This is the famous dharma theory. Dharmas here mean the event of which the mental processes are composed. The Hinayana tended to rest in these as though they were sort of ultimate objects, but the Mahayana insisted that they themselves be further ana-

lysed and divided and were not to be [93] considered as things, as the Hinayana tended to do, but that there also were even finer processes; that the dharmas were void themselves too. It's as though the Hinayana broke up the pudgala into dharmas, then started treating the dharmas as selves, as it were. The Mahayana said - no, you mustn't do that. They applied their non-atman even to the so-called objects or events into which the pudgala had been dissolved.

"The Dharmakaya, which literally means 'body or system of being', is, according to the Mahayanists, the ultimate reality that underlies all particular phenomena ..."

S: He says Mahayanists, but this more an Eastern development, in the Sino-Japanese sense. It is not developed very much in Indian Buddhism, not in the philosophical schools anyway.

" ... it is that which makes the existence of individuals possible; it is the *raison d'etre* of the universe; it is the norm of being, which regulates the course of events and thoughts. The conception of Dharmakaya is peculiarly Mahayanistic, for the Hinayana school did not go so far as to formulate the ultimate principle of the universe; its adherents stopped short at a positivistic interpretation of Buddhism. The Dharmakaya remained for them to be the Body of the Law, or the Buddha's personality as embodied in the truth taught by him."

S: I think this isn't clear enough. I think that one can say that dharmakaya can be looked at in three different ways. In the Theravada, the dharmakaya is simply the sum total of the Buddha's teaching; though again it must be said that the word dharmakaya, in a slightly sort of spiritual sense, does occur in the Pali scriptures, but, for the Theravada school, dharmakaya simply means the collection, the body, the corpus, of the Buddha's teachings, as transmitted in the scriptures. That's all the dharmakaya means for them.

Now in the Mahayana, there is this Trikaya doctrine, especially as developed by the yogic era: you've got the nirmanakaya, the sambhogakaya, and then the dharmakaya of the Buddha. So the dharmakaya here means the deepest aspect, if you like, of the Buddha's personality, using that term very loosely. In other words, that aspect of the Buddha's personality or nature in which he is at one with ultimate reality. This is his dharmakaya, and this dharmakaya is shared by all Buddhas, is common to all Buddhas. So therefore you can say that when you see Shakyamuni, when you see the nirmanakaya, that is to say, the actual physical body, the historical personality, you're just on the historical plane. But when you arise above that, and you start seeing the Buddha as he appears on a higher archetypal plane [94] as it were, you see the sambhogakaya. But when you ascend to the highest level of all, you see the Buddha as he really is, you see the dharmakaya. So the dharmakaya is the ultimate reality of the Buddha himself, the human, historical, and archetypal Buddha. This is the second meaning or interpretation of the term, in the Mahayana.

But in far-eastern Mahayana, Chinese and Japanese, they've taken it even further than that. The dharmakaya is the ultimate spiritual principle, not only of the Buddha himself,

but of the whole universe. So it's not a question of the body of the human historical Buddha being the Nirmanakaya of the dharmakaya. The whole universe, the whole cosmos, becomes a sort of collective Nirmanakaya of the dharmakaya, and the dharmakaya then becomes the truth and reality of the whole universe. So it's not just an interpretation applied to the individual Buddha, but to the whole of existence. It becomes a bit pantheistic, I'm afraid, when popularly expounded. Do you see the distinction? It's this sort of most highly developed dharmakaya idea that Suzuki is explaining, but he doesn't seem quite to see that there has been a development: that the dharmakaya which is the dharmakaya of the Buddha is not quite the same as the dharmakaya which is the dharmakaya of the whole cosmos, and of which the whole cosmos is the embodiment.

Devamitra: I suppose it could be argued that the dharmakaya of the Buddha is where the Buddha is at one with reality itself, with ultimate reality,

S: And also, one must say, consciously at one, as it were. The Buddha is aware, the Buddha has woken up, but presumably in the case of the cosmos that isn't so, there is a sort of difference. But in Far-Eastern Buddhism, China and Japan, and certainly in Suzuki's thought, dharmakaya means the ultimate spiritual principle, the ultimate reality of the whole universe, the whole cosmos, and it becomes, as I said, almost pantheistic, certainly if one speaks or writes loosely, without due thought and care; it could be taken for pantheism quite easily. But this is what Suzuki is expounding.

Nagabodhi: I'm a bit confused by the distinction, at the moment, between spiritual and transcendental. Could one refer to it as an ultimate transcendental principle?

S: Yes. I'm myself not distinguishing between spiritual and transcendental in this context. I think it's a rather risky development, actually, and is in danger of blurring certain clear outlines in Buddhist thought. [95]

Devamitra: There's also a danger of kind of taking things out of the realm of the individual, and losing contact with the whole purpose of ... (murmurs of approval)

S: Right. And if you're not careful, following this line of thought, you end up with a rather woolly sort of nature mysticism. This is the danger here. And Suzuki does, himself, occasionally, end up with that.

Vajradaka: Nature mysticism? Would you say like Findhorn? [A new-age organic gardening community in Scotland who commune with nature spirits, tr.]

S: I wasn't thinking of that, but you could say that. But when you think - well, there's just one principle, and all the trees and flowers are all embodiments of that - well, you know, it can be just a sort of natural vitality that one is thinking of, not anything at all transcendental, or even spiritual; and therefore can, as it were, become lower and lower. The language remains the same, you haven't noticed that the level is lower. (pause) You end up with a rather naive sort of naturalistic pantheism, which is quite pleasant and healthy,

but which is far removed from the transcendental perspective of the Mahayana. (pause) In other words, the dharmakaya begins to be a cosmic principle, and in Buddhism there is no cosmic principle in this sort of way. Buddhism is, you could say, a-cosmistic. (pause) That's something I think I have got to go into quite systematically. It's very, very important. (pause) Anyway, let's go on. Suzuki plunges deeper into it.

"The Dharmakaya may be compared in one sense to the God of Christianity and in another sense to the Brahman or Paramatam of Vedantism."

S: Partly because the dharmakaya has become a sort of cosmic principle, but in becoming that it has gone a bit away, or even very much away, from Buddhist thought.

"It is different, however, from the former in that it does not stand transcendently above the universe, which, according to the Christian view, was created by God, but which is, according to Mahayanism, a manifestation of the dharmakaya himself."

S: Here one is on very shaky ground indeed, from a strictly Buddhist point of view.

Vajradaka: The fact that he uses dharmakaya as 'himself'?

S: No, not just that: the 'manifestation' - the fact that the world is a 'manifestation' of the dharmakaya, and that the dharmakaya is a sort of [96] cosmic principle from which everything has come out. This is not, strictly speaking, Buddhist thought. I would say that the dharmakaya doctrine in itself does not represent a betrayal of Buddhist thought and the dharmakaya is not in fact a cosmic principle in a pantheistic way, but if one explains the dharmakaya doctrine loosely or carelessly, as I am afraid Suzuki has done to some extent, this is certainly what it could be mistaken for, but I'm quite sure that if I was to put it carefully, then I could certainly explain the dharmakaya principle as I think it in fact exists as quite compatible with the rest of Buddhist thought. I don't think that in itself it goes away from Buddhist thought, but certainly as incautiously expounded by some people, it does.

"It is also different from Brahman in that it is not absolutely impersonal, nor is it a mere thing."

S: Hmm. Yes. One mustn't say, though Suzuki seems to say, that the dharmakaya is personal - you know, he refers to it as 'him', hmm? The dharmakaya is neither personal nor impersonal, one could say. It's not mere being, in the sense of abstract being. Abstract being is a sort of concept.

"The dharmakaya, on the contrary, is capable of willing and reflecting, or, to use Buddhist phraseology, it is karuna (love) and bodhi (intelligence), and not the mere state of being."

S: Yes. I'm afraid Suzuki is talking of the dharmakaya as though it was sort of personal, and willing and reflecting are obviously, you know, activities of an individual, and the

dharmakaya isn't an individual, though it isn't a sort of non-individual. If one uses expressions like this at all, they must be merely analogical. He's trying to stress that the dharmakaya is not just something inert, a sort of abstract principle; that is, something, as it were, living. But he's making it seem too much like an individual being with specific as it were almost mental functions. He's personalizing it much too much I think. Anyway, let's carry on.

"This pantheistic and at the same time entheistic Dharmakaya is working in every sentient being,"

S: Yes. Pantheistic means that God is all, and entheistic is that God is in all. [97]

"for sentient beings are nothing but a self-manifestation of the Dharmakaya."

S: Hmm. This would need a lot of proper explanation if it isn't to be misunderstood.

"Individuals are not isolated existences, as imagined by most people. If isolated, they are nothing, they are so many soap-bubbles which vanish one after another in the vacuum of space. All particular existences acquire their meaning only when they are thought of in their oneness in the Dharmakaya. The veil of Maya, i. e., subjective ignorance may temporarily throw an obstacle to our perceiving the universal light of Dharmakaya, in which we are all one. But when our Bodhi or intellect, which is by the way a reflection of the Dharmakaya in the human mind, is so fully enlightened, we no more build the artificial barrier of egoism before our spiritual eye; the distinction between the meum and teum is obliterated, no dualism throws the nets of entanglement over us; I recognize myself in you and you recognize yourself in me; tat tvam asi. Or,

"What is here, that is there;
What is there, that is here:
Who sees duality here,
From death to death goes he."

S: I'm afraid Suzuki's got bogged down in monism - that dualism is unreal; the reality is one, and everything is that one; you are that one, I am that one. But this is not the Mahayana point of view. Perhaps he can't help putting it like this. The Mahayana point of view is definitely neither monism nor dualism. These are concepts, these are ways of looking at things, and in fact Suzuki himself, later on in life, in his Zen essays, quotes a little Zen saying: that if you reduce all things to the one, to what will you reduce the one? But here he is reducing all things to one and calling it the dharmakaya. The dharmakaya is not that. But this is a very young Suzuki. But also, he is trying to put things to predominantly a Christian audience, or who are conditioned strongly by Christianity. Perhaps at that time he could hardly have done it in any other way.

"This state of enlightenment may be called the spiritual expansion of the ego, or, negatively, the ideal annihilation of the ego."

S: Yes. That's quite valid. Oh, by the way, there was one point - he suddenly launches into 'tat tvam asi', and a quotation from the Upanishads. If you are not well versed in these things, you might well think that that is a quotation from a Buddhist sutra, but it isn't; it's from the Upanishads, and it's monistic: dualism is unreal, only the one is real. This is not the Buddhist point of view. But anyway, he goes on to say something quite neat: "This state of enlightenment may be called the spiritual expansion of the ego", you know, can talk of infinite expansion of consciousness. That is quite valid. "Or, negatively, the ideal annihilation of the ego." You can think of it in that way too.

"A never-drying stream of sympathy and love which is the life of religion will now flow spontaneously out of the fountainhead of the Dharmakaya." [98]

S: That's quite all right because this is openly poetic. In a way, it ?[can't] be misunderstood, because it is not meant to be understood, even, in that particular way, and he's certainly making a very valid and true point: that this ultimate sort of principle, this reality, is not something dead or static or inert. Whatever it may be in itself, it is the source of inexhaustible spiritual activities and manifestations, which we sort of personify by, you know, bodhisattvas, by the hundred and by the thousand, and this is very much the Mahayana way of looking at it.

"The doctrine of non-ego teaches us that there is no reality in individual existences, that we do not have any transcendental entity called ego-substance. The doctrine of Dharmakaya, to supplement this, teaches us that we all are one in the System of Being and only as such are immortal. The one shows us the folly of clinging to individual existences and of coveting the immortality of the ego-soul; the other convinces us of the truth that we are saved by living into the unity of Dharmakaya."

S: What Suzuki says here is substantially very valid, but it is this emphasis on unity that is rather suspect from the Buddhist point of view. Let the dharmakaya be, you know, the Absolute, the Reality, the fountainhead of all spiritual bliss, yes, but we mustn't be in a hurry to think of it as 'one' as distinct from 'many', 'one' and not 'many', or that duality is unreal and that 'oneness' is real. As I said, this is not, properly, the Buddhist point of view; but it is true that meaning and significance derive from that dharmakaya, and it is the sort of positive counterpart, as it were, of the teaching about anatma. The doctrine of dharmakaya tells us in which direction to look for Reality, not to look for with, in the sense of 'as confined to', the individual self, but to this higher, transcendental dimension, which we call nirvana, or dharmakaya, and so on. The term dharmakaya seems to be used when the higher spiritual principle, the transcendental principle, becomes the sort of principle through which everything else connects, which as it were, in the ultimate analysis, within the widest perspective, enables everything, inasmuch as they are all related and interrelated through this one great principle, to be as it were woven into a great harmony. And that harmony, that totality, is then called the dharmakaya. So in a way the dharmakaya is the principle of unity, but not unity in the sense of oneness of being true and duality being false, but more like a sort of harmony, the principle of harmony. The dharmakaya is the (?) principle, to coin a term. It's the principle that enables everything to be, when seen rightly, constitutive of a great (?) which is the cosmos. If

everything orients itself around the [99] dharmakaya, then the whole cosmos becomes a sort of mandala, hmm? Though the dharmakaya stands for that sort of principle, that sort of pole, that axis of everything.

Vajradaka: This sort of then brings in the question of whether the nominality is not so much real but illusion, and whether illusion is real.

S: Hmm. Hmm. Yes. Right.

Vajradaka: Whether the edges of the mandala, which is not the dharmakaya but the Nirmanakaya, it's there but it's not real. Or rather that it's not real in the same sense.

S: Yes, hmm, hmm.

Vajradaka: But more illusion. Would you say that that's right?

S: Well you could say it like that, but it could also be put in other ways. After all, the dharmakaya as a transcendent principle is equidistant, as it were, from everything. You cannot be on the periphery from infinity, really. Can you? You're only on the periphery of something finite. So how can you be on the periphery of reality? Hm? Hm? So language sort of breaks down, doesn't it? Hm?

Devaraja: Perhaps it all seems to break down when it seems unrelated to individual experience.

S: Yes. When you get into generalizations and abstractions.

Devaraja: Metaphysical abstractions. Perhaps this problem doesn't seem to really occur in the Vajrayana, to what I know. I mean, it seems much more closely related to individual experience.

S: Hm. Yes. Or the Theravada too, come to that.

Devaraja: Or the Theravada.

S: In its own way, yes? It is true that the Mahayana often does go off into generalities, not to say abstractions, and so Dr Suzuki, but obviously we have to be on the watch against that.

"The doctrine of non-atman liberates us from the shackle of unfounded egoism: but as mere liberation does not mean anything positive and may perchance lead us to asceticism,"

S: Oh, dear! It leads us to asceticism! He doesn't seem to like asceticism! [100]

"we apply the energy thus released to the execution of the will of Dharmakaya."

S: Hm. I prefer to pitch it a little lower than that, and say that we allow the bodhicitta to manifest through us. Dharmakaya is going a bit, you know, too quickly, as it were. (long pause) Let's carry on, then.

"The questions: "Why have we to love our neighbours as ourselves? Why have we to do to others all things whatsoever we would that they should do to us?" are answered thus by Buddhists : "It is because we are all one in the Dharmakaya, because when the clouds of ignorance and egoism are totally dispersed, the light of universal love and intelligence cannot help but shine in all its glory. And, enveloped in this glory, we do not see any enemy, nor neighbour, we are not even conscious of whether we are one in the Dharmakaya. There is no 'my will' here, but only 'thy will,' the will of Dharmakaya, in which we live and move and have our being."

S: Hmm. I don't think this is quite Buddhistic. (laughter) Presumably everybody here present does try not to harm others. Yes? But do you sort of go through a mental operation and think - 'Well, we are all fundamentally one (I mean one in the sort of metaphysical sense), therefore if I'm hurting some one self I'm only, really, hurting myself.' Do we really go through this, really believe this, or base our practice on this? Do we? I mean, let's ask ourselves whether we do or not.

Vajradaka: I have done that.

S: You have done. Yes. I mean, has anybody done?

Devaraja: Occasionally, but it seems to be very much an application of an idea to the situation rather than a ... it sort of almost limiting, in a sense.

Mangala: It is usually done in one's own self-interest, anyway.

S: (firmly) Right! Fair enough! (chatter) Fair enough! Enlightened self-interest! And anything else? (long pause) Any other reasoning or motivation for one's non-harming of others. How does one usually reflect?

Vajradaka: Retribution. If one does do a thing, a certain negative act, then because of conditionality, then one will receive the appropriate ...

S: Sure. Well, that's the enlightened self-interest. But any other? Any other train of reasoning?

Voice: No, I can't. [101]

S: Well, there is one in the Pali scriptures. The one that's given again and again in the Pali scriptures is that you reflect that that person is also a sentient being. If I strike him it will hurt him. If someone strikes me, I will feel hurt. I would not like to feel pain. He would not like to feel pain. So I shall not inflict it. In this very sort of simple, almost sort

of common-sense way. It seems more likely that we reflect in this way rather than in that metaphysical way. Would you agree with that? (murmur of assent) It's more sort of fellow-feeling, which doesn't go through, as it were, some metaphysical principle of oneness. Huh?

Devaraja: It seems like the metaphysical principle of oneness avoids seeing the person as an individual, as another individual separate from yourself.

S: Yes. Right. I mean, I think that this is Vedantic more than Buddhist, really, and that Suzuki was certainly in contact with the Vedanta when he was in America, I think perhaps with Swami Vivekananda, who, of course, does expound the Vedanta exactly in these terms. But, you know, and for this sort of practical reason, but it doesn't seem very Buddhistic.

Mamaki: Is it perhaps a further stage that one goes through, that maybe starting off with the 'doing to others as we would like to be done to ourselves,' then we can think, 'I might be a perverse individual. If I have masochistic tendencies, then it isn't right, you know, for me to do this to others.' So one might then move on to that thinking that 'Oh, another principle, which justifies being nice to someone else,' though maybe one doesn't feel like that about oneself. It is, in fact ...

S: Well, it is the principle, and not the actual particular thing.

Mamaki: ... a process that people go through before they get to something ...

S: I mean, you don't, for instance, think, well, I like apples, therefore I've got to give everybody apples. You think, well, I like to eat nice things, therefore I'll give others the things that they can find nice to eat. You sort of extend it in that way, don't you?

Mamaki: I was wondering if it was a kind of process of thinking that people do go through, and whether the Vedanta is a process or part of a process ... [102]

S: I think the basic thing is that - do we really mediate our ethical actions through abstract metaphysical principles?

Sulocana: It's more a feeling.

S: It's more a feeling. (pause) It seems a very artificial process, in a way. You could perhaps look back on it and say, well, this is in fact was (?) what was happening. I was sensing the oneness of things. But you probably wouldn't bother to do it. You'd just behave as you behave; not bother to put it in that sort of way. You might accept it if it was offered to you as an explanation. It wouldn't seem perhaps very real to you. Hm?

Mamaki: Well, is it a kind of teaching that aims not to have that kind of reason for behaving yourself in a certain way which sort of diminishes the importance of the self, of the ego in relation to others. You know, maybe, if one starts thinking in that way, per-

haps its a teaching to help one get out of an egocentric position, rather than that that is the way one normally runs one's life.

S: Does it, in fact, function like that?

Devamitra: I think it can only do that if you have something to balance it on the other sort of, you know, that's only one side of it, in a way, isn't it. It seems to me that if you always sort of approached it in this way there would be no way of developing skilful means and discrimination ...

S: Because it's possible to meet people who are intellectually quite convinced, or so it seems, of this principle of absolute oneness of all existence, but who are thoroughly selfish in their behaviour.

Nagabodhi: Maybe it would lead to an inflation of the ego ...

S: Yes.

Nagabodhi: ... just as much as whittling [it] away.

Devaraja: I must admit that whenever I've said anything like that I've automatically sort of felt almost immediately, goodness, how pompous and goody, and how so unreal and ...

Mangala: It's very sort of pious and churchy a bit, isn't it?

S: Hm. (laughter)

Sulocana: ... to people brought up like that.

S: Yes, that's true. Yes, that's true. [103]

Mangala: There's no 'My will here will be Thy will'.

S: Well, this seems much more Christian than Buddhist. Again, it may be justified by the audience for whom he is writing the book.

Devamitra: He does seem to be caught up in it himself, though.

S: It seems a little bit, yes, I get that feeling, too.

Ratnapani: I feel this will be very dangerous reading for a beginner.

S: Hmm. Yes.

Ratnapani: I know that you generally recommend Suzuki to beginners.

S: I don't think there's hardly a book that isn't dangerous for beginners. Beginners shouldn't read books about Buddhism. Maybe a few sutras, but not ... I think there's not a single book that couldn't do them harm in some way or another. This is all part of the 'path of regular steps' as distinct from the 'path of irregular steps'. What business have you reading books about Buddhism, really, from a strictly Buddhist point of view? Just a sort of intellectual interest and to satisfy curiosity? (pause) I mean, there ought not to be any books on Buddhism, perhaps. I said some time ago that I thought that even if there were no books on Buddhism and maybe not even any sutras, we could probably get on quite well with our three refuges and our ten precepts, and the sevenfold puja, and just a few selected passages from scriptures; we could probably get on perfectly well with just with that material. But we've got all the materials around so we're almost forced to use it. Maybe we are able to use it within the Order, but, you know, to a lot of other people it's just all confusing and misleading. It makes them think that they are in touch with Buddhism or understand Buddhism when no such thing.

Lokamitra: There's another point, though, well, maybe there is - that general books about Buddhism present so many teachings, and each of these teachings were presented just individually.

S: Yes. Right.

Lokamitra: And it is just going to confuse the matter if you have two hundred teachings to deal with instead of just one.

S: Yes. Right. Yes. Yes.

Devaraja: I am reminded of the fact that a lot of early Christians used to get a great degree of inspiration from reading the lives of the saints. Perhaps, in a way ...

S: How 'early' were these Christians?

Devamitra: Well, er, um (laughter) medieval Christians.

S: Yes, That's true. [104]

Devaraja: So, thinking for myself I must say I got a lot of inspiration from reading about Govinda's travels, and the lives of various teachers and Milarepa.

S: Right.

Devaraja: And perhaps that's a much better material for beginners than ...

S: I tend to agree with that. It's inspirational, yes. I agree with that.

Devamitra: As a matter of interest, why did you choose this particular book for the purpose of study?

S: Well, first of all, I wanted to go into the Mahayana very broadly. Secondly, it is a well-known text and it does contain some very good expositions of specific points. And thirdly, I knew it was a bit dated and it would be a useful way of ourselves coming to understand certain historically-based misunderstandings, and so on. But we can begin to see, even now, that it wouldn't be a very good book text, really, for, you know, a group of beginners, unless they had a very skilful upasaka [i.e. Order member, tr.] taking it. Anyway, let's carry on.

"The Apostle Paul says: "For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive." Why ? Buddhists would answer, "because Adam asserted his egoism in giving himself up to ignorance, (the tree of knowledge is in truth the tree of ignorance, for from it comes the duality of me and thee); while Christ on the contrary surrendered his egoistic assertion to the intelligence of the universal Dharmakaya. That is why we die in the former and are made alive in the latter."

S: I think these sorts of comparisons are no longer necessary. They probably were in those days, but not now. All right. Let's go straight on to 'nirvana'. (pause, then laughter)

"The meaning of nirvana..."

S: Something quite simple. (more laughter)

"...has been variously interpreted by non-Buddhist students from the philological and the historical standpoint; but it matters little what conclusions they have reached, as we are not going to recapitulate them here - nor do they at all affect our presentation of the Buddhists' own views below. For it is the latter that concerns us here most and constitutes the all-important part of the problem. We have had too much of non-Buddhist speculation on the question at issue. The majority of the critics, while claiming to be fair and impartial, have, by some preconceived ideas, been led to a conclusion, which is not at all acceptable to intelligent Buddhists. Further, the fact has escaped their notice that Pali literature from which they chiefly derive their information on the subject represents the views of one of the many sects that arose soon after the demise of the Master and were constantly branching off at and after the time of King Asoka. The probability is that the Buddha himself did not have any stereotyped conception of nirvana,"

S: This seems rather odd. You know, although nirvana is a matter of conception. The Buddha didn't need to have any conception of nirvana at all, stereotyped or otherwise, because he had realized it. Surely Suzuki's point of view is a little bit intellectual, let us say. "The probability is that the Buddha himself did not have any stereotyped conception of nirvana." He probably has a very liberal sort of free, you know, loose conception, you might say. But it seems very odd to think of the Buddha in that sort of way at all. There was the Buddha who was nirvana, in human form, who had realized it, and experienced it, did not even have to think about it or form conceptions about it, what it might be like.

Ratnapani: This bit suggests to me that Shakyamuni would only have experienced nirvana in fact after the parinirvana, and not before that; like going to heaven. [105]

S: No, I don't think that was meant.

"and, as most great minds do, expressed his ideas outright as formed under various circumstances; though of course they could not be in contradiction with his central beliefs, which must have remained the same throughout the course of his religious life."

S: Well, the Buddha wasn't just a great mind; he was an Enlightened mind. And he didn't have any beliefs, "which must have remained the same throughout the course of his religious life"! He had his own enlightened experience, going on all the time, and he was constantly referring to that; so it seems, I mean, Suzuki's almost treating him as though he was a sort of great philosopher, or something of that sort. It seems a bit regrettable.

"Therefore to understand a problem in all its apparently contradictory aspects, it is very necessary to grasp at the start the spirit of the author of the problem, and when this is done the rest will be understood comparatively much easier. Non-Buddhist critics lack in this most important qualification therefore, it is no wonder that Buddhists themselves are always reluctant to accede to their interpretations."

S: Carry on.

Nagabodhi: I just wonder, actually, when he keeps saying things like this, whether there's a two-pronged fork in his references to Christian thinking and his Buddhist interpretation. But you might be giving them a bit of their own medicine, because a lot of Christians would be horrified by his interpretations of the crucifixion, for example. He's showing them what its like.

"Enough for apology. Nirvana, according to Buddhists, does not signify an annihilation of consciousness nor a temporal or permanent suppression of mentation as imagined by some; but it is the annihilation of the notion of ego- substance and of all the desires that arise from this erroneous conception. But this represents the negative side of the doctrine, and its positive side consists in universal love or sympathy for all beings."

S: That's fair enough. It's a straightforward and simple statement of what nirvana broadly is. This certainly could be accepted, I think, by all Buddhists.

"There two aspects of Nirvana, i. e., negatively, the destruction of evil passions, and, positively, the practice of sympathy, are complementary to each other; and when we have one we have the other. Because, as soon as the heart is freed from the cangue of egoism, the same heart, hitherto so cold and hard, undergoes a complete change, shows animation, and, joyously escaping from self- imprisonment, finds its freedom in the bosom of Dharmakaya. In this latter sense, Nirvana is the "humanization" of Dharmakaya, that is to say, "God's will done in earth as it is in heaven." If we make use of

the terms, subjective and objective. Nirvana is the former, and the Dharmakaya is the latter phase of one and the same principle. Again, psychologically, Nirvana is enlightenment, the actualization of the bodhicitta (Heart of Intelligence)."

S: The full development of the bodhicitta. Again, well, fair enough, you know, apart from the partial comparison with Christianity.

"The gospel of love and the doctrine of Nirvana may appear to some to contradict each other, for they think that the former is the source of energy and activity, while the latter is a lifeless, inhuman, ascetic quietism. But the truth is, love is the emotional aspect and Nirvana the intellectual aspect of the inmost religious consciousness which constitutes the essence of the Buddhist life." [106]

S: That's fair enough, provided we aren't too critical about the terms. One could criticize the use of the word love, because that is so misleading and misunderstood, and the use of the word 'intellectual', but apart from that, again, it is a pretty fair statement of the position.

Ratnapani: I don't see that nirvana could be an aspect of anything.

S: Yes, he's using the word very loosely, don't forget, and he's already said that it's the subjective, you know, as opposed to the objective side, the dharmakaya being objective, and it is also true that, I mean, many terms are used in Buddhism: Nirvana, bodhi, prajā, tathata, dharmakaya, etc., so you could say that they all represented different aspects of something, for want of a better term, whatever it was, which was indefinable. In that sense, as a term, Nirvana is an aspect. It just gives one side only of that sort of quite incomprehensible whatever-it-is. So you can speak of it as the intellectual aspect; I personally wouldn't. I think even that is too narrow, you know, too limiting. But anyway, he's just trying to put across that there are these two aspects - the, as it were, intellectual, and the, as it were, emotional - and nirvana isn't just something cold and dead and intellectual as was the general impression in Christian circles; and even is now, you know, generally! So he's quite right in wanting to try and correct that, and bringing out the emotional or as it were emotional side, and saying, 'No, love springs forth from nirvana, I mean, love in the best and highest sense; it is not just a cold, intellectual principle, there is the other side too.' And he does insist, all through his writings, on that, and very rightly.

"That Nirvana is the destruction of selfish desires is plainly shown in this stanza: "To the giver merit is increased;
When the senses are controlled anger arises not,
The wise forsake evil,
By the destruction of desire, sin, and infatuation,
A man attains to Nirvana.""

S: This shows one aspect of nirvana. Carry on.

"The following which was breathed forth by Buddha against a certain class of monks, testifies that when nirvana is understood in the sense of quietism or pessimism, he vigorously repudiated it:

"Fearing an endless chain of birth and death,
And the misery of transmigration,
Their heart is filled with worry,
But they desire their safety only,

"Quietly sitting and reckoning the breaths,
They're bent on the Anapanam.
They contemplate on the filthiness of the body,
Thinking how impure it is!

"They shun the dust of the triple world,
And in ascetic practice their safety they seek:
Incapable of love and sympathy are they,
For on Nirvana abides their thought."

S: Let's read the little footnote, on anapanam; which is, of course, the mindfulness of breathing. See what Suzuki at this stage has to say about that.

"This is a peculiarly Indian religious practice, which consists in counting one's exhaling and inhaling breaths. When a man is intensely bent on the practice, he gradually passes to a state of trance, forgetting everything that is going on around and within himself. The practice may have the merit of alleviating nervousness and giving to the mind the bliss of relaxation, but it oftentimes leads the mind to a self-hypnotic state."

S: So he doesn't seem quite sure about the practice. Even though it is a very basic one. As for this verse he translates from the Udana, I think he's got it quite wrong. The Buddha isn't testifying "that when Nirvana is understood in the sense of quietism or pessimism he vigorously repudiated [107] it". The Buddha is approving nirvana here, as far as I recollect the Udana, and approving the attitude of the monks, but there is a query about the translation here when he says, 'incapable of love and sympathy are they'. Now the words 'love' and 'sympathy' in English here, in this translation, are used in a quite different sense from that in which Suzuki has just used them - just worldly love and sympathy and attachment - that this particular verse is talking about, and the monks he refers to are incapable of attachment, because their whole thought is concentrated on nirvana. So there's quite a bit of confusion and misunderstanding here. And this is a bit fresh in my mind, because, of course, we did that Udana seminar not so very long ago. He's quoting from General Strong's translation which was the earliest one, but was certainly rather shaky.

Mamaki: About this self-hypnotic state, I don't know what people mean when they talk about this, but a lot of people have said to me this is what can happen in meditation; nobody has said it who has ever experienced it themselves,

S: Yes. Right.

Mamaki: ... but they always know what somebody else ...

S: Yes, I've come across this too. This used to be very current in the Buddhist Society, that you had to be very careful you didn't get into a state of auto-hypnosis if you practised meditation. I mean, people have even asked me about this, and I've said that I didn't think an auto-hypnotic state was at all a bad one to be in, it could be quite positive, but it wasn't quite meditation, but there was nothing wrong with it, you know, in itself, it could be quite relaxing and quite helpful. But there seems to be this terrible fear of getting into an auto-hypnotic state; but, as you say, no one has ever, you know, been in it, it's always someone else.

Mamaki: No. It's always somebody else, or there might be the danger...

S: Or just purely abstract.

Mamaki: But do you know anybody who's, you know ...

S: Well the only person I know who has got any experience of hypnotism is our friend Sudatta, who could probably put himself into a hypnotic state with the greatest of ease, but what have you got to say about it?

Sudatta: I'd say it would certainly be an advantage to have a hypnotic state, because you define, you would simply define a hypnotic state as a state of enhanced suggestibility, and if you're doing something like metta bhavana, too, it would have a far greater impact on you, learning-wise, done in a state of heightened suggestibility [108] rather than a state of more normal consciousness, when your mind is teeming with counter-suggestions all the time, and other things. People define hypnosis as a state of auto-intention, because I think it is essentially one in which one has enhanced suggestibility largely because one has relaxed certain areas of one's mind which are constantly throwing up endless material. From the sheer point [of view] of learning, even in hypnotic trance, you know, twelve to fifteen times the normal suggestibility. As you go deeper you get increasing amounts, and it is just a concentration of the very process of learning, and the deeper the trance, the purer and more undiluted the signal being sent through the mind. At the same time, the deeper the trance, the more areas of your mind have been relaxed and put to sleep, as it were, so you are only conditioning an increasingly smaller part of the mind, so psychologists tend to reckon that if you are going to use it for suggestions because of its enhanced suggestibility achieved by it, that it is better to have a lot of sessions of relatively light trance than to build up to having a very deep trance and try to plant something indelibly in one go.

S: Well, this is, in effect, perhaps what happens when we have the meditation: there is a slight sort of suggestibility, and, especially when we do the metta bhavana guided practice, suggestions are then sort of gently implanted.

Sulocana: Could this be how one can learn by heart more easily? I mean, it seems no effort to remember things heard in this state ...

S: Well, you're sort of open. You remember better if you are open and receptive.

Sudatta: Yes, yes, that's very interesting. Another aspect of it is that the so-called hypnagogic state, as you go from the normal state to sleeping state, which is the one in which people who are meditating certainly would spend a lot of their time [sic], is reckoned to be the most creative state the mind goes into. This is probably one of the reasons why it is such a useful state to do a bit of mental spring cleaning, and why so many people, scientists and others, who've had tremendous inspiration about scientific theory, have had it in the bath, in a sort of ...

S: When they're relaxed.

Sudatta: ...when they're relaxed or dozing in the chair, or watching the flickering flames. It's because they're in this extremely creative, hypnagogic state.

S: Watching the apple fall.

Sudatta: Yes. [109]

Sudatta: It's said to be much more creative than the corresponding state as you wake up, I mean, close to waking, because you go through the same zone on arousal, but it is much less creative than the one as you go down.

Sulocana: Sorry, could you say that again?

Sudatta: I was just saying that between the normal consciousness waking state and the going off into a sleeping state, as you go down, you go through the hypnagogic state, which is the most creative mental state we've got. In fact a friend of mine has a thing called a hypnagogostat which keeps you permanently (laughter)

Sulocana: And the one coming out of sleep you say is not so creative.

Sudatta: It's the hypnopompic as you come out. But because of the sort of various hangover ...

S: You're getting as bad as Suzuki.

Sudatta: ... process going on, it's not as creative as the same level, of arousal, as you're going down.

Sulocana: Oh. Who found this out?

Sudatta: Er ...

S: Is this true for everybody, or would it perhaps differ from one person to another, or one temperament or another?

Sudatta: I think one would probably have to say that generally it's the so strange and various are the ways ...

S: And what about the afternoon doze, or snooze?

Sudatta: Well, you might say it depends whether you've had a big meal or are doing it on an empty stomach, you're tired, or otherwise. There are so many variables. But just as a rough guide ...

S: Anyway, what have you got to say by way of explanation of this fear, as it seems to be, of the auto-hypnotic state? That one's being warned by people, as I know myself also, 'Oh, be very careful with meditation, you might get into a state of auto-hypnosis'.

Sudatta: I think the word hypnosis is like the word 'communism' in America. You know ...

S: Black magic.

Nagabodhi: Is it not to do with this fear of being conned: that one's going to just delude oneself that there's something worth striving for, and you've just hypnotized yourself into thinking that there's something called Enlightenment. You know, you're being tricked. You know, its part of that attitude that it's a trick.

Sulocana: A fear of losing control of one's thoughts, something like this. If someone had been suppressing a lot that they don't want to think about and if they go into a semi-deny state, perhaps too many things start [110] to come ...

Devaraja: Is this a sort of fear of being laughed at, because people under hypnosis, in sort of stage acts of hypnosis, you know, they get the person to: 'Now raise your right arm' and 'jump up and down', and 'on your left leg', people do, you know, ...

S: But I don't think it's this, behind these sort of fears, because it seems to be a certain sort of person, usually someone who's into something like, say, Theosophy, or Buddhism in a sort of way, and are ostensibly interested in spiritual life; they seem very afraid of this. It's these sort of people.

Sulocana: Or being controlled by another; something taking them over, or something like that.

Vajradaka: I heard a friend - well, he wasn't a friend, he was actually, he is, a spiritual teacher - describe a process that happens during hypnosis over a long period of time, of

the separation between the link between the mind and the body, so that, say, after a long period of hypnosis that there ...

S: You mean a long single session, or a lot ...

Vajradaka: ... a lot, a long link of sessions, minor sessions, that if one was, say, standing at the road, waiting to cross, one's mind might cross the road, or one's body might cross the road, but there wouldn't be any sort of co-ordination between the two, you know, and there might be a matter of up to half a minute of separation between the two of them.

S: Oh. What would you say to this, Sudatta?

Sudatta: I think there's a fair possibility in that. I don't know what you feel about it.

Lokamitra: Would the danger be that one gets attached to these states of - they've been described to me as psychedelic states, at times - which one can experience if one wants from certain techniques, and that one gets attached to these instead of going along, one goes off at a tangent, as it were.

S: Yes, but to get back to what Mamaki said, the people she was referring to seem to be afraid of the auto-hypnotic state, not the meditative state - at least not in theory; they don't warn you against getting there, or getting attached to there. They say, 'Oh, be careful, you know, you might be practising meditation and by mistake just auto-hypnotise yourself, you know. Be careful, my dear,' you know, and so on and so forth.

Is it perhaps a fear on the part of some people of just making a [111] mistake, you know, because they're very unsure of themselves and think they might do it wrong.

Mamaki: And might fool themselves - as I think you were saying - might fool themselves into believing something that wasn't so, but they had sort of, by the self-hypnosis, persuaded themselves ...

S: Because the way you spoke about it, I got the impression that there's a dear old lady sort of afraid of taking a wrong turning.

Mamaki: No. No. Not dear old ladies at all. In fact, mostly youngish people who have, as you say, been involved in some kind of spiritual life, sometimes have got into, perhaps, a rejection of a previous religious practice.

Mangala: I think maybe it's partly because people are a bit confused and at first that are not really too sure what meditation is all about, and they are not too sure what even to expect, but they, you know, know, hypnosis exists and, you know, ...

S: They seem to have at the same time, a quite negative view of hypnosis which would seem not to be justified.

Devamitra: Do you think it could also be partly due to fear of the unknown?

S: But then, it seems that they know what auto-hypnosis is, or they seem to, or suggest that they know, but that they say, no, you mustn't go into that, you must go into meditation. Auto-hypnosis is not meditation.

Mamaki: Perhaps it's a fear that people who are involved in meditation - and one person in particular was afraid of taking it up, because of fear of self-hypnosis - they have in mind those people that they have either read about or met, who have got into a kind of hazy, I suppose a kind of hippie, frame of mind ...

S: I think these fears were around before the hippies, as such, were. Because I mean, I've encountered this sort of reference in quite old books, you know, I mean, written many years before the war, if not before the First World War.

Son: Maybe it's a fear of becoming insane; that you get, you know, hypnotic trance and you can't get out - it may be something ...

Mamaki: Yes, kind of lost to the world, so to speak ...

Sona: Or lost to yourself ...

S: Cut off ...

Sudatta: Or perhaps they fear that because hypnosis involves, to a substantial [112] extent, a disengagement of the will, some alien will-force will creep in and take you over, because you've got most of your area of what produces volition off to sleep, apart from the area which is producing suggestions you can give yourself and the exercise you're going to do, and so, as an auto-hypnotist, you've learned the whole patter off and you can, in fact, (?) put yourself down quite deeply once you practise it regularly, and I suppose at that point it's conceivable that one could be probably much more prone to being picked up by a powerful consciousness in the aura, and perhaps in Theosophical circles there are some of these sort of very powerful hypnotist people as described in sort of psychic research by the periodicals, sort of thing, who have this sort of tremendous will that they sort of radiate around them, and ...

S: Well, I was told recently, that Terry Dukes, for instance, had been accused of hypnotizing people. I felt that was rather amusing, but I think he has got that sort of reputation, even though it may not be at all well-founded, and, you know, people may have that sort of fear, for instance, with regard to him, and this can be quite a general sort of thing, especially in these sorts of circles. But what occurred to me, at least to ask, was whether there were more men, or women, or both?

Mamaki: More men than women.

S: More men than women. That's quite interesting.

Devaraja: I think it may be a fear also of loss of contact with reason and reality and kind of ... because it suggests, or to me (and that's probably my conditioning) but hypnosis suggests a kind of a kind of cutting off from the objective world and all the tangibles.

S: Hmm. Yes, very much so. Hmm. Yes.

Sudatta: In Buddhism we very much think in terms of paddling our canoes, although we act corporately we are (?) ourselves, because this is very much a lone path, and you sort of paddle down and do your own work and be captain of your own ship, as you go along, and from this point of view doesn't one talk about grasping the will, and people around oneself climbing on to that box, as it were, and anything which abates this, or might weaken your will, I think that people who go over a long period of hypnosis, would tend to become somewhat more passive, and suggestible people, just by the fact that you're doing it.

S: Anyway, let's pass on.

"Against this ascetic practice of some monks, the Buddha sets forth what might be called the ideal of the Buddhist life:

"Arouse thy will, supreme and great,
Practice love and sympathy, give joy and protection;
Thy love like unto space,
Be it without discrimination, without limitation.

"Merits establish, not for thy own sake,
But for charity universal;
Save and deliver all beings,
Let them attain the wisdom of the Great Way." [113]

S: Hm. It's interesting he doesn't give any reference for these two verses, as though it's his own little composition - I don't know whether it is or not. But anyway, it did just occur to me, he uses the word 'love' here and the word 'love' is used in the previous quote, when the ascetic monks are supposed to be quite incapable of love. And this reminds me that, in, say, the Dhammapada and in Pali literature generally, you've got two quite different words, both of which are translated usually into English as 'love' There's 'pema', (Sanskrit: preman), which means a selfish egoistic attachment kind of love, with clinging; and then metta (or Sanskrit: maitri) which is the impersonal, as it were, friendliness, and 'love' in a very sort of, in a way, spiritual sense. And these are definitely contrasted in Pali, and you are urged to get rid of pema and cultivate metta, but according to context, if you translate both by 'love', you'll be told 'to get rid of love, and to cultivate love'. And you then get this sort of confusion.

Son: It says also, a few pages back, karuna is also love.

S: Yes. Well strictly speaking that is compassion.

Lokamitra: Is pema as strong as lust?

S: No. It's very often translated as affection. It's ordinary human affection, but definitely sort of ego-based, and with, say, attachment and jealousy and confusion along with it.

Devamitra: Is it sentimental, that kind of love?

S: That's true yes.

Devamitra: Because I've been reading that in fact you discussed in the last seminar ...

S: We did talk about sentimentalism in general; what it was, you know, at some length.

"It is apparent that the ethical application of the doctrine of nirvana is naught else than the Golden Rule, so called."

S: I think we've got our 'diamond rule'!

Lokamitra: "The Golden Rule, however, does not give any reason why we should so act, it is a mere command whose authority is ascribed to a certain superhuman being. This does not satisfy an intellectually disposed mind, which refuses to accept anything on mere authority, for it wants to go to the bottom of things and see on what ground they are standing, Buddhism has solved this problem by finding the oneness of things in Dharmakaya, from which flows the eternal stream of love and sympathy. As we have seen before, when the cursed barrier of egoism is broken down, there remains nothing that can prevent us from loving others as ourselves."

S: Well that's very true, but the only question is, to what it is helpful in breaking down the barrier of egoism to reflect on the metaphysical principle of oneness? Do you see the point of Suzuki's criticism of Christianity, which may not be completely valid, I'm afraid? There is the Golden Rule, 'Do as you would be done by.' So he says, according to Christianity, this is laid down by an authority: God says, or Christ says, 'Do as you would be done by,' and you're not allowed to ask what is the reason for this, other than that it is God's will, you just have to [114] do it. But, he says, in Mahayana Buddhism we're given a reason: do as you would be done by because you're all essentially one. But this would not necessarily carry conviction to everybody, or they might raise further questions, or they might even reject it completely, but I think it is perhaps a rather dangerous thing to ground an ethical observance or ethical conduct on an abstract metaphysical principle, you know, just presented intellectually. And I mean you could suggest the practice or precept in such a sympathetic way, you wouldn't be laying as an authority but also you wouldn't be laying as an authority but also you wouldn't perhaps have to invoke some metaphysical principle as a principal explanation and therefore as an incentive to practise. In a way, what you said would be self-evident, it would carry its own conviction, because of the way in which you said that your whole attitude, and your

behaviour towards that person. That might be much more convincing and persuasive than your sort of hitting him over the head with your principle of oneness. I think Suzuki's a bit of an intellectual, or at least he was at that time.

Also, this also occurs to me, before we do go on - it seems to me that sometimes, to ask for reasons, or to demand reasons, or want to have a reason for doing something before you do it, is a sign of deep inner insecurity. Anyone got anything [to say on] this? It's just been a reflection of mine recently, as I've been thinking over certain things.

Devaraja: Can you be more specific about what caused you to think that?

S: Well, for instance, in my contact with people, I see that some people accept an idea or a suggestion very quickly and easily, and go off and do it. But others seem very unsure, and they say, 'Well, why?' You know, 'What good would it do?' 'Well, it would do such and such.' 'How do you know? How can you be sure?' meaning how can I be sure? Then in the end one has to say, 'Well, look, you can only try, you know, the ultimate test is that, well, what happens when you actually do that thing? What, in fact, you do experience? What does happen? But they want to be sure, first, then, that, well, if they do that, then they will certainly get that sort of result, and you've got to prove that they will, to their complete satisfaction, before they will embark on the practice. Do you know what I mean?

Mamaki: Something to do with the reverse of it, perhaps. That an anxiety from past conditioning, perhaps, that wrong decisions bring punishment or disapproval. Well, that's punishment, too, so that there is a need to feel that something is going to, at any rate, have livelihood ... [115]

S: They seem to want to be sure of doing things in the right way, and to be convinced of that beforehand and have it completely foolproof, otherwise they don't feel able to step forth.

Mamaki: This really is the anxiety of consequent pain.

S: Right. But sometimes the situation or the subject is such that it cannot be proved and demonstrated beforehand: they just have to take a chance. But to take a chance is something, and it, just from a common sense point of view, is not even a chance - a chance is something this they feel unable to take. Even a very little matter becomes almost a matter of life and death, and they have to be absolutely certain.

Devamitra: Don't you think that it could also be because they don't want to do it anyway?

S: It could be that, sometimes. It is actual resistance and they don't, like, say, 'Well, I don't really want to do it.' They are just finding reasons not to do it. It can be that too, yes.

Mamaki: And you would know from the general pattern of the person that ...

S: Yes. Right, yes.

Mamaki: Some people do feel very insecure in that, so to speak - it sounds a bit Christian, in a way - but they grow up with a feeling of themselves as being bad, no good, useless, or something, so that whatever they feel they are going to do seems automatically to be wrong, so they want these kinds of reassurances.

S: Hm. Hmm. Yes. Hm. Yes.

Vajradaka: So it just shows them so clearly that they can't really see what the consequences could possibly be,

S: Hmm. Yes. That's true. Yes.

Vajradaka: And that's just pushing them into the sort of very basic situation of not seeing, and just not liking that they don't see, or we don't see, or I don't see. And it's, you know, that's how it is.

S: But I mean - this just occurs to me because Suzuki seems to be giving reasons for something where one would think, well, reasons just weren't necessary - it's self-evident, you know, to an ordinary human consciousness. You don't have to bring in, drag in, your metaphysical principle to get people to be a bit decent or unselfish; it just doesn't happen. (several insistent voices) I mean, for instance, like this morning when our battery went flat, one of [116] my next door neighbours came and helped us, but, you know, we didn't invoke the metaphysical principle of oneness - that, you know, we are fundamentally one and therefore, if you help us you are helping yourself - he just came and helped us. There was a bit of fellow-feeling, you see.

Sulocana: I have been asked this, though: 'Why should I do this?' Karen has asked me. And I couldn't give any good reason then.

S: Well, you can't, I think. I'm sure he wouldn't have been convinced by the metaphysical principle of oneness, whatever, however plausibly you had argued, or however forcefully you had presented it, he would have found counter-arguments which might have been better than yours.

Sulocana: And he couldn't see any reason why he should, and for what reason anyone ever did this.

S: Yes. Hm. So it seems as though the deep, instinctual motivation has somehow gone wrong, yes? And spiritual life consists not so much in cancelling these out, or crushing them, but in gradually refining them and guiding them.

Devaraja: It's interesting. It might be something about Suzuki and Japanese culture in general at that time. I think it was still very much oriented sort of (unclear) and oriented to sort of complete obedience to the emperor, and to the head of the clan, and with very heavy punishment on people who didn't immediately do things such and such a way and right.

Sudatta: Do you think that in Japanese culture there's a weakness generally on this love and compassion factor? That Japanese as a lot are a hard-baked and sort of more sadistic and tradition ...

S: Well I'm afraid I do get that impression. For instance, they go through a most drastic toilet training at a very early age, and surely this has its consequences, if we can go by modern psychology and psychiatry at all. Apparently they are sort of drastically toilet trained by the time they are about eight or nine months old, and really severely.

Vajradaka: Really?

S: Yes.

Sulocana: There are English books - well, one I know of - a nurse who advocated this as the method, traditional English, so there might be in England, too.

S: Whereas in India, they don't really bother to toilet train them at all, very often; they just go sort of wiping it up after them, and this [117] goes on till about seven or eight years of age and then they stop doing it of their own accord, you know. So the Indian has a quite sort of different character from Asian, on the whole.

Vajradaka: They just go and do it by the railway.

Devaraja: I was - [this is] really amusing - I first got to India, how, well, Indian children certainly - girls and boys used to wear little skirts and didn't have anything underneath the skirts - the Tibetan boys all used to have the middle seam from here right through to the back completely unstitched. And when they wanted to go ... (laughing)

S: As soon as they squatted it automatically (drowned by laughter) ingenious, huh?

Devaraja: I must say, they do seem an incredibly cheerful people.

S: Right. Yes.

Mamaki: Is it not so much the training, but the way in which the training is undertaken, because, you know, you can either punish the behaviour you don't want, or encourage the one you do. Now, if you're going to punish all the behaviour you don't like, then this makes for hardness and anger and all sorts ...

S: Well, apparently the traditional Japanese method I understand is ridiculous. The young are constantly ridiculed and made to feel ashamed. And this also links up with the Japanese Zen practice of mirroring, which is a form of ridiculing. Of course, it is widely used in Japanese social life, that you ridicule people by mirroring their behaviour, in other words, by mirroring them, and by ridiculing them whether verbally or mirroring actions, to make them feel ashamed and reduce them to obedience. This is widely used. For instance, there's a little story, quoted, incidentally, in a Zen text, admirably, you know, as a good example. For instance, the teacher in school noticed that some of his pupils were dozing during his lesson, so the next lesson he walked straight in, put his arms on the table and went off to sleep. When he woke up after twenty minutes everybody was sitting there absolutely rigid and terrified and wide awake. And the Zen book quoted this very approvingly, that this is the right sort of technique, and very skilful means, huh? And in the same way, the Zen master or Zen teacher, mirrors your behaviour, and this seems to be purely Japanese, and a bit negative. Yes? It's a form of ridicule, to make you feel ashamed and to correct you and make you more obedient. And it seems in Japanese society, traditionally, perhaps not so much now, the young are systematically ridiculed, occasionally young men, and made to feel ashamed and made to feel embarrassed and in this way kept [118] under control; never praised or admired.

Vajradaka: ... teaching of karate ...

S: Ah, for instance, another thing I noticed - I was just flipping through Terry Duke's karate manual, and there's the list of qualities of the true sensei: 'the true sensei never gives any praise.' I felt, well, how un-Buddhistic. 'Never gives any praise'. He never praises his students. I don't know if this is true of Zen, as a method, but certainly it is not the Buddhist tradition generally, not to praise. The Buddha certainly praised. 'Sadhu, Sadhu. Well done, O monk.' Or 'Well said.' We do praise and we do approve and we do express that very positively, and this is a good thing in Buddhism. But this not praising seems to be Japanese, nothing to do with Buddhism, nothing really to do with Zen. So this seems to be negative control.

It seems to me, therefore, this is one of the reasons why I say that into the practice of Zen in Japan certain things have crept that are Japanese rather than Buddhistic, and may even be quite out of harmony with Buddhism.

Devaraja: I sort of heard about this mirroring thing in connection with Jiyu Roshi, and with the senior monk ...

S: Well, she seems to use it quite indiscriminately, and, if I may say so, unintelligently.

Vajradaka: It's quite popular up in Glasgow.

S: With whom?

Vajradaka: With the Friends.

S: Well, watch it then. (amusement)

Vajradaka: Well, I have. But, you know, they seemed to think that it was a very efficacious and meritorious thing to do, and they thought that it was sort of standard practice for Friends, so I pointed out to them that it ...

S: Well, how did they get that impression?

Vajradaka: No one used any names, but they said that certain Order members who had been up had used it.

S: Oh! Oh!

Devamitra: I've never seen any Order member doing it.

Nagabodhi: I've seen Padmaraja do it once or twice, actually. I mean his normal way's praise, actually, but I have seen him do it and maybe that ...

S: Well, I'm not saying that it is to be altogether excluded. I mean that would be going to the other extreme. There may be occasions when a [119] little gentle mirroring is quite appropriate. But I think its force derives from the fact that it is a generally socially understood technique. For instance, I'm told - I don't know how correct this is - that Jiyu's head monk was doing this at Sarum House. He thought that everybody was being a bit greedy as regards the food, so he went into the kitchen and he was really greedy himself. But apparently no one understood what he was trying to do, and they were commenting among themselves afterwards how greedy the head monk was. (laughter) (unclear) (drowned in uproarious laughter)

Well, perhaps they weren't even being greedy, you know. Perhaps he'd arbitrarily decided that they were. So he seems to me to be therefore doing it a bit mechanically and not considering whether it was a technique which would be understood. It's no use saying, 'Well, stupid people, they ought to understand.' You are supposed to be teaching them, and you are supposed to be devising the skilful means, i.e. the means that get across to them. And what is a skilful means in Japan may not be a skilful means here. So you're not really seeing the situation and seeing them, you're just mechanically continuing to use a certain method.

Devaraja: (unclear) indigestion! (uproar)

S: Probably rather annoyed, rather angry. And also, I think, if you're not careful, it can be a rationalization and you're not actually mirroring; that you're doing it yourself. Hm. Anyway, let's go on.

Lokamitra: Can I just bring up another point, back to the idea of the use of that - I don't remember what it is called, whatever - from its counterpart, anatta, doctrine. I've found it

quite useful to consider to combat attachment, and they seem to go together very much there - oneness of things and emptiness or ... I just thought ...

S: Well, if one finds it useful to contemplate in that way, well certainly do so. But all I'm rather wondering is how useful these abstract or what seem to be abstract principles are when we are dealing with people who perhaps have got no contact with Buddhism, and they certainly don't accept Buddhism, and, you know, might think or feel all these things rather unreal.

Mangala: Usually you find that these are the areas in which people do seem to know about Buddhism, if you like, you know.

S: Yes. Right.

Mangala: That's where you can usually relate to them in these kind of things. [120]

S: Or at least talk to them. I doubt whether they would really relate.

Mangala: Yes. But it's very sort of tedious.

S: It's as though people know everything about Buddhism that isn't necessary to know! (amused noises) All right. On to the next.

"Those who wish to see nothing but an utter barrenness of heart after the annihilation of egoism, are much mistaken in their estimation of human nature. For they think its animation comes from selfishness, and that all forms of activity in our life are propelled simply by the desire to preserve self and the race. They, therefore, naturally shrink from the doctrine that teaches that all things worldly are empty, and that there is no such thing as ego-substance whose immortality is so much coveted by most people. But the truth is, the spring of love does not lie in the idea of self, but in its removal. For the human heart, being a reflection of the Dharmakaya which is love and intelligence, recovers its intrinsic power and goodness, only when the veil of ignorance and egoism is cast aside. The animation, energy, strenuousness, which were shown by a self-centred will, and which therefore were utterly despicable, will surely not die out with the removal of their odious atmosphere in which egoism had enveloped them. But they will gain an ever nobler interpretation, ever more elevating and satisfying significance; for they have gone through a baptism of fire, by which the last trace of egoism has been thoroughly consumed. The old evil master is eternally buried, but the willing servants are still here and ever ready to do their service, now more efficiently, for their new legitimate and more authoritative lord."

S: Hm. Yes. I don't quite know who these people are that Suzuki is referring to, but what he says, you know, in substance, in itself is completely valid. I mean, do you think that people ever do think that, you know, when you're sort of selfish egoistic instincts have been dissolved, that you'll just reach a dead, inert state?

Ratnapani: I've had it said to me.

S: Have you? Hm.

Devaraja: Usually with people who already strongly identify with their cravings and their desires as being what they are, and they don't have much sort of contact with an emotional response to life in a ...

S: In a more refined way.

Devaraja: Yes.

Ratnapani: Scared people, very little people, who've got no sort of horizon outside of a very narrow one. (pause)

Devaraja: Often people who've got no contact even with ... or they don't even subscribe to ethics to any degree.

Lokamitra: I think this is becoming even more common today, perhaps again. I notice it among people I used to know quite well who may be still involved with drugs or whatever, that they will defend these certain aspects of what they consider very important in their lives.

Nagabodhi: I've found that (?) with people who are into truth (?) (?) ... (?) [121] just represents everything.

Devaraja: A form of hedonism.

S: Yes. Right. Vajrabodhi in Helsinki had been having quite a few thoughts on what he calls 'naturalism' - that's his word for, you know, well, hedonism, in fact - and he's been wiring to me that there are quite a few people who are attracted by the Friends who are not really interested in the Dharma, though they may think they are, but in a purely hedonistic approach, and even meditation can become just a more refined hedonism.

Son: Is he talking about Friends here or Friends in Finland?

S: I think he had Friends here in mind more, because he filters there much more carefully than perhaps it is possible for us to do in London. He screens people much more.

Voice: Really?

S: Oh, yes. He's very ... but it's possible there because people come along singly and there are not very many of them, and they don't tend to come just to the group, and just sort of fit in; they tend to come and see him personally, or come to see Bodhisri personally, even not the two of them together, and then he will invite them to this class or that class if he thinks they are suited, or he may even discourage them from coming.

Devaraja: Do you think that's maybe ... not entirely advisable - discouraging people from coming - on the basis that the practice itself might help them to modify their reasons ...

S: Well, I think at present he is justified because the group is quite small, but it's a very pure group, the quality is quite good, he's very clean, as it were, and he feels he must have a strong nucleus at first before he tries to expand to take in too many kinds of people. And he has recently written about whether he should accept into the group someone who is mentally disturbed, and this particular person wants to be a mitra - they've somehow heard about the kalyana mitra system - and I've advised him against it, and said, you know, you're not in a position to handle it.

Sudatta: What's exactly wrong with the hedonist approach? After all, in Buddhism one talks about the absolute reality as being (unclear) [122] and a state of bliss.

S: No, not ?saggidana. That's Vedantic.

Sudatta: Is it?

S: Yes.

Sudatta: It does appear in Buddhist texts.

S: No. No. Not that expression, not ?saggidana? No.

Sudatta: Well, the Buddha, Buddha, Buddha somewhere says that he ...

S: (breaking in) Nirvana is bliss!

Sudatta: ... he says to the Emperor, 'You only are in bliss every now and again, but I'm in constant bliss.'

S: Right. Yes.

Sudatta: So he obviously correlates bliss as one of the spin-offs of getting the nirvanic experience.

S: Oh, yes, sure! The Buddha says that nirvana is bliss, but the hedonist says that bliss is nirvana. (laughs from one or two) Yes? Almost any sort of bliss!

Ratnapani: You mean nirvana's (equal to?) the old cream cakes. (laughter)

S: Sure we must steer a middle way between self-torture and self-indulgence. I think in modern society it's the extreme of self-indulgence, not to say hedonism, that needs to be avoided rather than that of self-torture. Self torture, except perhaps in the form of repression, is something, that, you know, hardly comes into question. People certainly

don't deliberately torture themselves, but I think they do quite deliberately go seeking pleasure, in a rather narrow sense, even a self-defeating sort of way. And very often the people who sort of seek pleasure end up, you know, rather sad sort of people. I was reading about this somewhere recently, what was that? I think it was a newspaper article about this, and, yes, it was, I think, someone who had been very, very wealthy, and been sort of practically a millionaire, had the best of possible 'good times'; and even looked back on it happily and enjoyed it in retrospect. (pause)

Sudatta: I was somewhat surprised to read in, I think, the Times a couple of years ago an obituary on Sir Maurice Bowra of Oxford [5 July 1971, p.14, tr.][123]

S: Who?

Sudatta: On Sir Maurice Bowra.

S: Oh yes?

Sudatta: Who was a paragon of the age of classical culture, so witty, and very learned. He'd read everything and was a great don, and Camus ... one can imagine a whole generation at Oxford modelled themselves on him as being the ideal to aim after, and it gave his summary of his philosophy which was rather hedonistic, but in spite of all these theories, if people live more by the pleasure principle he thought he would have a much better world, and I was rather surprised that ... to read this from somebody so (?), representing ...

S: Well, what does one mean by pleasure? I mean there are refined pleasures as well as unrefined ones.

Mangala: I think if so-called pleasures really do give you pleasure and satisfy you, it's fair enough, but I think, you know, they might do for a while but, you know,...

S: I mean, one need not adopt a puritanical attitude towards pleasure, but I think one just has to be careful that you are not using the pleasures - even the quite normal pleasures of life - as a sort of neurotic substitute for something else. (pause) I mean cream cakes are fine, we can entirely enjoy a cream cake, but, you know, supposing we insisted on having cream cakes with every meal, even for every meal. Well, obviously there is something wrong (laughs) if I'm not even enjoying them, just sort of compulsively swallowing them. (pause)

Pleasure is so dull. Really. The life of pleasure. It is quite right (unclear) ... a slave of pleasure! You really are a slave!

Devamitra: I think there's usually quite a desperate sort of attitude behind that pleasure-seeking all the time. I came across this very much amongst theatrical people because it is a rather hedonistic society generally, but there's a sort of very desperate element

there as well. I mean, I know this within myself. I've been fully caught up in it myself at that time.

S: You know, and trying to convince people you are having a more pleasant time than they are, you've had a more pleasant sort of weekend, and all that sort of thing, you hear this, too. [124] This is why, you know, the indiscriminate use of this 'Oh, it's absolutely marvellous; had a wonderful time', you know? The same sort of mentality is behind these sorts of expressions. 'Oh, it was absolutely fantastic!' 'Never known anything like it!' 'Oh, you absolutely should have been there!' 'Oh, I'm so sorry you missed it!' You know? 'It was absolutely wonderful!' (laughter)

Vajradaka: I think I've heard that somewhere else! (laughter)

S: I'm sure you have. Anyway, to get back to what Suzuki was saying about, I mean, the spiritual life is a positive life. You just don't become more and more dry and barren - you just become more active and happier and more creative as you go merrily up that spiritual spiral. You don't become all dry and desiccated; you have a better and better time. Even though you may also have to undergo quite a bit of pain and suffering, but it is not incompatible. There is an overall enjoyment of what is happening. (pause) All right, carry on.

"Destruction is in common parlance closely associated with nothingness, hence Nirvana, the destruction of egoism, is ordinarily understood as a synonym of nihilism. But the removal of darkness does not bring desolation, but means enlightenment, order and peace. It is the same chamber, all the furniture is left there as it was before. In darkness chaos reigned, goblins walked wild; in enlightenment everything is in its proper place. And did we not state plainly that Nirvana was enlightenment?"

S: I think there are so many misunderstandings about nirvana current that what Suzuki emphasizes still needs to be emphasized. But we need to emphasize very much the positive side of the spiritual life, huh? Even if we have to put it a bit crudely sometimes, so that people don't get the impression that Buddhism expects you to work your way towards a state of annihilation, of destruction, and that your ego just disintegrates and just a great yearning void is left - [that] that's the goal - we mustn't give people that impression. Even if we do put it rather strongly the other way, so strongly that a subsequent correction may be necessary, it doesn't matter. Even if you have to speak in terms of a positive principle, even [125] a dharmakaya, in a Suzuki-like way, well, never mind - that is better.

Lokamitra: This is the value of a sangha in a way.

S: Yes.

Lokamitra: Because people see that people aren't all dull and gloomy ...

S: And they're quite puzzled.

Lokamitra: Yes.

S: I mean, how is it that Buddhists should be so cheerful? 'You ought not to be cheerful! You're a Buddhist!' 'A cheerful Buddhist is a contradiction in terms! You're probably a bad Buddhist!' Sometimes people almost feel this; almost say it, even. They expect you to be rather, you know, stiff and gloomy, almost; certainly very serious, very sober.

Ratnapani: That's funny. I found last year the opposite. People I've met, their preconception would be, if you're not smiling, you're being a bad Buddhist.

S: I think that's more among Buddhists themselves, that, isn't it?

Lokamitra: Possibly it is among Buddhists, but in non-Buddhists people are quite convinced - you know, middle-aged friends of my parents - that Buddhists spend their whole time chuckling and smiling ...

S: The laughing Buddha image!

Sudatta: Young people do ...

S: Well, in a way, yes. A successful Buddhist should be happy, and, you know, if you're not yet happy, well, you're still, to some extent, a Buddhist in the making, so you have to admit, well, yes, I'm just trying to be a Buddhist, I recognize a Buddhist should be positive and happy. The trouble is that they then think that they are the positive people, and that they are sort of more enlightened than you, even on your own terms. And then they'll just be wallowing in their own self-satisfaction, not really happy and joyful at all. There's not very much you can say then, but you just have to keep quiet, probably...
(break in recording)

Vajradaka: ... These people were Buddhists; very strict. Buddhists should be always in the realm of light and love and not do anything which is in any way heavy or sort of strong or firm or in any way nasty or that could be called nasty or kind of assertive or regressive. [126]

S: I should think the reason for this is a lot of people who get into what, for want of a better term, may be called spiritual life, or even pseudo-spiritual life are just weak people who can't cope with society, with the demands of society and other people, so that when they do go into sort of spiritual life or pseudo-spiritual life they want everything sweet and nice, sort of comfortable and pleasant, and non-demanding. I think this is what is at the back of much of this sort of approach. They are really, in a sense, nice but inadequate people.

Lokamitra: It's interesting there - the summer retreat - the Sufi who was staying there read a lot of palms on the Order retreat and said that he had noticed this: that most people involved in the spiritual life - just about everyone he's come across - their hands

show severe lack of confidence during childhood, and he noticed this was true about all the Order and - I'll tell you later whether it's true about you ... (much laughter)

S: Please do.

Mangala: He said it would be true of you, too.

Lokamitra: But it's as if this is necessary to give the push to ...

S: Well, that's all right if it's the push, because, I mean, anything's all right that gives the push; the push is what you need. But if you go on remaining like that and your whole spiritual life becomes a justification for that, well, that's quite a different thing. That's why people just take the sort of sweetly scented side of Buddhism and leave the other side. Forget all about these powerful, wrathful deities, which do mean something. Flames: forget all about the flames. All they want is, you know, the sweet incense and the lotus flowers. They just develop in a very sentimental attitude.

Lokamitra: Almost a sensuous approach to the ...

S: That's true. Then it verges on the hedonistic. It can be just weak and sloppy, the diluted rosewater sort of approach. (pause)

Mamaki: This sort of expectation can then act as a very strong inhibitor of anyone who is wanting to get out of that kind of thing.

S: Yes. Right. Yes.

Mamaki: It seems so bad to everybody else.

S: And then they can make you feel that it's bad, and it's un-Buddhistic; that you should always be very sweet and very soft and very gentle, and that something a bit hard and a bit straight and a bit strong is un-Buddhistic and it's frowned upon. [127] Certainly the Friends as a whole has gone through this phase, there's no doubt, but I think most of Order members at least are now quite well out of this, but it was fairly general a few years ago.

Ratnapani: [R.D.] Lang interpreted the gesture of somebody putting their arm around somebody else as meaning 'let me protect you from my violence'.

S: Yes.

Ratnapani: I mean I feel that ties in quite ...

S: Oh, yes, yes.

Ratnapani: ... people scared of their own aggression.

S: Right. I think this is very true. I think that a lot of people are scared of their own aggression.

Devaraja: I must say I have found that I really kind of switch off when there's an excessive amount of hugging going on - this great sort of over-effusive sort of greeting as everybody sort of dives into everyone else's lap.

S: Very often it is a mask for repressed aggressiveness. I'm quite sure that I've picked this up, I've seen this, though more with some people than with others. With some it is a genuine outward-going affection, you could say, if not metta, but with others you know there definitely is aggressiveness, I think. Sometimes even the display of affection is a bit aggressive, you know, as though you've got to accept it whether you really like it or not.

Mamaki: It is also a defensive thing: if I'm hugging you then you ...

S: ... you've got to hug me ...

Mamaki: Well, you wouldn't be really attacking me, you know ...

S: Yes. Right. Right. Yes. Hum. (laughter)

Mamaki: ... that's your function, isn't it? If you're nice to somebody else, then they're not going to attack you.

S: Well, this is animal behaviour, isn't it? Animals sort of submit to one...

Mamaki: Yes. Exactly. Yes. Yes. Yes.

S: ...another. Or they even, you know, expose themselves in the sense that they make themselves vulnerable. The other animal then is, well [127] his aggressiveness is inhibited; he just walks away. For instance, some animals expose their throats, then the stronger animal just can't do anything. They expose their more vulnerable part. It seems dogs do this, and wolves.

Devaraja: Yes, I've noticed this with cats and dogs coming up to humans; they really do that to get them stroked.

S: So I think we have to be very careful. I mean sure: real, true, positive metta is a very valuable thing and it must be cultivated. If it isn't there, there's no Buddhism. But we don't want any sort of sloppy, sentimental imitation. We also don't want pseudo-hardness, you know. So there are all sorts of pitfalls that one must avoid. But, broadly speaking, I do feel that most of the younger people who come into the spiritual life are, for want of a better term, you know, coming through weakness, and remain weak for a long time; have to be built up and strengthened, almost. And some may stay in the spiri-

tual life then, and some may not. Some may go just go back and just lead, you know, ordinary lives in society.

Ratnapani: The stronger ones seem, at least the apparently strong people, seem to get involved with the more dubious movements, the really outgoing powerful people.

S: Yes. Right. Yes. (pause) All right. The last section in the chapter.

"The Intellectual tendency of Buddhism. One thing which in this connection I wish to refer to, is what makes Buddhism appear somehow cold and impassive. By this I mean its intellectuality."

"The fact is that anything coming from India greatly savours of philosophy ... (to end of paragraph) ... Buddhism, as a product of these people, is naturally deeply imbued with intellectualism."

S: There's a great deal of truth in this, and I've said it myself very often. Sometime's I've said that in India they talk about philosophy just like in this country they talk about the weather. (amusement) But it isn't really indicative, necessarily, of a genuine interest in philosophy or what philosophy represents. It's very often just talk, and after a while in India, a few years in India, you realize this: that these people are just talking. They talk about Brahman, and Mahaya, and Isvara, and bhakti, and jnana, and so on and so forth, and you have the old story about the snake and the rope for the hundredth time: it's all just talk. [129] It means very little indeed. Again Suzuki does say "Buddhism, as a product of these people". Buddhism is not a product of those people: it's a product, if it was a product at all, of the Buddha's enlightened consciousness trying to communicate with unenlightened people. What Indian culture contributed, what the Indian people contributed, was the cultural medium, the medium of expression, the language. But to speak of Buddhism as a product of any people is absolutely ridiculous. If it's a product at all, it's a product of an enlightened individual. Here, again, Suzuki's being a bit careless.

"Further, in India there was no distinction between religion and philosophy. they did not believe in anything blindly ... This spirit of self reliance ... later became singularly Buddhistic ... (to end of paragraph) ... What enlightened man would go by another's faith? The multitudes are like the blind lead in darkness by the blind."

" To say simply, 'Love your enemy,' was not satisfactory to the Hindu mind ... as soon as people were convinced intellectually, they went even so far as to defend the faith with their lives ... (to end of paragraph) ... They were above all a people of intellect, though, of course not lacking in religious sentiment."

S: This is a bit of a generalization. I would say this applied more to the upper classes or castes, especially to the Brahmins. It didn't apply nearly so much to people lower down on the social level.

"It is no wonder, then, that the Buddha did not make the first proclamation of his message by 'Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand,' but by the establishment of the Four Noble Truths. One appeals to the feeling and the other to the intellect."

S: I don't think that you can really sort of divide in this way. I won't say anything about whether the appeal of Christianity is to the feelings or the intellect, but when we were studying the Udana, for instance, we certainly didn't find that the Buddha was having a purely intellectual approach or appeal, and we certainly didn't find him establishing the Four Noble Truths first: they were only mentioned once in the whole of this archaic text. And it does seem that emotion, in a refined sense, played its part from the very beginning. Also the whole man was involved: the Buddha himself was enlightened in his total being, and the people to whom he spoke were, as far as we can make out, totally committed to the search for realization, for enlightenment, and so the Buddha presented his teaching to them, as it were, totally, not just making a sort of intellectual appeal. But I think there is no doubt, it must be said, that later on, certainly, [130] that intellectual tendency of the Indian or the upper class Indian monk did take over and did influence very much the presentation of Buddhism, and the way the material was arranged. And when you look at the literature of Indian Buddhism, including even many of the sutras, we do find the marks of the Indian mind and its very intellectual attitude. But this is not essentially Buddhist, and again, of course, it did disappear when Buddhism goes to China and Ch'an springs up: it's completely Buddhist, faithfully Buddhist, but it isn't intellectual in that Indian sense - and I think one of the difficulties that we encounter with Buddhism in the West is that we are encumbered to some extent by the intellectual Indian garments, which are, you know, they've clung so tightly to the body of Buddhism, as it were, to as it were continue the comparison, that it's very difficult to separate them. The two are stuck together, but there is a sort of body of Buddhism underneath if you can peel off these layers and layers of intellectual Indian garments. We don't really need all of them. But to separate is quite difficult because, you know, you find them even in the scriptures themselves, in the sutras.

"One appeals to the feelings, and the other to the intellect."

S: Well, you know, this just isn't true. It's much too schematic and neat.

"That which appeals to the intellect naturally seems to be less passionate, but the truth is that feeling without the support of the intellect leads to fanaticism and is always ready to yield itself to bigotry and superstition."

S: It's true that in early Buddhism you certainly don't find passion. You don't find a sort of passionate presentation of the truth. This is really quite un-Buddhistic. There is emotion, there is devotion, there is metta, but that sort of passion that you get in connection with Christianity, very often, just isn't there. But Buddhism would certainly regard this as a blemish. (pause) The sort of fiery, fanatical element isn't there, but it deliberately isn't there, but deliberately excluded by the Buddha, and not encouraged. And when some of his disciples got very angry when people were abusing the Buddha; he didn't say, 'Oh, what wonderful faith. They get really angry when anyone abuses me.' He said, 'No!

Have I taught anger as a help to the realization of nirvana or have I taught it as a hindrance?' And they said 'Well, you've taught it as a hindrance.' So he said 'Well, don't get angry then, even when people abuse me. It does not help you.' [131] No zeal of the Lord eats up Buddhists. I don't know about Christ himself, but certainly some Christian saints and teachers have encouraged anger on behalf of Christianity: it's a good thing. 'The zeal of the Lord has eaten me up!' And you go around smashing up altar plate and tearing holy vestments of some other Christian sect. 'The zeal of the Lord hath eaten me up!' I remember some time ago I saw a film of Cromwell. Did you see that, anyone? Well it's quite offensive. The opening scene showed a church service in progress, a little village church, and there was the priest at the altar, and he was officiating, and there was some beautiful gold plate, and in strides Oliver Cromwell and sweeps all the plate off the altar and no one in the cinema seemed to mind. Well this struck me as really offensive. You know, he was presented very much as the hero, as though it was a really noble gesture to do that, and it seemed very terrible to do it in the middle of the service, even though one might agree that, yes, perhaps not so much money should be spent on gold plate, etc, etc. But this brusque, this brutal interruption: just sweeping the plate aside, and just telling the priest to be gone and not defile the house of the lord with his mummeries. Well, you didn't certainly get any sort of spiritual impression from that.

Lokamitra: Buddhism seems to be the only large religion which doesn't have this element. I mean, all the other religions seems to have been at war and so on ...

S: Yes, and look at Muslims, rejoicing in the destruction of images. It's really terrible.

Devaraja: I saw a very interesting little Persian miniature reproduced in a book showing a Muslim fanatic destroying what was obviously a bodhisattva image, and this was, I think, this painting was from western Persia.

S: Oh! Ah! Hm. That's quite interesting.

Devaraja: It was produced in western Persia quite obviously. The meditation posture was a bit wrong and the hands were a bit wrong, but there was a five-leaved crown on the head.

S: Oh dear. It must be some reminiscence of the Islamic invasion of central Asia and territories which are now party of Persia, which were originally Buddhist. Where did you see this?

Devaraja: It's reproduced in a book in the British Museum; one of their books on, I think, either Persian or Turkish religions. [132]

S: I think one of the things I've been saying lately is that we must blow our own trumpet a bit more vigorously; we mustn't be apologetic about Buddhism or being Buddhist. One of the things that we can certainly blow our own trumpet about is the fact that Buddhism has a much better record of tolerance. In fact, there's no comparison. We certainly have not done - against any religion - what all other religions seem to have done against one

another and against Buddhism when they got the chance. And this surely means something. It's not just a sociological accident: 'it just happens like that'. There is a very different reason for this, and the reason lies within Buddhism itself, in the nature of Buddhism. You can't say, 'Oh well, all religions disintegrate, because Christianity wasn't like it in the beginning, but it degenerated and became fanatical.' That isn't true. It was fanatical right from the beginning. And why didn't Buddhism degenerate and become fanatical and persecuting? It never did. It degenerated, sure, in certain ways, but it never went to that extent.

Lokamitra: It seems to be a slight danger of this, though, in Ceylon, where it's ... where Buddhism is becoming identified culturally ...

S: This is very true. Yes.

Lokamitra: ... the English suffer there.

S: This is very true, but one can also say that in Ceylon the Sinhalese Buddhists suffered for so many hundreds of years, first under the Portuguese, then under the Dutch, and then under the British. Buddhism was persecuted for many hundreds of years quite actively and vigorously; and there had been a sort of reaction. This is true, although it is regrettable. But I don't think any responsible Buddhist monk, at least, would sanction anything of that sort, whatever the laity might do.

Vajradaka: They didn't exactly sanction it, but they didn't say, 'No, don't do it.'

S: This is also true. But this is the main way in which Buddhism has degenerated; not in doing anything bad, but in just being weak where the good was concerned.

Devamitra: It's like the situation in Thailand with all the blessing of arms to ...

S: Hm. Yes.

Vajradaka: Have they actually done that?

S: Oh, yes. I've seen a photograph of this in a Buddhist magazine. But I've only seen this in Thailand.

Devamitra: Actually, in reference to Thai Buddhism, I mean, I sometimes wonder even whether one should - parts of it - whether one should even consider it [133] Buddhism at all. Like, for instance, they have produced these great chanting books with suttas in them which were written a hundred years ago. And this kind of thing.

S: Well, of course, in theory they would maintain that there they're the purer visions of Buddhism, but actually many changes have crept in but they regard it all as the original Buddhism. It seems rather odd.

Devaraja: Really? I mean what do you mean, suttas produced a hundred years ago?

Devamitra: At the time of, I think it was King Monghut [1804-1868, tr.]...

S: Well, not strictly speaking suttas, but certainly texts for chanting. He was a great reformer, and a bit of a puritan and fanatic.

Devamitra: Well, they're certainly referred to over there as suttas, I believe.

S: Hmm. Oh.

Devamitra: I got one ...

S: Well, then that's a mistake.

Devamitra: This was from talking to Douglas B ...

S: Yes, well, that's very misleading. (pause) OK let's carry on.

"The doctrine of nirvana is doubtless more intellectual than the Christian gospel of love."

S: Well, yes and no. Hm? I don't think it's intellectual at all, really. There's not a doctrine of nirvana; that's all subsequent, you know, if it comes in at all. There's an experience of nirvana, to begin with, just as presumably there's a Christian experience of love to begin with. Later on a doctrine of love, you know, worked out properly, theologically, in the same way as the doctrine of nirvana worked out.

"It first recognizes the wretchedness of human life as is proved by our daily experiences; then it finds its cause in our subjective ignorance as to the true meaning of existence, and in our egocentric desires which, obscuring our spiritual insight, makes us cling tenaciously to things chimerical; it then proposes the complete annihilation of egoism, the root of all evil, by which, subjectively, tranquillity of heart is restored, and objectively, the realization of universal love becomes possible. Buddhism, thus proceeds most logically in the development of its doctrine of nirvana and universal love." [134]

S: I don't think it proceeds logically at all; I think the logic comes in subsequently, by way of an intellectual systematization. We certainly don't find much logic at the beginning; it's a sort of direct appeal, a direct speaking out from the depths of one's own experience. Anyway, carry on.

"Says Victor Hugo (Les Miserables Vol 11): 'When a man clings to the self and does not want to identify himself with other fellows, he cannot expand his being to God. When he shuts himself in the narrow shell of ego and keeps all the world outside, he cannot reduce the universe to his inner most self. To love, therefore, one must enter nirvana. The truth is everywhere the same ... but ... some are more prone to intellectualism ... others

to sentimentality ... Let us therefore follow our own inclination ... and not speak evil of others. This is called the Doctrine of Middle Path."

S: I think there's a great confusion here. He almost suggests that you're either an intellectualist or a sentimentalist, and that there are different paths for these two different people which take you right up to nirvana, but I don't think this is Buddhism at all, because Buddhism has got its teaching of the five spiritual faculties and you unify faith and wisdom, the intellectual approach and the emotional, before you can even really begin to get into meditation properly, into the dhyana states, and after that there's a unified path which you tread with your unified being, huh? I don't think you can have a sort of separate path for the intellectual and a separate path for the devotee, the sentimentalist. Again, it's more Hinduism than Buddhism, you know, like jnana-yoga and raja-yoga.

Devamitra: What about the path of the faith follower and that of the doctrine follower?

S: This is the initial point of departure, you know. For instance, if you see the Buddha, you don't hear anything of the teaching or doctrine, but you're tremendously impressed by the Buddha's living personality; you respond. Well, that's how you start, but the faith follower can link up with the doctrine follower later on. But if, on the other hand, you never meet a Buddha, but you hear something of the teaching, and you understand it and like it and want to follow it, then you start off as a doctrine follower.

Devamitra: But I mean is in fact one is only a faith follower in the initial response, then? Or ...

S: Yes. But even the response of faith is with your total being; your [135] intellect goes along with it too, surely? Hm?

Devamitra: I had a conversation recently with someone who ... I was designated as a perfect example of a faith follower, whereas the other person was a doctrine follower.

S: Hm. But then you're not devoid of intellectual understanding?

Devamitra: No.

S: No. Nor is, presumably, that person devoid of some sort of emotional involvement, yes?

Devamitra: Umm.

S: It may be that one is slightly uppermost; there may be a degree of disassociation. But I think the ideal is definitely, as laid down by the teaching of the five spiritual faculties, to develop both and to unify both; to be involved with your total being, not just with either the intellect or with the emotion.

Mangala: In a sense, you can't really be involved with one without the other.

S: You can't, really.

Mangala: You can't really get into something intellectually if you're not, you know, turned on, sort of emotionally.

S: It's rather weird, the way in which all these distinctions seem to arise. There's a lot that just doesn't seem related to life at all, hmm? Doesn't correspond to what we actually experience. (pause)

Vajradaka: I think it might come from just taking too literally things written in books.

S: Well, for instance, there is this great generalization which Suzuki almost suggests: that Christianity is directed to the emotions and Buddhism directed to the intellect. This is a gross oversimplification.

Devaraja: It's almost as if ... something I've always thought ... that Christianity developed was ... is being very unbalanced, in the sense that Buddhism has worked to develop amongst quite ordinary practice and followers of the Dharma both sides, intellectual and emotional, whereas Christianity, if anything, I mean, has fought against the development of ...

S: You've got sort of very devoted lay people who don't know a thing about Christianity, certainly not on the doctrine, and very learned theologians who seem a bit dry. You know, the pope has got his sort of professional theologians, who advise him on theological issues that he's not quite [136] sure about. You have someone who is a sort of professional theologian, and he may, you know, barely be a practising Catholic, but he's an expert in theology and can make sure that the pope, you know, doesn't go theologically astray in his encyclicals. For he vets the pope's writings to make sure he isn't technically guilty of heresy. (laughs) He might, you know, because theology is so complex now, and it's so easy to trip up, and make a mistake, that even the pope might be guilty, so he has a staff of professional theologians who vet his writings before they are published.

Vajradaka: Extraordinary!

S: Yes, because, don't forget, the popes are recruited from the diplomatic corps of the Vatican, you know; they don't come from the monasteries and colleges, you know, they're diplomats - career diplomats.

Devaraja: Bishops and?

S: Well, they don't always have to be even bishops; they're sort of ambassadors of the Holy See to this country or that, very often.

Devamitra: Really?

S: That's the path to the papacy, yes. I mean, each of the two previous popes have been promoted from being papal Secretaries of State. They don't come out of monasteries, or contemplation, or anything like that. I mean, most are young Catholics of good family - or even poor family - who go into the Vatican service as a career, and get promotion, you know, step by step: the Vatican bureaucracy. And it's from the Vatican bureaucracy, in fact, who often, you know, includes bishops and so on - that most of the popes come in modern times. I mean, the last pope to have been a monk was a couple of hundred years ago. (pause) So all the modern popes - though some of them have been very scholarly men - have been primarily diplomatists, and politicians, administrators, statesmen, you know. And sometimes, you know, a little lacking in theological expertise. Certainly they know their Catholicism well enough, but when it comes to the very fine doctrinal points they may not be completely sure, and they have to seek professional advice. (sounds of surprise and amusement)

Mamaki: This - whether one is an intellectual or a sentimentalist - it may be a natural temperamental inclination towards one or the other. To have a path suiting one's temperament [137] seems to me - just looking at it now - quite wrong.

S: It's not a path, then.

Mamaki: Because, well, what would happen would be that one would develop a particular aspect that was perhaps already underdeveloped anyway ...

S: Yes. Right.

Mamaki: It could block one off making any movement at all!

S: Right. Yes.

Mamaki: There are three paths, aren't there, in Hinduism?

S: Well, at least three. Usually four.

Mamaki: Well, what happened to people who were pursuing this path?

S: Well, I've seen in India that in practice, when it is followed in this way, devotees are sentimental and silly, very often, and the jnanis - the wise, who follow, you know, the Vedanta philosophy - just become very dry and intellectual. I've actually seen this. Not in all cases; you get some who combine, in effect, both, even though they're nominally bhakti, or nominally jnanin. But they are balanced people; they manage to combine both. But you often get the silly devotee, or fanatical devotee, and the dry as dust Vedantic scholar. There's one described in my memoirs, who kept losing his temper when my friend, who was with me, didn't accept his arguments about the unity of all existence. (amusement) My friend even in the end said, rather belligerently, 'Well, you know, if you

say you've realized Brahman how is it that you get angry?' He said, 'I'm not angry; it's your delusion!' (laughter) I've described this scene. [The Rainbow Road pp.375-6, tr.]

Lokamitra: In 'Crossing the Stream' there's one section where you talk about perhaps if you are more open to the emotional side of things then you follow perhaps, the path of devotion, symbolized by Avalokitesvara, and through this one develops spiritual energy and wisdom. I can't remember ...

S: Yes. I think if you have to make a choice, it's better to start off - if there is that imbalance - you stand a better chance of making progress if you start off as a devotee, than if you start off with the intellectual approach. At least the devotee does something; he's got some sort of energy, and understanding will develop, huh? But if you just start off with a one-sidedly intellectual approach, you may just get more and more into it intellectually, but not be able to develop any sort of corresponding emotion. [138] So I think the non-intellectual devotee - the one who starts off in that way - is in a stronger position, in the long run, spiritually, than the rather non-emotional intellectual person getting interested in, well, spiritual things, for want of a better term.

Devamitra: I suppose this is, like, developing the five spiritual faculties singly.

S: Hmm. Yes. Right.

Devamitra: From faith to wisdom, and so on.

S: I mean, if your faith really does grow, sooner or later understanding comes too, but you can go very deeply into things intellectually without any devotion arising at all. (pause) So I think if one has to choose well, be the one-sided devotee, rather than the one-sided scholar.

Devaraja: What was it you said? There were four possible paths?

S: In Hinduism.

Devaraja: Yes.

S: They usually enumerate raja-yoga, jnana-yoga, bhakti-yoga, and karma-yoga, though there are other subsidiary ones too. Swami Vivekananda has popularized this, because he's got books on all four. But very definitely the teaching of modern Hinduism is that these are four alternative paths, and if you're predominantly emotional you follow the path of bhakti-yoga, if you're predominantly intellectual, the path of jnana-yoga, and so on. So a certain one-sidedness seems to be encouraged, or at least justified. I have discussed this with Hindu friends, and even argued about it; but some of them try to explain it - I would say justify it - by saying that extremism in itself is a good thing: it's good to be extreme. They don't accept this sort of middle path doctrine. They say, 'Go to extremes; that will get you there,' but I rather wonder. Not going to extremes in that sort of

way - maybe going to extremes with your total being, but not going to extremes in the development of what seems to be just one aspect of oneself.

Vajradaka: In a sense, following the path is an extreme thing.

S: Indeed, it is. Anyway, let's leave it there for today. [139]

(Day 3)

S: All right. Chapter 2, page 60.

"Historical Characterization of Mahayanism.

"We are now in a position to enter into a specific exposition of the Mahayana doctrine ... But ... first ... the views ... held by Hindu Buddhist thinkers. (to end of paragraph) ... and historical survey of its peculiarities.

S: This, by the way, is an American publication, and in India they always use 'Hindu' instead of 'Indian', or 'Hindu' in the sense of 'Indian'. So he doesn't mean Hindu in the sense of religionist Buddhist thinkers but Indian Buddhist thinkers. In an English edition this should really be changed every time. Sometimes it reads rather oddly in American publications. One reads, for instance, that the Buddha taught in a Hindu system, or something like that. It simply means Indian.

"As stated in the Introduction, the term Mahayana was invented in the time of Nagarjuna and Aryadeva (about the third or fourth century after Christ) when doctrinal struggles ... reached a climax ... (to end of penultimate sentence) they placed rather too much stress upon those points that do not appear to be very essential, but they were considered by them to be of paramount importance."

S: It may be that some of those points then considered important have become important again. Let's see.

"These points nevertheless throw some light on the nature of Mahayana Buddhism as historically distinguished from its consanguineous rival and fellow-doctrine."

S: All right. Let's carry straight on.

"Sthiramati's Conception of Mahayanism

"Sthiramati, in his 'Introduction to Mahayanism', states that Mahayanism is a special doctrine for the bodhisattvas, who are to be distinguished from the other two classes via the shravakas and the pratyekabuddhas."

S: That's quite interesting in a way - that Mahayanism is a special doctrine for the bodhisattvas. Here you get the suggestion that it isn't so much a difference of principle

between the Mahayana and the Hinayana, but simply that you are addressing a different class of person, i.e. you're addressing the bodhisattvas, and you're bearing in mind, therefore, their special spiritual needs and so on.

"The essential differences of the doctrine consists in the belief that ... bodhisattvas are incarnations of the dharmakaya ... and that persons who thus appear in the flesh ... associate themselves with the masses in all possible social relations ... that they might ... lead them to ... enlightenment." [140]

S: There seems to be a bit of confusion here. Let's go through this rather carefully. "The essential differences of the doctrine consist in the belief that objects of the senses are merely phenomenal and have no absolute reality." Well is this an essential difference as between Mahayana and Hinayana? One wouldn't have thought so. This is surely common ground to all Buddhist schools, in fact to all forms of idealism or mysticism, all forms of spiritual life. So (?) Suzuki's been a bit careless, here.

"that the indestructible dharmakaya, which is all pervading, constitutes the norm of existence."

Well is this really an essential difference? (pause) What do you think about that? That the Mahayana teaches an "indestructible dharmakaya which is all pervading, constitutes the norm of existence".

Devaraja: It sounds as if he's reified the dharmakaya.

S: It does a bit, doesn't it? After all, in the Hinayana you've got nirvana, which is certainly a higher transcendental principle. The word 'dharmakaya' certainly isn't used in that sort of sense in the Hinayana, but you do have that spiritual principle in the background. The only difference seems to be that according to Suzuki's interpretation, in the Mahayana, the dharmakaya becomes, if you're not careful, a sort of cosmic principle, underlying all things, whereas nirvana is never spoken of in that way. Whether, after your realization of nirvana, you see things in that way, well, that is left, as it were, an open question. They don't try to as it were predetermine what your experience of enlightenment or nirvana will be. So certainly in the Hinayana you have an indestructible transcendental principle, that is to say, nirvana, it isn't said that it is all-pervading - that would be a sort of metaphysical statement, and the Hinayana keeps clear of those metaphysical statements; whereas according to Suzuki, as we saw earlier on, the Mahayana does indulge in metaphysical speculation, even to a dazzling height, as I think he put it. And also the dharmakaya "constitutes the norm of existence"? It's not quite sure what that means; it's not quite clear. It could mean the true aim of existence, i.e. human life; well, the Hinayanist would certainly say that nirvana is the true, the real aim of human life, so there doesn't seem to be all that much difference, really, so far.

Vajradaka: You mean between the dharmakaya and nirvana?

S: Yes. It's almost as though the Mahayana is just a bit more metaphysical and speculative. (pause) Perhaps all you could say (and we did say this yesterday) is that in the Mahayana - the sort of positive and creative side of the dharmakaya - is stressed so that one doesn't get the impression of the [141] the ultimate spiritual principle just being a state of annihilation, and that is a possible misunderstanding with the rather bare presentation of nirvana in the Hinayana. The Hinayana certainly doesn't say nirvana is simply a state of annihilation, but it says so little about nirvana that it could perhaps give that sort of impression. Sometimes the Hinayana goes to the opposite extreme from the Mahayana: the Mahayana tends to say too much about the dharmakaya, so much that you think you've understood it, and it becomes a sort of cosmic principle, manifesting itself in the world; the Hinayana tends to say so little about nirvana you tend to think of it as, well, just a sort of blank, featureless state into which you merely disappear and cease to exist. (pause)

So let's continue with going through this. "that all bodhisattvas are incarnations of the dharmakaya, who not by their evil karma previously accumulated, but by their boundless love for all mankind, assume corporeal existences." What do you think of that? (pause) Are all bodhisattvas incarnations of the dharmakaya?

Vajradaka: Not aspiring bodhisattvas.

S: No. There are several different classes of bodhisattvas, surely? Yes?

Devamitra: Presumably only a bodhisattva of the dharmakaya is one in the tenth bhumi.

S: Yes. Yes. For instance, earlier on Suzuki, explaining Stthiramati, says that Mahayana is a special doctrine for the bodhisattvas. So why should a special doctrine be addressed to the bodhisattvas at all? Why should any doctrine be addressed to them? Well to help them in their spiritual progress. So this suggests that the bodhisattvas are still evolving, but here it says that all bodhisattvas are incarnations of the dharmakaya. Hm? So this just seems a bit confused; that it isn't distinguishing carefully enough between classes of bodhisattvas. I've gone into this in 'The Three Jewels', you remember this? (pause) How many kinds of bodhisattvas are there, very broadly speaking?

Devaraja: The bodhisattvas who are yet to develop the bodhicitta, decided to dedicate themselves to that path; then there's the bodhisattvas that it's arisen in; and then there's the bodhisattvas who cannot fall back because ...

S: Right.

Sulocana: One consciously reincarnated.

S: Yes, the universal bodhisattva. And then after that you've got what I call bodhisattvas of the dharmakaya ... [142]

Devaraja: That's the fourth class.

S: That's the fourth class. In other words a bodhisattva ... well, you can look at it in two ways. There are different points of view, which it isn't easy to, as it were, comprehend in a single formula or within a single perspective. You're concerned with time and you're concerned with eternity too. On the one hand, looking at it from the point of view of an evolving bodhisattva, you can say that the bodhisattva develops, develops, develops, and then he becomes fully enlightened. And after becoming fully enlightened, he becomes, as it were, at one with the dharmakaya, and in his enlightened form becomes one particular ray, as it were, of the dharmakaya, hmm? You can say that, you know, speaking very sort of popularly and concretely; or you can simply say that the dharmakaya has all sorts of eternally proceeding activities: it isn't a static sort of metaphysical principle, even a static spiritual or transcendental principle, but it expresses itself, and that its various expressions are what we think of as the various bodhisattvas of the dharmakaya. So how do you link up the evolving bodhisattva, who, as it were, disappears into or merges with the dharmakaya, with those expressions of the dharmakaya; and in what sense are those expression the sort of post-dharmakaya realization manifestations of the evolving bodhisattva? You see what I mean?

Vajradaka: Surely the effort that is made by the aspiring bodhisattva, even though it may not be a direct expression of the dharmakaya, to, you know, his actual experience, but the fact that he's working from an ego mundane base, making an effort to it, even that is an expression.

S: You could say that, but Suzuki uses the expression "an incarnation of the dharmakaya, who not by their evil karma previously accumulated, but by their boundless love for all mankind, assume corporeal existence", hmm?

Devaraja: Ah! In other words, a bodhisattva who is a manifestation of the dharmakaya is no longer functioning from karma.

S: Hmm, yes, right.

Devaraja: He's functioning from just a pure spiritual principle.

S: Er, yes.

Devaraja: Of love and compassion. In other words, karma doesn't enter into it any more. [143]

S: Right, yes. Of course, you can then raise the question 'in what sense is he then an individual?' It's then that he becomes very difficult to combine everything in one sort of doctrinal formulation. Hm? You couldn't because ... I mean if, for instance, after a particular bodhisattva becomes fully enlightened, becomes one with the dharmakaya, and is then manifesting the dharmakaya through his life and activity, does it mean that the dharmakaya's got an extra manifestation? Literally?

Devaraja: No.

S: You see. So thought really is rather inadequate to grasp what is happening, hmm?

Devaraja: The thing that interests me quite a lot is, would it be true to say that - in the Hinayana, we come across the expression the Tusita Heaven, I think...

S: Yes?

Devaraja: Would that be equitable with that process of transition from rebirth according to individual karma into rebirth as a manifestation of the dharmakaya?

S: Because this is quite a complex sort of question. In a way the bodhisattva ceases to be under the power of karma, certainly in the grossest sense, some time before his realization of the dharmakaya. Hm? And he wins control over his rebirth process before that.

Vajradaka: Is that before his enlightenment?

S: Before his enlightenment, yes, hm? For instance, sometimes it is even said that the great disciples, like Sariputta and Moggallana, were reborn mindfully, and fully conscious and aware; I mean, not to speak of bodhisattvas. The general sort of tradition is that in the interval preceding his last life on Earth the bodhisattva is reborn in the Tusita devaloka, which is a heaven at the summit of the world of form, but he is fully aware of what is happening, and it's certainly not due to the blind workings of karma, as it were, and by that time he's in a sort of spiritual body, and according to the full Mahayana teaching it's that spiritual body which descends into the womb of his mother - in this case, Mahamaya. He's fully conscious all the time, and knowing what is happening, and is then reborn in his last earthly existence. So the bodhisattva goes beyond karma in the ordinary sense, even before his attainment of the dharmakaya. This is what is usually said. [144]

So opinions do differ, teachings do differ, but after he becomes irreversible he seems to have this power, that he can be reborn, in a sense, wherever he wishes, but he goes to the Tusita devaloka and waits there for the final birth, and in that final birth becomes fully enlightened.

Devaraja: Can you say anything about the Tusita devaloka? I mean, to what does it seem to represent in more ...

S: Well, the Tusita devaloka, like any other heaven, is a higher realm of being and consciousness. We can say another dimension, (pause) an archetypal world. (pause) There's nothing very special about the Tusita devaloka because there are so many devalokas. It's simply the one in which the bodhisattva as it were resides before his final rebirth in which he becomes a Buddha. (pause)

But, anyway, to get back to sorting out Dr Suzuki - I think he hasn't really thought out all this, hmm? And he's sort of hovering between two quite sort of opposing views. He's neither expressed a fully consistent Hinayana, nor a complete Mahayana, teaching, nor is he clearly trying to synthesize the two. He's just got them a bit mixed up and sort of switches from one to the other. Obviously these are the sort of difficulties you get into when you become speculative. The Hinayana, and also archaic Buddhism to an even greater extent, is perhaps, in a sense, spiritually speaking, wiser, when it just doesn't try to say very much. It just, as it were, sees the spiritual aspirant, disciple, bodhisattva, call him what you will, disappearing into that higher dimension; and it is firmly convinced that that higher dimension is there. But what is its relation to the universe, whether as cosmic principle, or in any other sense? What is its nature? What is its intrinsic function? It doesn't say anything. It says, if asked, 'Well, you will know when you get there.' This may seem sometimes like a putting off, but there is a definite wisdom in it. Mahayana is much bolder; it makes all sorts of statements about the dharmakaya and so on and so forth, some of them from out of the experience of great enlightened masters surely, but others, perhaps, just by way of speculation. And then one statement is found difficult to reconcile with another. And then the Mahayana, certainly Mahayana philosophy, starts getting into difficulty. And there are parallels in other traditions. So we find a bit of this thing here. I don't think Suzuki has really worked out properly at this stage what he means by, you know, a manifestation of the dharmakaya. I don't think he has worked it out properly. He hasn't [145] thought about it sufficiently, or expressed himself clearly enough, (pause) "and that persons who thus appear in the flesh, as avatars of the Buddha supreme..." Well the word 'avatar' is not Buddhistic, except in a general literary sense, to mean 'entry into', as in Bodhicaryavatara: entry into the path of enlightenment. "associate themselves with the masses in all possible social relations, and in order that they might then lead them to a state of enlightenment." (pause) Hmm, I'm very dubious about this as to what extent it is really Buddhistic. Certainly in the Mahayana there is the strong feeling, for want of a better term, that the dharmakaya does express itself, that it manifests, but to speak of the dharmakaya as literally incarnating in the Hindu sense, or even in a Christian sense - the Christian doctrine is much more specialized - is probably not quite in accordance with basic Buddhist thought.

Devaraja: I'm a bit surprised ...

Nagabodhi: The descent of the bodhicitta, and therefore the transformation of an aspiring bodhisattva into a realized bodhisattva,...

S: Aha?

Nagabodhi: Can one not talk about it as an incarnation of the bodhicitta?

S: Not really. For instance - let me draw a parallel, say, with Christian thought - orthodox Christian theology teaches that Christ is incarnate God; that he was God from the beginning, he was God from the moment that he was born, that he was conceived, he was God for all eternity. So this is what we mean by 'the incarnation of the Word': Christ is God incarnate. This is orthodox theology. There is, or was in early Christian days, a

school of thought which was called 'Adoptionism'. 'Adoptionism' held, as it were, that Christ was the adopted son; in other words, that Christ was born in the ordinary way, he was an ordinary man, he was not born of a virgin, he was not an incarnate deity; he was a very virtuous man who led a holy life, such a holy life that at the moment of his baptism by John, the spirit of God descended upon him and he became the son of God: he was adopted by God to become his son, yes? So this adoptionism would seem to correspond more to what you say, and this I think is quite correct: that when, in the would-be bodhisattva's stream of consciousness, the bodhicitta manifests, or begins to manifest, then he may very well be spoken of as an expression, at least a partial expression, of the dharmakaya. Hm? You can even, if you want to speak poetically, speak of the dharmakaya becoming incarnate in him, but this is not what is usually meant by an incarnation. What is usually meant is that God, or the dharmakaya, or an aspect of God, or aspect of the dharmakaya, descends into [146] a human body, or is a human body, from the very moment of conception and the moment of birth, so that right from the very beginning that particular individual knows that he is God, etc. etc. This is what is sometimes claimed for, say, Guru Maharaji [Prem Rawat, founder of the Divine Light Mission, a popular cult in the 1970s, tr.], and it was certainly claimed for Meher Baba [Merwan Sheriar Irani, 1894-1969], and some Mahayanists claim it for the Buddha. But it would seem to me that the more orthodox Buddhist teaching, Mahayana teaching, is more adoptionist, hmm? That nobody starts off as an incarnation; that Buddhism does not in fact accept divine incarnation, hmm?, as the Hindus do in a multiple form and Christians do singularly, you know, just with regard to Christ. You can say that the Buddhists are multiple adoptionists - this is probably the nearest - and that from the Mahayana point of view, yes, surely, there is this sort of general perfuming of the spiritual principle; they're affecting all things in a very subtle manner, as Asvaghosha describes, and due to this subtle spiritual perfuming even in the heart of the most depraved of us, there is a spiritual spark - to change the metaphor - and that this may stir at any time, but one can hardly speak of that as the incarnation of the dharmakaya. That would be much, much too strong, hmm? But when, due to one reason or another, someone is spiritually developed, and making progress, and there is a breakthrough into some higher dimension, the bodhicitta arises, then surely one can speak in terms of the dharmakaya itself manifesting within that person and in that person's words and actions being more and more expressive of the dharmakaya. And as the bodhisattva develops, the bodhicitta becomes more and more active, as it were, and completely as it were takes over that person. And when it's decisively taken over, so that nothing can further obscure that, and ultimate progress is assured, then that's irreversibility. And when every sort of limitation is removed, and the relative bodhicitta merges with the absolute bodhicitta, then that's the attainment of the dharmakaya, and, in some mysterious way that we cannot fathom, there is an additional bodhisattva-like activity, you know, streaming forth from the dharmakaya, as it were eternally. But this we just can't express, we can't get it into human thought properly, though we might form some sort of picture. This is more the Mahayana teaching. But I think that Suzuki's just got a, you know, well, maybe he wasn't confused in his own mind, but he hasn't expressed it very clearly.

Devamitra: Can I just ask how do you relate the bodhicitta with the dharmakaya? I mean, for instance, you just spoke there of the ... speaking of someone in whom the

bodhicitta had manifested, and that being a sort of manifestation of the dharmakaya. [147]

S: Well I would say that this is just my own interpretation, based on the study of tradition, and, you know, based on observation and experience too. I would say that the bodhicitta, which means the relative bodhicitta, is the experience within time of the absolute bodhicitta, or the dharmakaya, hmm? That when you reach a certain point in your spiritual life development as a bodhisattva, or would-be bodhisattva, and you become sufficiently as it were transparent and receptive to higher spiritual influences, that is, to the dharmakaya, that manifests through you and that dharmakaya, or that absolute bodhicitta, manifesting through you, sort of breaking through your ordinary individuality, this is what we call the bodhicitta.

Devamitra: So does the absolute bodhicitta not actually manifest until the tenth bhumi?

S: Oh, no. It manifests when the bodhicitta arises.

Devamitra: Oh.

S: Yes.

Devamitra: I'm getting confused now, then, with absolute bodhicitta and relative bodhicitta.

S: Absolute bodhicitta is, roughly speaking, a synonym for the dharmakaya. Absolute bodhicitta is bodhicitta outside time. Relative bodhicitta is bodhicitta within time progressively manifesting itself.

Devamitra: I would have thought, then, that on the first manifestation of the bodhicitta that you would refer to that as relative bodhicitta.

S: The first manifestation of the bodhicitta, that is, absolute bodhicitta, or dharmakaya, within the order of time, is referred to as the arising of the bodhicitta, i.e. relative bodhicitta. When it arises within time and as it were appears to develop within time that is relative bodhicitta. As it exists out of time, eternally developed and complete, that is absolute bodhicitta, which is synonymous with dharmakaya, roughly speaking. Hm? (pause) So the bodhicitta arises when something begins to work within you which is you but which mysteriously is not you. Hm? Till within the depths of your being something starts bubbling up which is experienced as you, as yours, but which has come, as it were, from somewhere else. This is the bodhicitta.

Devaraja: It's a bit like ... I'm thinking of the blossoms which are carried by Avalokitesvara with the little bud and then the opening blossom and then the fully open blossom. I was just thinking that that seemed to equate with the ... the bud seemed to be like the bodhicitta (unclear) [148]

S: Yes, one can say that; though usually those three buds are explained as the Buddha's past, present, and future.

Devaraja: Ah. I hope you could explain it another way.

S: Yes. Well, to parody St Augustine, the more explanations, the better. [Augustine is supposed to have said 'The more interpretations, the better', tr.]

Sudatta: When you say that the relative bodhicitta has begun to emerge, then, say, people join the Order, or not necessarily? [!]

S: I'd love to be able to say that, but no. No.

Sudatta: So the Order can start below reaching the stage of bodhisattva ...

S: Oh, yes. Yes. It would be really quite wonderful to think that the bodhicitta had arisen in every Order member when they were ordained. Maybe it does sometimes happen; it's very difficult to see, you know, when the first subtle ripple begins, and one wouldn't like to say, well, it can't. But I would say that, no, the two are not synonymous. Certainly there is an aspiration, even an aspiration after Buddhahood, the bodhisattva career. But this is an aspiration on the part of one's present, as it were, individual being and consciousness which has formed an idea about these things. But when the bodhicitta arises, it is as it were the beginning of the real thing, hmm? It's not just your sort of mundane personality aspiring towards it, or thinking about it. But within that mundane personality, when it reaches a certain degree of transparency and receptivity, then something transcendental actually starts breaking through. It's like, for instance, you've got a wall, a wall of rather opaque glass, and you're rubbing it in the middle and it's getting thinner and thinner and thinner. And then a time comes, a point comes, when you've rubbed so hard, it's so thin, that a mere crack appears and the light starts shining through from behind, and that's the arising of the bodhicitta. And then you just make that crack wider and wider until the whole wall is removed and the light is just pouring in, and then you're a bodhisattva. Hm? So when you begin the wall isn't completely opaque, hmm? Well it may be at the very beginning but you could say that when you become an upasaka, you know, you're just rubbing away and you've got a certain not so very opaque area, and you rub within that, you know, your meditation and so on, and it becomes more and more transparent. And then finally the natural sort of breakthrough. It's much more like that. All right. Let's carry on. [149]

p.62 "While this is a very summary statement of the Mahayana doctrine, a more elaborate ... enumeration of its ... features ... is made in: (to end of section) ... the first three works here mentioned."

S: Yes. One of Suzuki's great advantages and great merits in those days was that he had access, because of his knowledge of the Chinese Buddhist canon, to many works - of course, which had been translated from Sanskrit - which were not available in Sanskrit, or which existed in palm-leaf manuscript form, had not yet been edited by scholars

and certainly not translated. So at this stage, 70 years ago, he had access to quite a lot of material which was not available to anybody else practically, and this is just an example. These things were hardly known outside a very very small scholarly circle, and he was the first person, more or less, to bring some of these teachings and texts, or extracts from them, a bit into general circulation in English.

"Seven Principle features of Mahayanism. "According to Asanga ... the seven features peculiar to Mahayanism ... are as follows:"

S: I think most people are aware of the distinction between Madhyamika and Yogacara? (no response) Madhyamika: the school of the Middle Way, mainly based on the Perfection of Wisdom texts and started - or at least, initiated - by Nagarjuna, and then after him by Aryadeva; and then the Yogacara school was based more on what we would call Buddhist idealist sutras and which was inspired by a figure called Maitreya, traditionally regarded as the bodhisattva Maitreya, but regarded by some scholars as a human teacher called Maitreyanatha, and then continued by Asanga and Vasubandhu: Vasubandhu after his conversion from Sarvastivada. These were the two great main Mahayana schools, especially philosophical schools, and they are very important still in Tibetan Buddhism. Anyway, we need not go into them in detail now. So these seven principles of Mahayana Buddhism: let's go through them one by one.

"1. Its comprehensiveness ... (to end). Innumerable ... laws taught by Buddhas of all ages ... all taken up in the coherent body of Mahayanism."

S: "Mahayanism does not confine itself to the teachings of one Buddha alone." What does anyone think that that means?

Ratnapani: They're crediting other teachers as being Buddhas; other great figures. [150]

S: It could mean that.

Devamitra: Does it not mean just other enlightened masters as opposed to Buddhas? You know, men like Milarepa, Padmasambhava, who presumably were enlightened, although not Buddhas in the strictly technical sense.

S: Ah no. I don't think it means that. It partly means that in the Mahayana sutras there are references to other Buddhas. For instance, Aksobhya Buddha appears, Prabhutaratna appears, but one could say that one doesn't know anything about these Buddhas except through Shakyamuni, because Shakyamuni is the one who appears speaking about the other Buddhas. For instance, in the Sukhavativyuha Sutra the speaker is Shakyamuni, and it is Shakyamuni who tells people about the Buddha existing away in the west, Amitabha. So it could seem, looking at it in this way, one has access, as it were, to the other Buddhas only through Shakyamuni. How do we know there are Buddhas existing in the north, south, east, and west, unless we have been told so, you know, by Shakyamuni in the sutras? It may also be that Suzuki is saying that other teachers are regarded as Buddhas - there is a footnote to that effect - but we do not in

fact find this in the Mahayana tradition. There is no tradition of this in Mahayana Buddhism at all. I think it would rather have horrified some of the Mahayana teachers in India and Tibet and China. But certainly the Mahayana, as he says, does recognize truth wherever found, so I think one should only cautiously start bestowing the accolade of 'Buddha' on this, that, and the other teacher. I think it is very presumptuous, I can't help personally feeling. I saw an issue of the East-West Journal some months ago and there were at least two different teachers. One of them was called Father Freejohn, that's right, Father Freejohn, and it quoted the Karmapa as saying about him that he was the greatest enlightened being since Gautama the Buddha!

Devaraja: I've heard that this. Rajneesh also said that about ...

S: Ah well, in this particular ad, Karmapa is quoted, and Karmapa is also quoted as saying the same sort of thing about another teacher whose name I forget. And it's in quotation marks. Whether he really said it or not I don't know, there's no means of telling, but this sort of bestowing of accolade in this way is a sheer presumption! At best you can say, 'Well, my personal feeling is that this particular person has something that I don't have; I really look up to that person.' How can you tell? Are you able [151] really to tell the difference between bodhisattvas of the fourth bhumi and a bodhisattva, say, of the fifth or sixth bhumi, or between a bodhisattva of the tenth bhumi and a fully enlightened Buddha? Can we really tell? It's just presumptuous. All that you can tell is that, well, I'm not there; this person has got something that I've not got; they're far beyond me. But which degree, which level, you just can't presume to say. And sometimes, you know, I use the comparison: we look up at night into the sky, we see all the stars. All we know is they're a long way away, but looking at them with the naked eye, they all seem pretty much the same distance, but probably some are only a thousand million miles and others are a thousand thousand million miles; [the nearest star is about 25 million million miles away, tr.] they look more or less alike, sort of down here on Earth, and looking up to them. And that's the position with great spiritual figures. We can't really grade or label them in this sort of way.

Perhaps, you know, Buddhas and bodhisattvas themselves can, and they know all about it. Maybe they'll tell us, but we don't know. So, you know, it's very presumptuous for us to assign degrees and grades and levels. Of course, this doesn't prevent us from detecting and even saying when we think something is phoney, huh? Hm? At least when we think that somebody isn't highly developed spiritually - they are just not what they profess to be or what their disciples say that they are - well you've every right to say, well, sorry, but I just don't see it, I don't believe it. In fact, if anything, I believe the contrary. But that is rather a different thing, huh? But where you see individuals transcending us, and if there are many of them, we can't presume to say, well, he's a bit higher and he's a bit higher; we just don't know.

There is a story I also tell - you must have heard it before - about three of my own teachers, all Nyingmapas. These were Chetul Sangye Dorje, Dudjom Rimpoche, Jamyang Khyentse Rimpoche, and they, all three, were Nyingma lamas and they had some disciples in common; they were almost a sort of team. There was a very great under-

standing between the three of them. And quite often the disciples would discuss between themselves, who's the greatest? (amusement) Yes! You know, which guru is top? (amusement) One of them ventured to ask one of the three, I can't remember which one, and he said, 'Well, it's very interesting. As a matter of fact, among us three,' he said, 'one is very much more highly developed than the others. But', he said, 'which one it is none of you will ever know.' (prolonged laughter) Well, it's rather like that. [152]

But I really don't like, you know, even Dr Suzuki handing out his certificates - that this person, and that person, you know, in the past, was a Buddha, was enlightened - and I certainly don't like people handing out certificates to Dr Suzuki, and saying that he was enlightened. Well I've heard this said, you know, and even written. I wouldn't like to say. I don't personally get the impression that Dr Suzuki was enlightened from reading his books. Certainly great insight and understanding, but I don't honestly see more than that. For instance, going through the Bodhicaryavatara you get the impression that you are in contact with a mind that might well have been enlightened, and that was certainly very much on the way. More than that it's not possible to say, but you're in contact, you feel, with a mind of that order. But perhaps one doesn't feel it reading Suzuki, good and helpful though he is.

"Innumerable good laws taught by the Buddhas of all ages and localities are all taken up in the coherent body of Mahayanism."

S: Fair enough. Obviously this is something that one should - I won't say, do but - be open to, be open to truth wherever it is found. (pause; next reader begins) Let's stay with it a bit. This refers more to this 'assimilative energy', as he called it earlier on. It doesn't refer to a sort of eclecticism, or a sort of picking and choosing what you like, and making up a little nosegay of many coloured flowers, or anything of that sort - having your own little sort of collection of spiritual teachings. It means just being very open, and not going by appearances; being prepared to recognize what is good and true wherever you find it.

Devaraja: [That] footnote's quite amazing [sic].

S: Yes. It is quite amusing [sic]. [The footnote was not read out, but it reads: "Perceiving an incarnation of Dharmakaya in every spiritual leader regardless of his nationality and professed creed, Mahayanists recognise a Buddha in Socrates, Mohammed, Jesus, Francis of Assisi, Confucius, Laotze, and many others." tr.] (pause) All right. Let's go on.

"*Universal love for All Sentient Beings.* Hinayanism confines itself to the salvation of individuals only; it does not extend its bliss universally, as each person must achieve his own deliverance. Mahayanism, on the other hand, aims at general salvation; it endeavours to save us not only individually, but universally. All the motives, efforts, and actions of the Bodhisattvas pivot on the furtherance of universal welfare."

S: I must confess I don't understand this distinction at all! Hm? I mean, what is saved, what is delivered - whether in the Hinayana or in the Mahayana - but individuals? What

is this 'universal salvation' as distinct from 'individual salvation'? [153] "Hinayanism confines itself to the salvation of individuals only." Fair enough. "It does not extend its bliss universally." What is this "extending of bliss universally"? "And each person must achieve his own deliverance." Surely the Mahayana too? "Mahayanism, on the other hand, aims at general salvation; it endeavours to save us not only individually, but universally." What is the difference between being saved individually, and being saved universally? If he's trying to say that the Mahayana tries to meet the needs of more people, in a greater diversity of presentations of the teaching - if he means to say that, he isn't actually saying it.

Mamaki: If he means, like, the Mahayana includes the idea of the bodhisattva who is helping others to reach their enlightenment, the Hinayana is just where the individual tries to reach nirvana by himself for himself without any of the extending of this help, so to speak, to others.

S: He might mean that, but he really doesn't say it.

Devamitra: It seems to me that what you said earlier about him being influenced by contemporary thought, philosophy, and so forth, and looking back over the page to the reference to 'the masses', as a bit of cock [?eyed] kind of socialism creeping in, using ...

S: Right. It could very well be that.

Devamitra: ... the bodhisattva ideal to tune into the socialism of that time.

S: It's almost as though he has a sort of collective salvation in mind, and salvation can't be collective, in Buddhism, hmm? It seems very vague thinking.

Nagabodhi: [By using] the ism of Mahayanism: it's as if it's a living entity, which is kind and protective, whereas Hinayanism is ...

S: One can quite justifiably say that the Mahayana does stress much more the altruistic implications of the spiritual life. In actual fact, as I must say, quite honestly, from my own experience, that I have not found that followers of any other Buddhism, say Theravada, are less altruistic than the followers of the Mahayana. They're no less friendly, no less thoughtful, no less kindly, no less willing to teach Buddhism, even though they are following the Hinayana path of individual enlightenment. And you can even meet, you know, people who are ostensibly following the Mahayana path who are not very willing to teach and help you. So essentially one can say that, well, spiritual development is an individual matter, and no doubt historically the Hinayana does stress much more that you must gain enlightenment for yourself, and even does say that there is not much that you can do for others until you have some [154] some spiritual experience, even enlightenment of your own, as it were, first. One can see the truth in that. On the other hand, the Mahayana says spiritual life shouldn't be individualistic; you shouldn't just concentrate on your own salvation and not bother about other people. You can see the truth in that too. Each can go to extremes. One can see that as well. But there's no such

thing as sort of collective enlightenment anywhere in Buddhism. The most you can say is that the Mahayana stressed the altruistic implications of the spiritual life, brought them out in a better manner than the Hinayana did, and also that it did much more deliberately aim at making the fruits of Buddhism and making the spiritual life available, without any degradation or diminution, to as many people as possible. The Hinayana did not explicitly try to do this, even though it did spread very widely.

Voice: Unless it's talking about, you know, again, the audience your speaking to, one of the objections that Christians make about Buddhism: that it's too much concerned with the individual achieving his own salvation, and that Christianity tries to save all people.

S: Even so, the Hinayana missionaries - to use that term - spread hardly less widely than the Mahayana ones. Even now, you know, in modern times, Theravada bhikkhus, until recently, were more active than all the Mahayanists put together. I mean, the Tibetans were following Mahayanism and the bodhisattva ideal, but did they go out propagating Buddhism outside Tibet? Until they were thrown out by the Communists, they never thought of it! Maybe in the border area, but did they ever think of sending Tibetan lamas to the West? There wasn't one came. Very, very few came from China or Japan until just recently. For hundreds of years, no one actually thought about sending any Buddhist monks to Western countries. Where was their bodhisattva spirit? Hm?

Ratnapani: It has become a bit sort of wishy-washy, again in this, that you want to find, I've just got it in the notes, Mahayanism as being the path of universal salvation. So I mean it is also completely valid, what he says, at the same time, isn't it?

S: Universal salvation in the sense that you are trying to put across the teaching, ideally, to everybody; you're trying to reach everybody; everybody as an individual, a Mahayana individual trying to establish contact with as many other individuals as possible. Not as some sort of collective entity.

Ratnapani: Don't apply judgement. (pause)

S: So I'm afraid Suzuki here must be convicted of confusion of thought and vagueness of expression. (amusement, pause) I'm not just trying to be hard on Suzuki [155] of course, I'm really getting at everybody present, because woolliness of thought is so common, you know, and if we're not careful we could be guilty of it ourselves. What do we really think? You know. We're going to be asked questions by people, sooner or later, about these very topics. We must be clear in our own minds. Otherwise we read through, we drift through, Suzuki, and unless we go into it thoroughly in this sort of way there can be confusion and the vagueness won't strike us at all, and we'll take it on, and sort of spew it forth when the time comes, and in this way propagate confusion and vagueness. So it's not just Suzuki; it's us as well, it's everybody. There's a great deal of this confusion and vagueness among western Buddhists.

Devaraja: It's quite terrifying, really. I mean ...

S: It really is!

Devaraja: It terrifies me sometimes just in myself that kind of terrible woolliness ...

S: Yes. Yes.

Devaraja: And sort of half-baked secondhand opinions, you know.

S: And you can really understand the attitude of the average Theravada layman: that he will not speak about the doctrine. That he will leave that to the monks. Sure, that's got its weak side, too, but you can see a reason for it: he will leave it, as it were, to the experts. Not that there are sort of experts, in the technological sense, in spiritual life; but he will leave it [half page blank] [156] but you're not going to be glib about it as though you had it in your pocket and could, you know, take it out and describe it, hmm? For instance, you have the Christians who know God's will: 'Oh, God told me to do this,' and 'God told me to come and see you today'; 'God told me not to go to the football match,' and, you know, 'God told me to come and give you his message', 'God doesn't like this,' and 'God approves of that', 'God was very annoyed at last night's TV programme'. Well, Buddhists, if they're not careful, Mahayana Buddhists, do the same thing about nirvana.

'Of course, yes, nirvana's synonymous with dharmakaya; it's all the same' and 'Oh, yes; Brahma? Oh, yes; it's synonymous with Brahman too,' you know? as though one knew all about it, you know, which one doesn't. And, of course, 'It's really the same thing as God, or at least the Godhead,' as though you knew; but, you know, you're only comparing words with words, really. Anyway, number three.

"(3) Its greatness in Intellectual Comprehension. Mahayanism maintains the theory of non-atman not only in regard to sentient beings but in regard to things in general."

S: What we saw yesterday: the theory or the teaching of the double nairatmya.

"While it denies the hypothesis of a metaphysical agent directing our mental operations, it also rejects the view that insists on the noumenal or thingish reality of existences as they appear to our senses."

S: This is quite clear and straightforward, so we can pass on.

Ratnapani: There is a difference, I suppose? (unclear)

S: Pardon.

Ratnapani: They haven't got, not especially a difference?

S: Well, yes. The Hinayana teaches only the pudgala nairatmya, whereas it is true the Mahayana does extend that principle to objective existence as well: to the Dharma. So

in that way you could speak of a greater scope of intellectual comprehension; this would probably be quite a fair thing to say.

Son: What is pudgala again?

S: The person, the individual. [157] The Hinayana is also concerned to go out to 'the manyfolk'

"(4) Its Marvellous Spiritual Energy. The bodhisattvas never become tired of working for universal salvation, ... to be self-sufficient without paying any attention to the welfare of the masses, is not the teaching of Mahayanism."

S: I'm not quite happy about this phrase "welfare of the masses", but anyway we'll let it pass. But it should also be remarked that in the Theravada Pali scriptures the Buddha is represented as recommending his disciples to go off and teach 'bahujana hitaya bahujana sukhaya': for the welfare and happiness of many people. [Vinaya Pitaka i.21, Mahavagga I.II.ii., tr.] And bahujana, which means many people, manyfolk, could be translated as the masses. So this is there, even in the Theravada, though perhaps it isn't stressed in the same sort of way, nor is it given an intellectual justification.

Devamitra: It's all so interpretive, though?

S: Hm?

Devamitra: It is all so interpretive, so I mean it could equally mean 'not the masses'. It could equally mean, well, you could interpret it as meaning the masses but not necessarily so.

S: No. It means the people, originally: manyfolk. Mrs Rhys Davids translates it, in fact, as the manyfolk; that is quite literal. But anyway, I want to show that there is a concern for even teaching Buddhism to many people isn't confined actually to the Mahayana; you certainly find it in the Hinayana, too. Sometimes you get the impression, as it were - this may be being a little unkind and critical, but you sometimes get the impression as though - the Mahayana, in the person of some of its followers, protests too much. You know what I mean? You know, using the phrase in its original Shakespearian sense: 'The lady doth protest too much, methinks.' [Hamlet 3.2, tr.] Sometimes you get the feeling that the Mahayana rather goes on about altruism and its own superior altruism a bit too much, and it protests too much, whereas there isn't all that practical difference, really, between Mahayana and Hinayana when it comes down to actual, you know, life. A Theravada Buddhist is not notionally less kind and helpful and friendly than a Mahayana, actually.

Devaraja: If anything, I mean in my own experience, in India, I found that, Tibetans aside, the Theravadins were much more helpful, whereas the Chinese were quite cold. Chinese bhikkhus and Japanese were very negative, you know, whereas Thai and Sinhalese bhikkhus were very friendly and courteous. [158]

S: (through the above) Yes. Ah! Right. Yes. It's strange, that, because, as you say, Chinese are very cold. It may be of course partly for political reasons; they're very much on their guard. But I don't think entirely, because I've noticed it all the time. The Sinhalese are remarkably friendly and helpful and the Thais nearly as much so. The Chinese and the Japanese, well, very often they just don't want to know you.

Devaraja: Turn you away, even.

S: Right, Yes.

Devaraja: I have been turned away twice. (laughter)

Lokamitra: This stressing, then, would be reactive from the time of the split, and it has been continued, perhaps, much too long.

S: Especially, perhaps, where Mahayanists are in contact with Hinayanists. You certainly don't find it, say, in Tibetan Buddhism as actually practised: they have the bodhi-sattva ideal, they do stress the compassion aspect, but they do put it into practice in a very genuine way - real - and perhaps, because it is more explicit, there is something in the Mahayana teaching and spiritual practice - one must say this too - which is not there in the Theravada; there is a sort of spiritual glow or warmth which is not in the Theravada. In the Theravada, the kindness and friendliness is more sort of on the human level, as it were. It's very welcome on that level and in that way, but with the Tibetan Buddhism, say, which is Mahayana-cum-Vajrayana, you get the impression of a much more definitely spiritual and even transcendental kindness and compassion - this is what I'd say from my personal experience - as though the bodhicitta is at work. It's the difference between metta, which is wonderful, and bodhicitta, which is still more wonderful. (laughs) The Theravadins have great metta - no doubt about that - but, I mean, some Theravadins at least have bodhicitta, which goes beyond.

Ratnapani: You also once made the point that there aren't any strings attached, that there tend to be strings attached at least the Theravada. You were talking about the Hinayana, metta, who had the metta in a famine and had a stock of grain, once who went around distributing it, and one who said 'You must come at a certain time', and a whole list of rules, to get the grain. [The Drama of Cosmic Enlightenment, p.16. tr.]

S: Yes, this is true. This relates to the Theravadin being quite willing to teach you but on his terms, according to a strict tradition, and the Mahayanist, if he's really a flexible Mahayanist - and you can find narrow Mahayanists, too who insist on teaching you in the strict Mahayana way - [159] but the real Mahayanist will just try to help you where you are and won't sort of stand on his dignity, as it were.

Mangala: They almost like represent two principles rather than, you know ...

S: This is true. Yes. It doesn't quite correspond to history and distribution of sects. For instance, you talk about Japanese - I remember Sister Palden telling me a story about her experience in Rajgir which is rather different, so there's an exception. She said she was staying in a Japanese temple and had to go to Rajgir station to catch her train and she had a big heavy suitcase. So he accompanied her to the station - they went on foot - and he was carrying it for her and then the train came in and they were going to be late, so she just didn't know what to do with this heavy suitcase, but, anyway, she said the Japanese monk, who was the head of the temple, without more ado, just put it on his head like a coolie and ran! And in that way she caught her train. But she often used to relate this incident - that he did not stand on his dignity - and that was the sort of Mahayana spirit, you could say. A Theravada bhikkhu would never have done that; it's quite unthinkable. He wouldn't have carried her case in the first place! I mean, he would have wished her well and helped her, but not compromising his dignity as a bhikkhu. He would have stuck to that, where even the Mahayanist might [?not], but that's because he hasn't got the spirit of Mahayanism. But those who have the spirit of Mahayanism, they wouldn't stand on ceremony.

Devamitra: Did this attitude of friendliness and so forth could also be partly due to the nature of the particular study that certain bhikkhus engage in. For instance, the Sinhalese bhikkhus study mastery of the suttas and the Thai, the Vinaya, which covers a lot of ground dealing with the Buddha's life, whereas in, for instance, in Burma, they're studying mostly Abhidhamma, and I think you said that, on the whole, Abhidhamma students tend to be rather a sort of temperamental bunch.

S: Hot tempered. Burmese monks are very hot tempered, and they've got a reputation for this among other monks. And Mongolian monks, who are often very good geshe, go in for the Mahayana equivalent of the Abhidhamma. They've got a reputation for being hot tempered, and I've noticed this myself.

Devamitra: And does this also get in the way of their friendliness?

S: It does to some extent. They are often friendly and generous but they might get angry with you at any moment. It doesn't last long, it blows over, but they're a bit uncomfortable to live with. (laughter) But Sinhalese and Thais just don't get angry or even irritated at all, not monks; lay people are a [160] bit different. The Thai will be much too disciplined and mindful, and the Sinhalese monks are usually just good jolly fellows (laughter) at least, even if they're not very spiritual, at least they're very friendly and easy to get on with and good company; at least you can say that. And I've not yet met a bad-tempered Sinhalese monk, as far as I remember, at all; or a bad-tempered Thai. Some of the older Thai bhikkhus are a bit dry and serious, but not bad-tempered, no. But the Burmese, ooh! you have to be really careful, (laughter) you know, restrained. (laughter)

"(5) Its greatness in the exercise of the Upaya. The term upaya literally means expediency. The great fatherly heart of the bodhisattva ... in order that he might lead the masses to final enlightenment ..."

S: I think this idea of 'leading the masses' is very unfortunate expression. You only lead individuals. You might even be able, with great skill and capacity, to lead a large number of them, but I think one should never speak in terms, in a Buddhist context, of leading the masses: you don't: you just lead individuals if you lead at all. It's almost as if, the demagogue, doesn't it?

Mamaki: Like someone walking along with a banner.

S: Right.

Devaraja: Do you think perhaps even 'leader' is a questionable word to use?

S: Perhaps.

Devaraja: It implies a sort of a mission as opposed to a sort of fellow-feeling, as opposed to a kalyana mitra sort of ...

S: And probably, in view of our memories of 'Il Duce' and 'Führer' and so on, 'leader' becomes rather unfortunate.

Lokamitra: This was a familiar idea at the time he wrote it, too, I think. Bismarck and so on. Historically ...

S: Bismarck was a little earlier. Was Bismarck known as the leader?

Lokamitra: No. This thing of leading the masses, I mean, later on it develops in different ways.

S: Well in those days, put it this way, there were masses to be led, certainly in so-called democracies, yes, but I would hardly speak nowadays in terms of leading the masses. I don't even think that Mr Heath [the then Prime Minister, tr.] would speak in those terms. (laughter)

Sudatta: It implies doing their thinking for them, doesn't it? [161]

S: Exactly. Yes. As Cardinal Manning said; 'I don't think. The pope thinks for me.' It's like that.

Son: When did he write that?

S: I've seen it quoted, and Manning was late nineteenth century. I wouldn't like to say where he said it or where he wrote it. I forget even where I saw it originally. I probably did pick it up from somewhere. It's a quite famous statement. 'I don't think; the pope does my thinking for me.' ["I thank God that I do not think for myself, religiously or morally; the Pope does my thinking." tr.] Another Catholic wished he could have a papal bull at breakfast every morning along with the 'Times' (laughter)

Vajradaka: A papal bull?

S: Yes. A sort of papal document telling you what to do, but that would probably be... (laughter) It is a bit sick, isn't it? So let's be a bit careful about leading people, yes?

"Mahayanism does not ask its followers to escape the metaphysics of birth and death for the sake of entering the lethargy and tranquillity of nirvana; ..."

S: I'm afraid these are the sort of expressions that Suzuki sometimes indulges in. I mean does anybody - or has any Buddhist, whether Hinayana or otherwise - ever aimed at a lethargic tranquillity of nirvana, or could nirvana possibly be lethargic? Well surely you overcome lethargy, you know, before you even enter on the dhyana states, not to speak of reaching nirvana! I'm afraid this is a bit of an example of the tendency of some Mahayanists rather to caricature the whole Hinayana position, the whole Hinayana concept of nirvana - not that they weren't a bit narrow or that they narrowed it all down during the course of the centuries, but even so, this goes a bit too far.

"For metempsychosis in itself is no evil and nirvana in its coma is not productive of any good."

S: And this, I'm afraid, is, you know, really a caricature: as though nirvana, as though the Hinayanic nirvana, was an almost a pathological state to be avoided at all costs. I'm afraid this is just partisanship.

"And as long as there are souls groaning in pain (laughter) the bodhisattva cannot rest in nirvana ..."

S: Well, we can see what Dr Suzuki means, and he surely is expressing, you know, a genuine type of Mahayana Buddhism, but (laughter) painting it in rather crude colours.

Devamitra: Well, he's really degrading nirvana, isn't he?

S: Yes. Well, degrading nirvana [162] and also, in a way, degrading the bodhisattva ideal, because if all that you avoid is a coma-like state when you are avoiding individual nirvana, well, that's not much of an achievement, is it? (laughter)

"There is no rest for his unselfish heart, ... he employs innumerable means suggested by his disinterested loving-kindness.

S: We mustn't lose sight, of course, of the principle: 'Its greatness in the exercise of upaya'; and certain of the Mahayana does - much more deliberately than the Hinayana - consciously try to establish contact with as many people as possible, even outside, you know, the limitations of formal Buddhism. The Mahayanist wouldn't hesitate, but the Hinayanist, even the friendly Theravadin, might well do so, and the Mahayanist tries much

more consciously to make use of different cultural traditions and symbolism and so on: arts and crafts...

"(6) Its Higher Spiritual Attainment. In Hinayanism the highest bliss attainable does not go beyond Arhatship which is ascetic saintliness. But the followers of Mahayanism attain even to Buddhahood with all its spiritual powers."

S: In classical Hinayana and Mahayana there is this distinction, which the Hinayanists also recognize: distinction of the spiritual level as between the Arahant and the Buddha, and the Hinayana does say that you should aim at being an Arahant and not a Buddha - that's too difficult. And the Mahayanist does, in fact, say that all should aim at becoming Buddhas, and of course those who aim at becoming Buddhas are bodhisattvas. But having said that, it must also be said that, as far as we can make out, in the very early stages of Buddhism, historically speaking, in the archaic or primitive phase, no such hard and fast distinction was made between the enlightened state of the Buddha and the Enlightened state of his followers. That seems to have come rather later. Or at least, the Buddha himself did not feel that he had reached a higher spiritual state than his Enlightened followers. And it is even said quite explicitly in the Pali scriptures by the Buddha that the difference between him and his followers is that he realized Enlightenment, bodhi, earlier, and they realized it later. But it seems to be, or it seems to be suggested, that it's one and the same bodhi, one and the same Enlightenment. But [as to] such a question, there was a lot of discussion about this and it was generally felt that the Buddha had a piece of superior equipment and was able to communicate better - lots of additional virtues, over and above the actual Enlightenment itself - and this eventually seems to have developed into a sort of difference of spiritual level altogether, and then, of course, the Arahant became more and more degraded and therefore, at least in the eyes of the Mahayana, until arahantship and nirvana ended up as very poor things indeed - which was quite [163] ridiculous, historically speaking. So in many Mahayana texts 'arahant' and 'Hinayana' seems to have no real historical relevance at all; they're just counters for certain low states which certainly don't tie up very neatly with what the Hinayanists themselves, the early Buddhists, understood by 'arahant' and understood by 'nirvana'.

Devamitra: I'm just thinking now in terms of 'Arahant' and 'Buddha', like, the greatest sin is to wound a Buddha, but you can kill an Arahant; would this sort of (laughter)

S: Well, a Buddha is more useful to the world.

Devamitra: Yes. But the point I'm trying to make - it's just a minor point for my own satisfaction - do you think, by the time this was said, the idea of arahantship had been degraded?

S: Well, yes, it does suggest that the arahant is on a definitely lower level than the Buddha, yes.

Vajradaka: By the time the Saddharmapundarika had been written, the Arahant had been degraded to someone who had merely purified the fetters, merely sort of dealt with his own psychological and emotional mess, as it were, rather than experienced the metaphysical...

S: (breaking in) wisdom. Whereas if you read some of the earlier Pali texts, well, that as a description of an arahant is ridiculous. Also it must be said that in the early days none of these terms had a very precise technical meaning. Arahant meant simply worthy, a spiritually worthy person, not someone who was assigned a very definite grade in a carefully worked out spiritual hierarchy, that came later. Again, in connection with this degradation of the word 'arahant', I am reminded of the degradation of the word 'saint' in English. In medieval times 'saint' meant, well, as the Catholics use the term today; it's a very good term. But then the Puritans were dubbed saints by their opponents and then a saint came to mean, in the eighteenth century, a rather morose and rather narrow-minded follower of one of the various Puritan sects, and the word saint was used almost ironically; so something rather like that happened with the term 'arahant'.

Devaraja: Was the Buddha himself ever referred to as an arahant?

S: Yes, not just as an arahant, but arahant samyak-sambuddha. And certainly one also finds in the Pali canon the arahants going out and teaching and spreading the dharma, helping others as much as they could. [164]

Lokamitra: Why did the Hinayanists say that one should aim at arahantship and not Buddhahood? Was it because there was a teaching and you might as well follow it?

S: Well, perhaps more like that. Also, it must be said, you know, quite honestly, as I've sort of said this very clearly and very strongly in the 'Survey', that there was a progressive narrowness of what came to be called the Hinayana. It did narrow down the teaching; in particular, it neglected the Buddha's personal example, hmm? so that it was more a question of following the Buddha, or following his teaching, rather than being like the Buddha. So to put it very broadly, the Mahayana was reminding people that it wasn't enough to be a Buddhist, as it were; you had to be a Buddha, huh? The Hinayanist was more content to be just a Buddhist and follow the Buddha's teaching, not to try to be like the Buddha himself, and in that way, of course, neglecting the example of the Buddha. The compassion side did tend to be rather neglected, and the Mahayana quite rightly restored that emphasis. The fact that we're a bit critical about Dr Suzuki mustn't blind us to the fact that there was a real difference as between the Hinayana and the Mahayana, and that, in principle, in substance, many of the Mahayana criticisms of the Hinayana were fully justified, even though, later on, they came to be a bit exaggerated and seem to have been, in historical terms, sometimes not quite accurate. But there were people, in India, within a few hundred years of the Buddha's death, of that very definitely Hinayanistic outlook and attitude, and it was that which the rise of the Mahayana was intended to counteract. All right.

"(7) Its greater activity. When the bodhisattva reaches the stage of Buddhahood, he is able to manifest himself everywhere in the ten quarters of the universe and to minister to the spiritual needs of all sentient beings."

S: Well what that means is very difficult for us to say, or to see, huh? So, perhaps better to just leave it at that. It could be that he's identified with the universal spiritual activity of the dharmakaya, and it could have some other meaning, but obviously it isn't easy to say. Let's just pass on then.

"These seven peculiarities ... the reasons why ... Mahayanism, the great vehicle, in contradistinction to Hinayanism, ... the small vehicle ... Asanga ... draws the line distinctly between the two schools ... not between Buddhism and ... other religious doctrines which existed at his time."

S: What's people's general feeling about the seven principle features of Mahayanism as expounded by Sthiramati?

Vajradaka: Oh, Sthiramati. I feel that Suzuki's putting a lot of interpolation into it, [165] and that it could be a lot simpler and crisp and ...

S: And clearer. Yes, clearer and shorter.

Vajradaka: Is it actually written anywhere clearer and crisper?

?: Clearer and shorter?

S: Well, I think I can say by me in the 'Survey', where I've given the essential differences between Hinayana and Mahayana, though I've considered them much more in their classical Indian forms, and I've not, you know, considered to what extent the Mahayana criticism of the Hinayana in India, in those days, applies to the Theravada schools of today. I've certainly criticized the Theravadins themselves at certain points, but not very systematically, but I have shown the basic differences between the Mahayana and the Hinayana. Any other general comment on the seven principle features? Right. On to "The Ten Essential Features of Buddhism".

"The following statement of the ten essential features of Mahayanism as presented in the *Comprehansive Treatise on Mahayanism* is made from a different standpoint to the preceding one, and is the pronounciamento of the Yogacara school of Asanga and Vasubandhu rather than that of Mahayanism generally. This school together with the Madhyamika school of Nagarjuna constitute the two divisions of Hindu Mahayanism."

S: That is, Indian Mahayanism.

"The points enumerated ... are ten. (1) It teaches an immanent existence of all things in the alayavij/ana or All-Conserving Souls."

S: More usually translated as the store consciousness.

"The conception ... was suggested by Buddha in the ... Hinayana sutras; but on account of its deep meaning ... did not disclose its full significance in their sutras; but made it known only in the Mahayana sutras.

"According to the Yogacara School, the alaya is not a universal, but an individual mind or soul ... in which the 'germs' of all things exist in their ideality. The objective world ... does not exist, but by ... subjective illusion, that is created by ignorance we project ... these ... and imagine that they are there ... while the Manovijāna (ego-consciousness) which too is a product of illusion ... never abandons its egoism. The Alayavijāna ... is indifferent to ... these errors on the part of the Manovijāna.

S: There will be rather more about the alayavijāna later on, so I think we'll leave it until then and go into it in more detail. I think the general idea is clear, isn't it? It's as though there is a level - not exactly within the individual mind, but opening out at the bottom of it, as it were - where the seed of everything, the impressions left by all our thoughts and actions, are deposited, as it were. And this is sort of continuous [166] from life to life. And when we meet, you know, externally, the appropriate conditions, those seeds can sprout and flower. This is the general idea, but I must also say that within the Mahayana literature itself the alaya conception is very, very obscure, not to say confused and contradictory. It isn't easy to sort it out by any means.

Right, let's leave this for the time being. But certainly this is one of the points distinguishing Mahayana from Hinayana, and especially the Yogacara form of Mahayana from Hinayana: that it does teach this alaya vijāna; this store consciousness.

"(2) The Yogacara distinguishes three kinds of knowledge: 1. illusion (parikalpita) ... 2. Discriminative ... knowledge (paratantra) ... 3. Perfect knowledge (parinispanna)."

"The distinction may be illustrated ... men frequently take a rope lying on the ground for a poisonous snake and are ... shocked ... When they ... examine it, they become convinced of the groundlessness ... This ... what Kant calls Schein."

I don't quite see the point of that conclusion. Anyway, I think the illustration is quite clear, hmm? It's the stock one which was taken over by the Vedanta later on: you see a rope lying on the ground on a dark night and you think it is a snake. Your perception of the snake is purely illusory, so the snake has only an illusory existence: there is no real snake, there is only the rope. If you want to pursue the analogy further, in terms of these three kinds of knowledge - I don't know whether Suzuki does do that; whether I anticipate, but anyway - the snake is illusory knowledge. Your perception of the snake is illusory knowledge. When you perceive that that snake, as you thought it was, is in fact only a rope, that is relative knowledge. When you perceive that the rope is made up of hundreds of thousands of tiny strands, or even do a chemical analysis of the strands, that is perfect knowledge. So you've got these three different kinds of knowledge: the illusory, which is completely false; then the relative which is true, as it were convention-

ally, or within the terms of ordinary experience; and that which is absolutely and unconditionally, as it were. So the Yogacara distinguishes these three kinds.

You could say also that the atma perceives not as the label for your ... the collection of your thoughts and feeling etc, but as something having a real existence, your thoughts and your feelings, in other words, the five skandhas as experienced: these would be relative knowledge. And the void, sunyata - which as it were underlies those five skandhas - would be regarded as perfect [167] knowledge. So you've got these three levels according to the Yogacara. Let's carry on and see what further explanation Suzuki gives.

"Most people ... do not go any further ... they understand ... the snake was ... nothing but ... rope, they think their knowledge complete ... and do not stop to reflect ... their knowledge does not go beyond ... the things they perceive."

"But is an object ... as it appears to be? ... the Yogacara ... says ... their existence is only relative and has no absolute value whatever independent of the perceiving subject. Clear insight into ... their non-realness ... is perfect knowledge."

S: In other words, Suzuki seems to be suggesting that this relative knowledge is not knowledge at all, but only a projection on to things outside of us of what is essentially inside; and those things inside he identifies with the seeds deposited in the alaya. In other words, we perceive in terms of our own, as Kant said, that we cannot know the thing in itself, but Buddhism would say you can know it, but through prajña, that higher faculty of wisdom, not through the lower, discriminating consciousness.

Sudatta: Would you say that the first two categories were avidya, and category [number] three was vidya? In other words, that if you can discriminate ...

S: Yes, you can say that: that, yes, those two forms of so-called knowledge are in fact avidya, yes, and that the third is vidya, yes. All right, let's pass on, simply still illustrating the difference between the Mahayana, especially the Yogacara, and the Hinayana.

"When we attain to perfect knowledge, we recognize ... there is no such thing as an objective world, ... an illusive manifestation, ... the empirical ego ... having no ... knowledge as to the true nature of the Alaya ... entangling itself in ignorance ... takes its own ... creations for real realities."

S: What is really being said is that, owing to the very structure of our consciousness, we split things up into subject and object, we see everything in terms of subject and object, we experience everything in terms of subject and object: here am I, the subject, and there is the object, there is the objective universe, there is the world. Here is reality, if you like: we see everything in this way, but this is essentially a falsification, and when we see things as they really are, when we gain perfect knowledge, we no longer split things up in this way. Perfect knowledge, or reality, transcends the distinction between subject and object. This is, of course, something that we can't think, because when we

start thinking of that [168] reality in which subject-object distinction does not exist, we make that reality an object out there, which is self-contradictory, so we can just make the bare statement and we can try to sort of break through the subject-object distinction, especially in meditation, but we really can't think about it, or we can't really think of reality or imagine reality, as it transcends subject and object. (laughs) We do just the opposite in trying to do that very thing, so there's not really much usefully which we can discuss, even, we just have to break through that subject-object distinction. And we can't even speak in terms of, well, then we shall see what we shall see, because that supposes an object which is seeing a subject which is... (laughter) You know; you can't win, as it were, or you're not meant to. It's probably good that you shouldn't: you're just baffled, which, you know, spurs you on to change your consciousness, or the structure of your consciousness, so that it doesn't split everything up in this way. Right, we come on to something more straightforward now. Number 4.

"(4) For the regulation of moral life, the Yogacara ... proposes the practice of the six paramitas ... Dana ... sila ... santi ... virya ... dhyana ... prajā ... Asanga says 'By not clinging to wealth or pleasures ... cherishing thoughts to violate the precepts ... feeling dejected ... awakening ... thoughts of indolence ... by maintaining serenity in ... confusion of the world ... and by always practising ekacitta ...'"

S: Ekacitta is single-mindedness.

"And by truthfully comprehending the nature of things (6), the bodhisattva recognizes the truth of vijanamatra - the truth that there is nothing that is not of ideal or subjective creation."

S: Yes. So these are the six paramitas of Yogacara, and, in fact, of the Mahayana generally. These are quite fully discussed in my 'Survey' as I expect most of you know. These, in a way, are not all that different from the precepts in the Hinayana, as I've also pointed out in the Survey [that] in the Hinayana you get a path of sila, dana, and bhavana, joined on to one of sila, samadhi, and prajā, so that you get dana, sila, samadhi, and prajā. And certainly in the Hinayana, patience is taught and energy is taught: you get energy, virya, as one of the five spiritual faculties. So it's true that the Mahayana systematizes these six into a sort of path in this way, and it's certainly a very sort of comprehensive statement, but in principle it doesn't differ all that much from the paths enumerated in the Hinayana. Perhaps the biggest difference is in the underlying motivation - that you are practising these paramitas not just for the sake of your own individual development but so that you can help others as well. Anything that needs to be said about the six paramitas? [169] I don't know if these are going to come up later or not. Anything that occurs to anyone to ask about them? They are relatively straightforward.

Mangala: It's interesting that Asanga explains it in the negative: that's it's not like to cultivate giving, but more by not clinging to wealth ...

S: Right. That's true. It's a bit, in a sense, Hinayanistic.

Mangala: I mean, I find that very good, actually, because I've never actually seen them expounded in this way before; they've always been put over in the positive way.

S: Usually, of course, that is so, because that is the whole emphasis of the Mahayana, yes. Because obviously you can't give away wealth if you're clinging to it. (laughter)
Right, on to number 5.

"(5) Mahayanism teaches that there are ten spiritual stages of bodhisattvahood, viz....

S: The note says these ten stages are explained below, see chapter 12. "By passing through all these stages one after another, we are believed to reach the oneness of Dharmakaya." These are the ten bhumis, the ten stages of the bodhisattvas progress; in other words, the ten stages of the progressive manifestation of the relative bodhicitta in the life of the bodhisattva. But we'll go into them when we come to that chapter 12. On to 6, then.

"The Yogacarists claim that the precepts practised by Mahayanism are far superior than those of the Hinayanists. There are physical, verbal and spiritual precepts observed by the Buddha. The Hinayanists neglect the last ... The bodhisattva ... even venture to violate the ten siksas ... (He) does not hesitate to go to war in case the cause he espouses is beneficent to humanity at large." (sounds of surprise)

S: That is a bit extreme, isn't it? It is true that in some Mahayana texts it does say that the bodhisattva does not hesitate to violate the precepts for the sake of helping other living beings, huh? It is true that that is there, but it seems that the statement is made more to discourage ethical formalism than to encourage a sort of antinomian attitude, and a genuine bodhisattva would be very, very scrupulous and very careful and break - if it is a breaking - my friend Mr Chen used to insist that it should be called a transcending of the precepts - would be very, very careful, very mindful, before deciding to do any such thing, and I'm not quite happy with Suzuki's bodhisattva sort of marching happily off to war. I think we are no longer so confident about [170] wars which are "right and beneficent to humanity at large".

Devamitra: Can you think of any historical example of where it could have been said that that war was beneficial?

S: I think I could if I had a bit of time to consider. I'd have to sort of consult my history books, but I think there have been a few, but how does one know at the time? I mean, in retrospect, one can look back and say, well, yes, that was a short, sharp, little war, you know, and it did prevent, quite definitely, something much more catastrophic. But how can one be sure at the time? One can't be.

Nagabodhi: The First World War was going to be very short and sharp.

S: Yes. Yes. Even the second was going to be short. I think it is very dubious and quite dangerous when put in this sort of way. Sure, one does not want to encourage ethical

formalism and making rules ends in themselves, but I think, at present, that the danger lies rather in the opposite direction.

Devaraja: I must say I'm beginning to wonder whether it's advisable to sell this book at the centre! (laughing)

Mamaki: (laughing) Yes!

S: Right! Yes!

Devamitra: It was one that you recommended.

S: Well it is in many ways one of the best, yes? But there aren't very many at all, are there? Anyway, we've only got to page 70. Maybe we should just plug mine. (laughs) I must say, quite honestly, I don't think I've committed any mistake of this sort at all, in my 'Survey' or my 'Three Jewels'. We'll have to have a look at McGovern when he arrives: I've not seen that book for many years. I'll look through that when it arrives.

Mangala: Which book's that?

S: 'An Introduction to Mahayana Buddhism'. I read it about 25 years ago and had quite a good sort of positive impression of it then, but let's see. Is there any point in discussing that sort of theme generally: the bodhisattva's alleged willingness to violate the precepts if it can only help other beings?

Lokamitra: Surely, I mean, that in itself is not breaking the precepts because that is what the precepts are there for.

S: Not really, no, but technically. For instance, take this question of taking life. The first precept does prohibit the taking of life, but the Mahayana [171] does say that if it is going to benefit beings on the whole, the bodhisattva is able to take life, or is entitled to take life.

Lokamitra: It gets into this collective thing in a way, doesn't it?

S: Perhaps it does. I don't think that is what is meant. I think what is meant is: no ethical rule can be absolute. If there is any absolute it is only the wisdom and compassion, and that must decide, even if it appears to override ethical requirements. But it is a very dangerous sort of teaching which assumes or implies tremendous responsibility on the part of the individual person. I mean, otherwise you could justify anything: that it was good for the person: 'I shouted, I lost my temper, it was good for him, that was my skilful means!'

Mamaki: It does say bodhisattvas.

S: It does say bodhisattvas, and strictly speaking a bodhisattva is one in whom the bodhicitta has arisen, so one has to be very careful and not sort of claim that the bodhicitta has arisen and it's the bodhicitta doing it and not me, sort of thing, otherwise one is on very shaky ground indeed.

Devamitra: It seems we've got to leave that kind of attitude until we're well along the bodhisattva path. (laugh)

S: Right, yes, but the Mahayana sutras do make such statements. Well, one could even say, yes, all right, a bodhisattva wouldn't hesitate to go off and fight in a righteous war, even IF it was a righteous war, but where are these bodhisattvas? You haven't got sort of tens of thousands of them in the Japanese army! Even though they were all Mahayana Buddhists, or many of them. But it could be used to justify a sort of militaristic attitude such as Japan had.

Nagabodhi: Suzuki goes on to do that in a few pages.

S: And of course, Zen is brought in here, you know. Christmas Humphreys sometimes uses it in this sort of way.

Devamitra: Samurai tradition.

S: Yes, right.

Vajradaka: It also sometimes comes in the teachings of Don Juan and the warrior.

Lokamitra: It's an attitude. That's what I got; an attitude more than an actual ...

Mangala: An action.

Lokamitra: Yes. (sounds of agreement)

Nagabodhi: He says, in fact, there's a lovely line which describes that attitude as, [172] 'Only the warrior can balance the terror of being alive with the wonder of being alive.' I think that's how he sees the warrior; not fighting, a state of mind.

Vajradaka: He never talks of it, or very rarely talks about actual fighting; the warrior actually ever fighting; but he does talk about sort of killing animals, for instance.

Devaraja: Maybe we're getting a bit off the subject.

?: ... related to the text of study.

Vajradaka: It's related to how one feels as an aspiring bodhisattva; whether one, you know, talking about one's own confidence in sort of having a great deal of power, in a sense, in one's own choice and decision, and deciding how one is going to use it.

S: Of course the Mahayana sutras do also say that the bodhisattva is quite willing to kill if necessary, if it's going to help others. It also says he's prepared to undergo the karmic consequences. It doesn't say that there won't be any karmic consequences: there will be, he'll have to suffer, but he's prepared to accept that, yes?

Devaraja: He's also prepared to be killed, as well.

S: If necessary, if necessary. Though he doesn't let himself be killed lightly, because a bodhisattva, looking at it quite objectively, is a very valuable person to have around.

Mamaki: And that will be the same, I suppose, for his killing someone else: that this is going to affect him as a bodhisattva according to the karmic consequences.

S: Right. Yes. It might well incapacitate him, or sort of put him out of action, for a few years, or a few lifetimes, even. Because if he sort of is in hell because of that action, he can't be very useful, though he might do something, even in hell, but that depends how advanced a bodhisattva he is.

Nagabodhi: This is why Mr Chen prefers to use the word transcending, because the ...

S: Yes. That probably is wiser, rather than to speak of breaking the precepts. He used to say it was ridiculous to speak of the bodhisattva's breaking. He never breaks, though he may transcend.

Nagabodhi: Would he not transcend the karmic consequences?

S: Apparently not; the sutras don't go as far as to say that. They do say [173] that he is willing to bear the karmic consequences. Even the Mahayana doesn't go as far as that.

Mamaki: Because it would turn it into something magical?

S: Ah, yes. Even the Mahayana has a great respect for the law of karma. 'The iron law of karma' as (drowned by laughter) used to say! All right. On to 7.

"As Mahayanism insists on the purification of the inner life ... they do not shun ... 'the dust of worldliness' ... they endeavour to impart spiritual benefits to all, ... without regard to their attitude ... towards themselves ... They never become contaminated; ... being free from all spiritual faults, they live in ... accord with suchness,... their inner life is a realization of the dharmakaya."

S: I think the whole difficulty arises when one thinks of the bodhisattva as being the ordinary, average, Mahayana Buddhist, huh? And this, of course, does happen in Mahayana countries, just as in Theravada countries they assume everybody is an upasaka. In the same way, in Mahayana countries, they assume everybody's a bodhisattva, which isn't the case. They become much too broad, as it were. For instance, you read here

that "Mahayanists do not shun to commingle themselves with the 'dust of worldliness'; they aim at the realization of bodhi, they are not afraid of being thrown into the whirlpool of metaphysics, they endeavour to impart spiritual benefits to all sentient beings without regard to their attitude, whether hostile or friendly to themselves. So can the ordinary Mahayanist Buddhist afford to take this sort of attitude: that you're quite impervious to samsara, you know, you don't care whether you dwell in the midst of all the dirt and noise and bustle, you know. You can't afford to! A bodhisattva, yes, but you are not a bodhisattva. Maybe you're aspiring to be one.

Vajradaka: You soon find out when you try! (laughter)

S: It's not easy, is it? I think, you know, one of the difficulties is - and this applies to transcending the precepts too - that in Mahayana countries, very often, or even usually, what applies to the bodhisattva is held to apply to sort of Mahayana Buddhists generally, just because they are sort of regarded as honorary bodhisattvas, as it were, and that's quite unrealistic. (pause) All right, on to 8.

"(8) The intellectual superiority of the bodhisattva is shown by his possession of knowledge of non-particularisation (amaraṇṭha) ... knowledge of the absolute ... free from dualism ... ego and non-ego. His knowledge ... transcends ..., soaring ... to the realm of the absolute and the abode of non-particularity." [174]

S: Well this is all right, but it's called intellectual superiority. What seems to be suggested is that the bodhisattva's mind is free from the limitations of the subject-object structure. So this can hardly be described as being an intellectual superiority. It's not intellectual at all. So it is rather odd to speak of the intellectual superiority of the bodhisattva in any case. So I think that the point that is being made here is simply [that] the bodhisattva is not limited, either in his own inner being or in his knowledge or in his neither activity nor consciousness, by the duality of subject-object. This is what is being said. That's fair enough. But again, this doesn't apply to the average common-or-garden follower of Mahayana Buddhism. Right: nine.

"In consequence of this intellectual elevation, the bodhisattva perceives the working of birth and death in nirvana, and nirvana in ... birth and death ... He does not recoil ... when ... in context with the world of the senses ... but ... never clings to things evanescent ... his inmost consciousness forever dwells in the serenity of eternal Suchness."

S: So here Suzuki is saying that inasmuch as the bodhisattva's inner life is not vitiated by or limited by subject-object distinction, he perceives everything non-dualistically. This is what he is saying. He's expressing himself, I think, a bit sort of crudely, but this is, in effect, what he is saying: that when you no longer perceive things in terms of subject and object, when you yourself are no longer limited by that distinction, then you perceive everything non-dualistically; you don't think in terms of samsara and nirvana etc, etc. You don't shrink from the one and embrace the other; you live non-dualistically. But this again applies to the bodhisattva, to quite an advanced bodhisattva at that.

All right. On to 10, then.

"(10) The final characteristic to be mentioned as distinctly Mahayanistic is the doctrine of Trikaya. There is, it is asserted, the highest being which is the ultimate cause of the universe and in which all existences find their essential origin and significance. This is called ... dharmakaya."

S: There's a very un-Buddhistic expression here: the highest being which is the ultimate cause of the universe. (sounds of agreement) In Buddhism there is no ultimate cause of the universe. It's a very loose expression indeed.

Mamaki: It's very confusing to put things like that in.

S: It is really, yes.

Devamitra: Isn't it also questionable "so that they find their essential origin"? [175]

S: It is, yes. That is also misleading.

"The dharmakaya, however, does not remain in its absoluteness. It reveals itself in the realm of cause and effect. It then takes a particular form. It becomes a devil or a god or a human being or an animal of lower grade, adapting itself to the degrees of the intellectual development of the people."

S: This can be taken in two ways, one of which is definitely un-Buddhistic, that is, if you take it as 'incarnation' - that the dharmakaya directly incarnates - this not really Buddhist. But you could say that when, for instance, you meditate and have a glimpse of a high spiritual level of a certain spiritual form, then something of the light of the dharmakaya shines through this. That through that particular form, through that particular medium - it may be in the form of, say, a bodhisattva, or even, you could say, a god, or archetypal form in general - you do get some sort of glimpse of ultimate spiritual reality of dharmakaya. You could say that. And in that sense you could speak of the dharmakaya as 'taking that particular form' within your particular mind in the course of your meditation. But I don't think you could say more than that.

Nagabodhi: What about the "animal of lower grade"?

S: Yes. That's very extreme indeed. Of course, there is the Hindu doctrine of avatara, where it even goes so far as to say that the absolute can directly incarnate in, or become, even a stone.

Devaraja: The lila, divine lila?

S: Not quite. For instance, the Shalagram stone is regarded not as a symbol, as we would say, but as a direct manifestation of Vishnu, just as, say, Christ is God incarnate in human form. Then the Shalagram is Vishnu incarnate in the form of a stone. In fact,

Christian theologians even raise the question of whether God could not have become incarnate in an animal or an inanimate object, and effect the work of salvation in that way, and the answer which was given, as far as I remember, or agreed upon, was that he could have done that, but the human form was more fitting and appropriate for that work as it was the noblest form, and so on and so forth, but that was within the power of God: to incarnate in a stone. So this is also the Hindu view, but it is not the Buddhist view, that this isn't this sort of incarnationist philosophy or theology.

"For it is the people's inner needs which necessitate the special forms of manifestation. This is called the Nirmanakaya, that is, the body of transformation."

S: This is not really quite correct. Usually nirmanakaya applies to the historical [176] figure of the Buddha himself. There is a term, nisyanda, in the Lankavatara Sutra which seems to cover other forms that can be regarded as manifestations of dharmakaya.

"The Buddha who manifested himself in the person of Gautama, the son of King of Suddhodana"

S: There does seem to be a misprint. King Suddhodana, not "King of Suddhodana".

"about two thousand five hundred years ago ... is Nirmanakaya. The third ... is ... Sambhogakaya ... the spiritual body of the Buddha ... The conception of Sambhogakaya is full of wild imaginations which are not easy of comprehension by modern minds."

S: There is a chapter on the trikaya later on. We'll leave it till then. I don't know that wild imaginations is a very happy expression. I wouldn't regard them as that at all; it's more like rich imagination, not wild imaginations. And what I said about the forms which may be perceived in meditation, technically speaking, would be aspects of the sambhogakaya, not nirmanakaya.

Vajradaka: There seems to be quite a lot of confusing literature on this: some books I've read say nirmanakaya is the body of bliss, which is the eighteen-foot aura, golden aura, of ...

S: They say this about the sambhogakaya?

Vajradaka: No.

S: If it's nirmanakaya, that's a definite mistake, quite straightforwardly.

Vajradaka: Ah. Because Edward Conze in 'Buddhism Through the Ages' describes it like that. [Not found in Buddhist Texts Through the Ages, tr.]

S: That's a mistake then.

Devaraja: I've seen mention in the Japanese tradition, Zen tradition, of ... connected with the kayas, I think it's Vairocana, then Locana, Locana Buddha ...

S: Oh, that is their corruption of Vairocana isn't it? Yes, because they don't have an R, do they, in Chinese? Only an L. You're talking about the Shingon School?

Devaraja: No, because the Japanese say Dainichi, don't they, for Vairocana? Locana is the sambhogakaya ...

S: Ah, wait a moment, you can either translate the name from the Sanskrit - the meaning - or you can try to reproduce the sound in your own language. So when they translate the meaning [of] Dai-nichi, that's Maha-Vairocana, dai meaning great, nichi meaning sun-like or shining. 'Locana' is their corruption of the term Vairocana, yes? In the Chinese (unclear); [177] Maha Vairocana and Vairocana. Maha Vairocana then becomes the dharmakaya; Vairocana, or Locana, becomes sambhogakaya.

"These characteristics enumerated as seven or ten ... are what the Hindu Buddhist philosophers of the first century down to the ... sixth century ... thought ... the most essential points ... and what entitled it to be called ... Mahayana ... (They) ... are saturated with a partisan spirit ... are scattered and unconnected statements ... and give but a ... somewhat obscure delineation of it ... Mahayanism ... has much in common with Hinayanism ... and ... there is no need of emphasizing ... one school over the other. On the following pages I shall try to present a more comprehensive and impartial exposition of ... Mahayanism."

S: He's going to as-it-were expound it on its own merits without reference to the Hinayana.

Ratnapani: So he took made a definite pose earlier on, a sort of Mahayanistic pose, during the whole chapter, in fact?

S: Maybe, but there seems to be certain amount of confusion, too.

Ratnapani: Almost a pseudo-Mahayanistic pose.

Devamitra: He doesn't seem to be at all that familiar with the Hinayana.

S: In a way. In a way.

Devamitra: I mean, he does make one or two very bad sort of...

S: Of course, there is the Hinayana as it exists in the pages of the Mahayana and the Hinayana as it exists actually in itself, especially in its, say, contemporary Theravadin form, and, you know, what is true of the Hinayana as it exists in the pages of the Mahayana isn't necessarily true of the Hinayana as it is in its own right, though it may be to some extent. Anyway, we come on next to speculative Mahayanism, so perhaps ... [178]

"Mahayanism can best be treated in two main divisions ... the speculative and the practical. The first ... is ... a sort of Buddhist metaphysics ... abstruse problems of philosophy ... Speculative followers of Buddhism have ... written many volumes on various subjects. The second or practical phase of Mahayanism deals with such religious beliefs that constitute the life and essence of the system ... the speculative ... is merely a preparatory step ... As Mahayanism is a religion and not a philosophy ... it must directly appeal to the inmost life of the human heart."

S: It's interesting that Suzuki says "Mahayanists might have reasoned wrongfully to explain their practical faith, but the faith itself is the outburst of the religious sentiment which is inherent in human nature." Perhaps the word 'faith' is a bit restricted here, but the point he is making is a very valid one: that your faith, as it were, your spiritual experience, can be quite valid - well experience is experience anyway - but you might not always give the right reasons for your experience, and even you yourself, especially if your experience isn't comprehensive, might not understand it correctly, rationally speaking. So it is quite possible that Mahayana philosophy might go a bit astray, but this does not necessarily affect the basic validity of Mahayana experience. So perhaps this needs to be borne in mind, and it is perhaps a bit applicable to Suzuki himself, you know, so far as Mahayana Buddhism is concerned, you know, his heart's in the right place, even though some of his explanations are a bit astray. All right. On to the next section.

"Relation of Feeling and Intellect in religion. So much has been said about the relation between philosophy and religion ... many scholars ... believe ... a religion which is rational and practical is no religion. Buddhism ... on this account ... has been declared by some to be a philosophy ... I have thus deemed it wise here to say a few words about the relation between feeling and intellect in religion."

S: Let's carry straight on.

"There is no doubt that religion is essentially practical. If religion was the product of intellect solely, it could not give satisfaction to the needs of man's whole being."

S: You find Suzuki here speaking of "man's whole being", not just of his feeling: that's much more satisfactory.

"Reason constitutes but a part of ... an individual. Abstraction ... and speculation ... do not satisfy the innermost yearnings ... but they can do when they enter into one's inner life ... in short, when philosophy becomes religion." [179]

S: This is fairly straightforward, so let's just go on.

"Philosophy as such, therefore, is generally distinguished from religion ... This alienation ... from concrete facts on the part of the intellect, constantly tends to disregard the real significance of life ... The conflict between feeling and reason ... has been going on since the awakening of consciousness."

S: He does seem to get back to this identification of - at least, line up of - feeling with religion, reason with science, instinct with religion, knowledge with science, and so on, and I think, I rather suspect, this comes out even more strongly later on, when he takes up Zen, in some of his later writings.

Lokamitra: [By] science, he really means as an attitude, doesn't he? Not as anything absolute?

S: Presumably he means science as a discipline. He seems to think that it's a purely intellectual discipline, but this is rather doubtful. He seems to think of religion - despite that expression 'man's whole being' - he seems to think of religion as something more emotional and instinctual, almost, but I don't feel at all happy about that. I mean, religion is surely, if one uses that term, the response of one's whole being, you know, to the demands of existence and the call of reality, not just one's feelings and emotions. Surely they can't be left out. But religion doesn't appeal solely, or even predominantly, to them.

This discussion seems a bit dated. This is a bit sort of late Victorian, as it were. Anyway, let's just read it through.

"Seeing this fact, intellectual people are ... prone to condemn religion as barring the freedom ... of scientific progress. It is true that this was especially the case with Christianity, whose history abounds with regrettable incidents resulting from its violent encroachments upon the domain of reason."

S: Obviously there is some historical truth in this.

"It is also true that the feeling and intellect are sometimes at variance, that what feeling esteems ... is ... relentlessly crushed by reason, while feeling looks with ... Contempt at results ... reached by intellect after much lucubration."

S: Of course - Suzuki doesn't make the distinction - but there are feelings and feelings. There is one sort of general positive emotionality, which is normal and healthy, and then there is one's neurotic emotionality, one's projections, and so on and so forth. These later can certainly be exploded by reason if you like, by cold logic, but, you know, what harm can science or any amount of scientific knowledge do to a genuine emotion? No amount of knowledge is going to do that any harm at all; if anything, just brighten it a little bit. Huh? So, I mean, it's only the false emotions, as it were, that have anything to fear from any kind of knowledge. [180]

Devaraja: It's also only false intellection which will result in a sort of contemptuous attitude of the emotions. Because true ... a truly rational approach to things is very exciting.

S: Yes, right, right. All right, on we go then.

"But this fatal conflict is no better than the fight which takes place between the head and the tail of a hydra when it is cut in twain; it always results in self-destruction."

S: Perhaps it is of some use to consider, well, what happened in the case of Christianity. I mean there's no doubt that Christianity, that is, official Christianity, the Church, especially the Catholic Church, did obstruct the progress of free enquiry. And there's no doubt about that, because the result, or at least the tendency, of the free enquiry, seemed to throw into doubt some of the cherished teachings of the Church. But it was quite clear, or it became quite clear to us if we think about it, that the teachings of the Church which were thrown into question by scientific investigation were what we would call pseudo-religion, hmm? That they were bits and pieces of outdated, in fact, scientific knowledge which had somehow become embedded in the fabric of religion itself, in the fabric of Christianity, and become religious dogmas. Like, for instance, that the Sun went around the Earth. Well surely it isn't any concern of spiritual life or spiritual teaching one way or the other, but the fact that the Sun went around the Earth and not the other way round had become, for Christianity, a dogma, just to give a crude example. But then the further questions arises: why did that happen? When one dogma is challenged, it's as though the whole fabric is challenged, and then you have a deep insecurity and you react emotionally, you try to suppress the free enquiry, and so on and so forth. But how did the Christian Church come to be in that position anyway?

Sulocana: It seems as though they were afraid of development, of it changing.

S: Well that surely, yes.

Mamaki: Were the people who came into importance in the Church, were they people that one would think of as having got to that point by spiritual development or were they largely political appointments?

S: Well I was talking to someone about this recently in connection with the pope, and I pointed out all the reasons modern popes are Vatican career diplomats, they are not spiritual people, they certainly don't come out of monasteries and they haven't spent their time, you know, thinking about the mysteries of the Catholic religion. I mean they are Catholics, they do [181] believe, and they are well-informed, huh? but they aren't primarily religious people, I would say, they are mainly administrators. They've been Vatican legate here, and administrator there, and so on and so forth, and the last two popes have been secretaries of state who have held diplomatic posts and so on and so forth. Even Pope John was primarily a diplomat. He spent many, many years as the Vatican representative in France, representative to the French government. So that may be part of it, that, you know, that it was almost a sort of religious bureaucratic attitude. But at the same time, very strong feelings were bound up with it all, feelings of insecurity and wanting to hold back the free enquiry and repress it if possible, to persecute and to kill. But only Christianity seems to have got itself into that position to that extent ... (break in tape) ... previous popes, who were also infallible, so they've landed themselves in quite a difficult position. But it seems like the whole sort of trend and tendency of Semitic religions, especially Judeo-Christian religion, has been to identify religion

much too much with the material order and beliefs and teachings about the material order, rather than with purely spiritual principles and spiritual development. That seems to be the basic sort of mistake.

Devaraja: What about Islam? Because in Islam they've got a record of being quite scientifically oriented, at times certainly encouraging and developing the sciences. Except on the other hand it's extremely fanatical and very brutal.

Mamaki: But then we've pursued the sciences, haven't we?

S: Regardless, in the teeth of opposition from Christianity.

Mamaki: Yes, sure.

S: Islam seems to have pursued the sciences in - well, I was going to say its golden age, but it wasn't the golden age of Islam as such but of Persian civilization and culture, yes? Because, I mean, what contributions have Muslims made in recent years or recent centuries? Hardly anything at all. But it's as though, in Christianity, the sort of historical perspective is so narrow and the religious outlook was so closely identified with their historical perspective - you know, the Creation in 4000BC, and the last judgement looming up in a thousand or two years' time, and the Earth at the centre of the universe, and God cradling this little solar system and that being the universe, and Christian thought and dogma and feeling were so much bound up with this rather tiny scale of things, that, when that was questioned, they felt the whole structure of religion itself crumbling, and they still do. [182]

Lokamitra: And the trouble is, when people started questioning these things, the popes were at their weakest, in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.

S: Yes, they were very weak at that period.

Lokamitra: And so they couldn't really be open to things.

S: Also, I think, right from the Reformation, the Catholic Church, at least, has felt very much on the defensive, and therefore, if you are on the defensive, feel your back is up against the wall, you crack down with greater vigour than ever, and want to ensure conformity. And science was pursued much more in Protestant countries, I think, than in Catholic countries. So it would seem as though the difficulties in Christianity, in a way, stem almost from a wrong understanding of religion itself, or at least a wrong emphasis. And, you know, while it lasted, the sort of Christian synthesis and outlook was very strong, but it was also very vulnerable as soon as scientific knowledge started expanding. But it's quite true that your spiritual life proceeds independently of a theory about the universe. You can develop spiritually whether you believe that there's an affinity of worlds or whether you believe that there's just this one little Earth and the Sun revolving around it; it doesn't make any difference. But suppose you say that the fact that the Sun revolves around the Earth is an article of religious faith, and there is no faith and no re-

ligion without this: then you have to defend it. Had you kept quiet, probably nothing would have happened, but you made it an issue, and you are defeated on that issue. You know, the same way ...

Mamaki: I wonder why it should have happened like that; that it came to be of such importance. It seems a very external.

S: That's why I say that there was that initial wrong emphasis, it seems, and I think this is just a legacy of the whole sort of Judaeo-Christian tradition. (pause) And so what we may call classical Christianity has virtually collapsed. It survived, but, you know, it merely survives; it isn't any longer a really living thing. Anyway, let's go on.

"We cannot live under such a miserable condition forever ... feeling and reason cannot do without one another ... for in the end ... it is man who acts as he feels and reasons ... Religion, though essentially a phenomenon of the emotional life ..."

S: He's still harking back to this, you see. It's quite strange.

"... cannot be indifferent to the significance of the intellect. ... in India, ... there was no dividing line between philosophy and religion; and every teaching was at bottom religious and ... aimed at the deliverance of the soul." [183]

S: Sometimes the connection or relevance became a bit remote - one must admit that too - as in the development of medieval logic by both Buddhists and Hindus. Ostensibly you perfected the (?) of logic so as to be able to convince and convert people more easily. But quite clearly logic became an interest in itself, and end in itself, for many scholars.

"There was no philosophical system that did not have some practical purpose."

S: That's true.

"Indian thinkers could not separate religion from philosophy ... Their philosophy has as much fire as religion."

S: All right. Let's go on to Buddhism and Speculation.

"Owing to this fact, Buddhism ... is full of abstract speculation ... but we cannot say that it ... disregards the importance of ... the feeling ... When not guided by love and faith ... (knowledge) ... is the servant of egoism and sensualism."

S: I can't help feeling that there is a bit of a conflict in Suzuki himself between intellect and emotion. (sounds of agreement) I don't know whether it is because of his, you know, academic training and that sort of thing - maybe his emotional life got a bit stifled - but there does seem to be a definite conflict.

Lokamitra: It seems quite unhealthy. It seems he goes from one extreme to the other.

S: Sometimes, sort of at least in a phrase or two, he's sort of following a middle part, speaking of the 'whole man' and so on, but he doesn't seem able to sustain that for very long at all.

Devaraja: That's a really false statement: that about the essence of religion is love and faith.

S: Exactly! (sounds of agreement)

Devaraja: It's totally false!

S: Right. Yes. Yes.

Ratnapani: And there's a contradiction in the talking about there was no distinction between religion and philosophy, they were one, and then going to say how different and how near they came to each other.

S: Right, yes. So it is in a way a bit surprising, because he wrote this book at the end of his thirties, just before he was forty; he certainly wasn't a youngster when he wrote it, but there does seem to be that conflict. I can't help wondering the extent to which that enters into his exposition of Zen, because he has certainly stressed the irrational side of Zen, quite definitely, and that again has been taken up by people and perverted, you know, still [184] further: that Zen is a sort of irrationalism, Zen is sort of Zenny, huh? (sounds of agreement)

"What Tennyson says in the following verses is perfectly true with Buddhism:

"Who loves not knowledge? Who shall rail
Against her beauty? May she mix
With men and prosper! Who shall fix
Her pillars? Let her work prevail.
But on her forehead sits a fire:
She sets her forward countenance
And leaps into the future chance,
Submitting all things to desire.

Half-grown as yet, a child, and vain
She cannot fight the fear of death.
What is she, cut from love and faith,
But some wild Pallas from the brain

Of Demons? fiery-hot to burst
All barriers in her onward race
For power. Let her know her place;

She is the second, not the first.

A higher hand must make her mild,
If all be not in vain; and guide
Her footsteps, moving side by side
With wisdom, like the younger child."

S: It is quite well expressed by Tennyson. It's good that Suzuki quotes it, but the spirit of it is rather different to his own, yes? (amused sounds) All right, carry on.

"But it must be remembered that Buddhism never ignores the part which is played by the intellect ... all religious superstitions ... are finally destroyed."

S: Shall we look at this note on prajā and so on? Would someone like to read it?

"Prajā, bodhi, buddhi, vidya, and jna or jnana are all synonymous and in many cases interchangeable. But they allow a finer discrimination. Speaking in a general way, prajā is reason."

S: Ah, now, let's look at that. "Speaking in a general way, prajā is reason." No! Huh? In Pali, in the Hinayana tradition generally, which was taken over by the Mahayana, three kinds of prajā are distinguished. It's a very important little group; I think we've had it before. They speak of srutamayi-prajā, then chintamayi-prajā, and then bhavanamayi-prajā. So what do these three mean? Has anyone come across them? I know I've mentioned it before. Sruta is what is heard. Srutamayi-prajā is the knowledge; here it means simply knowledge or understanding which comes by hearing; in other words, learning, studying, especially the understanding or the knowledge you get of spiritual things, the spiritual path, just by studying, reading about them, attending lectures - it comes from outside; you take it in and you understand. Then chintamayi-prajā is that understanding, that knowledge, which develops as the result of your own independent thought and reflection and investigation.

Lokamitra: Is it based on that previous learning or is it ... ?

S: It may be. It may take its point of departure from there, yes; in fact, it usually does.

Mamaki: Pondering.

S: Pondering, yes. Where you're not merely sort of taking in but you're actively considering and turning over in your own mind and evaluating and even coming to conclusions of your own which were not contained in that material. [185] Bhavanamayi-prajā is that knowledge or wisdom which arises as a result of your meditative experience, and this is prajā in the true sense, this is prajā proper. In other words, it isn't just rational, it isn't just knowledge; you know, you really need another term. So when simply prajā is spoken of it usually means the third kind: it is prajā that intuits reality. So therefore, when Suzuki says, "Speaking in a general way, prajā is reason," that's not quite correct,

hmm? There are these three kinds of prajā usually enumerated, and when prajā by itself is meant, then it is almost always the third kind. For instance, prajāparamita is prajā in its distinctively Mahayana form. In the Hinayana, prajā is that which intuits that all conditioned things are subject to suffering, are impermanent and devoid of self, and it doesn't mean just intellectual understanding, it really sees and knows and fully experiences. In the Mahayana, mahaprajā, or prajā as a paramita, is that transcendental faculty which sees into and experiences the truth of sunyata, which goes, according to the Mahayana, somewhat beyond the Hinayana.

Vajradaka: According to the Mahayana?

S: Yes. Sometimes in sort of popular texts like the Jataka, prajā is used simply in the sense of know-how in a quite non-Buddhistic sense, non-technical, general literary sense, just simply know-how, just understanding, worldly wisdom.

Devaraja: Mahaprajā was comprehension of sunyata, yes?

S: Prajā, in a Mahayana context, is simply comprehension of sunyata, but when the Mahayanist wants to distinguish their prajā from Hinayana prajā, we should speak of their prajā as mahaprajā. But sometimes they just use the term prajā for their prajā, i.e. mahaprajā, according to context.

Vajradaka: So what is the Hinayana prajā, then?

S: That, as I said, is the intuition of suffering: that all conditioned things are subject to suffering and are impermanent and devoid of self.

Vajradaka: Which relates to chintamayi-prajā.

S: Not necessarily; yes and no. You can think it over. For instance, first of all, to give an example, you may hear that all things are impermanent, and you understand, yes, all things are impermanent. That is the first kind: srutamayi-prajā. Then you might turn it over in your own mind, and then you might think, for instance, of various scientific applications of that; you might think, you know, about the constitution of the atom and how even that is undergoing process and change, and you might even make your own independent discoveries on the scientific level; that's all chintamayi-prajā. Then you meditate and reflect [186] and then you see, spiritually, the truth of these things, so that it transforms your whole being; that is bhavanamayi-prajā. But then you can go on even further than that, according to the Mahayana, and you see that everything is void: that's a higher kind of prajā. And when they want to distinguish that from the Hinayana kind, they either say prajāparamita or mahaprajā. Or, if they are speaking in a purely Mahayana context, they say simply prajā, but they don't mean the Hinayana prajā.

Mangala: It's also like sometimes the bodhisattva perfections aren't six but ten, and when it's ten, prajā doesn't mean the higher sort of Enlightenment, it means more like knowledge or ...

S: Yes. When there are ten paramitas, prajā, which is the sixth, becomes the realization of the non-duality of samsara and nirvana. In other words, the Mahayana has these four sunyatas, so this would be the understanding of sunyata number three, whereas jnana, which comes at the end, the tenth paramita, would be the understanding of sunyata number four, which is the voidness of voidness. This is, perhaps you could say, Mahayana speculation, philosophical construction. Anyway there's no need to go into that. All right there are different meanings of prajā. Carry on - bodhi.

"Buddha wisdom or intelligence"

S: Usually translated as Enlightenment; you know, when you say that the Buddha has gained bodhi, it isn't just wisdom or intelligence, he hasn't become particularly intelligent: he was intelligent before! This is Enlightenment, we would say, which is both emotive and intellectual, as it were.

"buddhi enlightenment, vidya ideality or knowledge,"

S: Vidya is more like scientific knowledge, though it can be used spiritually, in the sense of spiritual knowledge, especially in the Tantra.

Devaraja: What does buddhi mean as distinct from bodhi?

S: Buddhi isn't really used much in Buddhist literature; a little bit in Mahayana. It's more a Vedantic cum (Jantian?) term and it means sort of ordinary intelligence; it's closer to that. It's not used in Buddhism, as far as I recollect, in the sense of Enlightenment at all. More like understanding, huh? For instance, in modern Hindi they say uskabuddhi nehe(?): he has no intelligence, he's a fool, he's got no buddhi, no understanding.

"Jan or jnana: intellect."

S: Hmm, well, it's knowledge, but then again it's sometimes used in a worldly sense, but more often in a spiritual sense.

"Of these five terms, prajā and bodhi are essentially Buddhistic." [187]

S: Well jnana is, too, especially in the Tantric context: the five jnanas, huh?

Nagabodhi: That's the five wisdoms?

S: Embodied by the five Buddhas. The term then is jnana in Sanskrit, not prajā.

Voice: (unclear)

S: It means a transcendental knowledge. Usually jnana is translated as wisdom, as is prajā, but the five wisdoms, the five jnanas, not five prajās.

Devaraja: In a sense, then, I suppose because they are more specific; they're related to, er, that's with wisdom in connection with a specific thing.

S: It may be that, yes. It's not just sort of wisdom in general. The five distinct wisdoms.

Devaraja: (unclear) praj/a.

"In this work both praj/a and bodhi are mostly translated by intelligence,"

S: This isn't really very adequate. It's more like wisdom and Enlightenment.

"but this is rather vague, and wherever I thought the term intelligence alone to be misleading, I either left the originals untranslated or inserted them in parentheses."

S: So this is quite helpful.

"Praj/a in many cases can be safely rendered as faith, not a belief in revealed truths, but a sort of immediate knowledge gained by intuitive intelligence ... corresponds in some respects to wisdom ... Greek sophia. Bodhi, on the other hand, had a decidedly religious and moral significance."

S: I would say that praj/a has that too, but anyway.

"Besides being praj/a itself, it is also love (karuna) ... these two constitute the essence of bodhi. May bodhi be considered in some respects synonymous with the divine wisdom as understood by Christian dogmatists?"

S: Hmm, I wonder. (sounds of amusement)

"But there is something in the Buddhist notion of Bodhi that cannot properly be expressed by wisdom or intelligence ... due to the difference of ... interpretations by Buddhists and Christians of the conception of God."

S: I think it's just good that Suzuki does often include the original Sanskrit terms. Perhaps we can sometimes ignore his translations and just read those terms. Right, carry on, then.

"The intellect is so far of great consequence, and we must respect it ... but ... the true religion is ... never reluctant to appear before ... scientific investigation ... Science ... must find its reason in religion; as a mere intellectual exercise it is not worthy of our serious consideration." [188]

S: Again this sort of conflict between head and heart. "The human heart warm with blood and burning with the fire of life, the intellect however powerful will never be able to trample it underfoot." Well that's all right, maybe; that sort of conflict does exist in many

people, but you can't identify religion and spiritual life simply and one-sidedly with "the human heart warm with blood and burning with the fire of life". It's just as much on the other side: the search for truth. I don't know to what extent this is a conflict in the Japanese psyche itself. I mean, after all, he was writing in the Taisho period of the Meiji Restoration. When was that? 1868, when the modernization of Japan seriously started. And maybe there was a great conflict felt between the traditional values and way of life, to which, no doubt, many Japanese were emotionally attached, and all that was, you know, scientific and industrial and so on and so forth. It may have something to with that; I'm not sure.

Devaraja: I must say it does seem apparent from what contact I've had through books, and live, as it were, with Japanese, particularly Zen, teachers; there does seem to be a tremendous kind of rejection of intellection, certainly in the books that I have come across written by Japanese Zen teachers. It's almost like it's rather sort of despised - the intellectual process. And certainly in Zengo, he was almost incapable of functioning intellectually. I mean, his arguments tended to be almost childishly ridiculous. [Zengo was a Japanese monk who 'taught' just sitting meditation in the FWBO for a couple of years in the early seventies, tr.]

Ratnapani: Yes. A praise of one of his followers about another was that 'he's not an intellectual', you know, and that was the height of praise: 'not an intellectual type'.

S: Well, if it's sort of deeply embedded in Zen itself, it can hardly be due to, you know, modern development. But I wonder whether the old Zen masters had that sort of attitude towards the intellect? I mean, did, for instance, Dogen have it? Who wrote sort of philosophical essays and expositions and went very deeply into the nature of time?

Vajradaka: Uddiyana Sensei, a master who I stayed with, was very scholarly. He wasn't wishy-washy at all when it came to this kind of thing. And he was in direct line with Dogen.

S: For instance, I mean, when the industrial revolution got under way in this country, there was a sort of split between head and heart. For instance, look at Blake; you know, you could say that Blake was all for heart and imagination against head, and he really eschewed science, he had no time for Newton and Locke and wrote naughty poems about them, huh? It's a bit the same sort of thing, isn't it? It may be that Suzuki also was caught up in this to some extent, as, in fact, many people were and still are - that science means to challenge everything that you hold really dear - and it's not just the emotional side of yourself, perhaps, [189] but it's your, well, your whole being is sort of divided, And Suzuki, when he wrote this, was, as I said, in his late thirties. He must have been born about 1870, roughly, I think, [correct, D.T. Suzuki 1870-1966, tr.] so that, you know, the Meiji Restoration and the industrialization of Japan had been going on for about twenty years when he was born and must have developed tremendously when he was an impressionable young man and a university student and so on. And he went abroad anyway, to an American university. It could be, you know, that in his own life that he was living at that very critical transitional stage, there was quite a bit of conflict.

Mamaki: There are theories about psychology, aren't there? A lot of people do feel that there is a psychological enquiry, [that] just looking at things from a psychological angle is going to destroy something. It may distort, but it can't destroy.

Voice: That's interesting. People do think that.

S: But it's only, I mean if anything can be destroyed, it's only one's false emotion, and one's projection, not any valid emotion or truly human experience. And perhaps one is saying, 'oh my emotions and my emotional life', and one only means 'my illusions'.

Mamaki: Yes, because maybe it (unclear)

Voice: ... false scientific attitude which isn't really scientific at all.

S: Hm. Well then, what is a false scientific attitude? Do we really find such a thing among scientists?

Voice: The fear of feeling anything when that's not scientific because they would observe something truly, if it was really scientific, instead of denying what they feel. It's not scientific, is it?

S: For instance, I have read that many scientists are extremely fond of music, and they're not particularly verbal people or literary people but have a great fondness for music. So that is truly emotional, then.

Devaraja: Music; I think I read it somewhere, it may have been Thomas Mann; something about music being the wedding of science and art.

S: Well presumably he is referring to the sort of mathematics of music: that's the scientific side.

Devaraja: Yes, but it's something more than just simple mathematics; he was implying it was not just a wedding but it was hard to put it almost in one category or the other, it seemed to blend so perfectly.

Voice: Scientists have still a reputation for being agnostic, atheistic, I think, very much so. [190]

S: Well, that is within the Christian context, because, I mean, science has exploded so many dogmas of Christianity, which were sort of pseudo-religious teachings, but that doesn't make science particularly cold. I mean, science has simply exploded some of your illusions, huh? So it's not anti-emotional, because it explodes illusions.

Vajradaka: What you said holds true to a lot of psychologists as well.

S: Perhaps we can say that some kind of split between intellect and emotion, for want of a better term, is characteristic of all people affected by the development we call the Industrial Revolution. I mean, we certainly see it in many English poets and writers of that particular period.

Mamaki: It's more, I suppose, the thing that's opposed to feeling, it seems to me, is not so much intellect or science but technology. There are ways of looking at people doing jobs which is very alienated, but it's not, so to speak, science that's doing it but a kind of technological attitude.

S: You could say that slavery was alienating in the same way when you had tens of thousands of men pulling stones into position for a pyramid, even though the technology, on that level, was of the simplest kind.

Nagabodhi: The term 'rationalization' applies to the process of increasing industrial efficiency, cheap conveyor-belt production, and bureaucratization.

S: Well this is, you could almost say, not so much scientific as economic, huh? Economic forces and interests using technology in its own interests and thereby denying or undervaluing certain human values.

Ratnapani: Coming back to you talking about the split starting with the Industrial Revolution.

S: Well it became greatly exacerbated then. I think it can be traced back right into Christianity itself, because why was it in the Christian West that we had an Industrial Revolution and the vast technological development? I mean, people in other parts of the world were not fools. The Chinese invented gunpowder, but they didn't do anything with it except make fireworks. (laughs)

(outbreak of voices)

Mamaki: ... using the animals being there and the plants and things for one's own use?

S: I think Christianity introduced a serious imbalance in the West, and its part of that imbalance that the Industrial Revolution came and the exacerbation of this split between intellect and emotion.

Nagabodhi: In a very famous work by Max Weber, 'The Protestant Ethic and the Rise of Capitalism', in which he talks about the Protestant ethic that forbade people from [191] enjoying the fruits of their labours, so they saved it up and then this led to investment, and then investment into plant, and this was economically the facts behind the growth of the Industrial Revolution. He traces it directly to the Protestant ethic.

S: Yes.

Vajradaka: So were you essentially saying that the over-emphasis of faith in the early Christian Church had to be balanced by the intellect and reason, which is what the Industrial Revolution did?

S: It's almost as though - though probably this is a tremendous generalization - Christianity was responsible for the beginnings of this split, at least or the groundwork of the split, by over-emphasizing faith, or emphasizing faith in the wrong sort of way, or in the wrong sort of things. And that then there was a sort of counter-tendency, because men were intelligent, even though Christian, and they, you know, they had to assert what they saw to be true, flew(?) in the face of the disapproval of their religion, and then science developed in sort of antagonism to Christianity, and that seems to be the beginnings of the split. And of course, science was developing, well, mainly in the seventeenth century; that was the great age of science, really, culminating in Newton. And then there was the application of that technologically, in the next century, and that gave us the Industrial Revolution. So it's very significant: you've got the process of Reformation in the sixteenth century: you know, Luther tearing away great chunks of Europe from the Catholic Church, that great split, huh? And then in the seventeenth century you've got the vast increase of science, of scientific knowledge and understanding in all directions; and then in the eighteenth, you have got the Industrial Revolution.

Devaraja: It's also interesting, you saying that about this development round about the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries: the development and growth of science. But also that comes at the end of the Renaissance, and that really was the time when the artist as an individual was starting to emerge in that period. I mean, there were a few sort of bright lights before then, but not the concept of an artist as an individual, as functioning individually, rather than as a channel for the culture to express itself through it.

S: Yes. Rather than the servant of tradition. But, you see, until then, it's been pointed out, right up to the seventeenth century, technologically, politically, economically, East and West were equal: Europe had not advanced beyond the Eastern civilization. There was the Turkish Empire which was threatening Europe right up until the beginning of the sixteenth century; it was finally defeated only with the Battle of Lepanto, and until that point, Europe and Asia - I mean, you have to leave out America, which was barely discovered and Africa which was [192] savage, you could say - Europe and Asia were sort of balanced, but then Europe shot ahead, materially, scientifically, technologically, and that has disturbed the whole balance of the world ever since. It resulted in colonial expansion, it resulted in economic exploitation, it resulted in the creation of the developed nations and the undeveloped nations, all that followed, you know, culminating in two world wars, you know, between rival camps within the developed nations, bringing in a greater part of the rest of the world.

Ratnapani: So the Industrial Revolution, then, is really a neurotic happening.

S: It seems so, as though it need not have been.

Ratnapani: A substitute for (unclear) balancing themselves properly.

S: We tend to think of it as inevitable and progress, but was it? Need this development have happened? Or, you know, would it sort of cancel itself out when we go back, as it were? I mean, it's quite a thought. And all within just a short time. When man and human beings and individuals have, you know, been alive and developing and all that, for, you know, at least a million years, the greater part of which period has no history. And does this spring from this mal-emphasis of Christianity? We emphasize, you know, the faith so much that the intellect has to re-assert itself in a very one-sided fashion, and then, you know, the psyche gets out of gear, out of harmony.

Devaraja: It's interesting that Buddhism reached its extreme faith orientation in Japan.

S: Yes. Quite.

Devamitra: I mean, really quite extreme.

Mamaki: The thing about 'soul', too, perhaps has something to do with using things, because one way in which Christians had to sort of not be upset about treating other human beings as slaves was to regard them as not really human, therefore not having a soul. That's kind of ...

S: Just as the Muslims denied that women had souls.

Mamaki: It kind of starts an exploitation.

S: Or at least it justifies it, you know, reinforces it. Anyway, I think we had better go on. That's a bit of an excursion. But perhaps it's of some historical importance and practical relevance, even at the present day, because we are dealing mostly not with normal human beings but people who have been injured, dislocated in their psychic life, by having been born and brought up under this sort of system.

Devamitra: Do you think that another sort of reaction could be setting in, like against that over-assertion, as it were, of the ... [193]

S: Oh yes. For instance the hippie movement, you know, they just are completely non-even anti-intellectual, so often. You know, you escape into drugs but, you know, it's as though it's like this: you are going to extreme and extreme, but down, in a downward spiral. This is what is happening if you are not careful. Many hippies seem mindless - using the word 'hippie' for want of a better term - just mindless, you know, just pleasant vegetables, but enveloped in a cloud of hash-smoke. (laughter)

Devamitra: Zombies.

S: Sort of, yes. Like zombies, yes, very often. And this sort of simple life, it's just an extreme reaction. And even getting back into the country and growing your own food, well there's something healthy in it, but sometimes it's just an extreme reaction, you know.

Not wanting to know, not wanting to have to do with this extreme onesided development of science, but, you know, you have to tackle it, really, and face it, and do something about it, in your own interests and in the interests of humanity at large. You can't ignore this development. It has taken place, however bad it may be. I was reading in yesterday's colour supplement something I hadn't realized as clearly before: that a human being requires oxygen, huh? and oxygen is produced by plants, isn't it? I'm not very clear about the actual process, but at least I've got that fact firmly in my mind. And apparently, to produce the oxygen required for one human couple, you need one oak tree, you need one tree. And to counterbalance, ecologically, a small car, you need a hundred and fifty trees. (sounds of whew) To counterbalance, ecologically, a power station, you need a green area the size of Greater London. Think of all that! What are we doing? Eating up our green spaces all the time! And, you know, it may not be a question of population explosion and not enough food, it may be a simple question in the end of not enough oxygen! You might asphyxiate, rather than starve to death, if you are not careful.

Sudatta: Well, the symptoms of anoxia include sort of loss of memory and mental function and all sorts of things that are quite current at the present.

Sona: There was quite a worry about the Amazonian jungles being chopped down, and I think it is quite recognized: this problem.

Sulocana: The only way of getting lead out of the air is green leaves; we don't know how to do it.

Lokamitra: Just one more thing, leading on from what Devamitra said. The materialistic thing which seems to have come from the scientific reasoning side; that seems to be being balanced, too, by a re-interest in re-stimulation of religious feeling.

S: Ah! The danger is, you go - like Dr Suzuki seems to be going - [194] from one extreme to the other, and you never come to a middle position and integrate the two extremes, so you get extreme technocracy, and then some people react and they have nothing to do with science and technology, and extreme religious emotion, etc, etc, and then presumably there'll be another extreme reaction from them. Hm? But what you need is a middle position and to integrate the head and the heart and the blood and the nerves, etc, etc. And this (?) is so important! I've certainly stressed it all the way through, ever since the Friends began, you know, via the five spiritual principles; you have got it there, you know, balancing faith and wisdom, all the time. But it's so difficult, and even more people who are involved with the Friends, there are some who say, 'oh, I really love the puja, and there's such warmth and such devotion,' you know, but they don't like the philosophy. Or some are really taken by the philosophy, but they can't stand the puja. There are such people! And even some who are really into it feel vaguely uncomfortable about some Buddhist practices. It's partly due to this: your two halves, your emotions and your understanding, they don't quite fit; you're not just one person responding totally. And this affects everybody. I think there's hardly a person who escapes it.

Devaraja: It's almost as though people want to be spiritually caponized. (S. laughs)

Vajradaka: Spiritually what?

Devaraja: Caponized. You know you take a ... a capon is a castrated cockerel. I mean people want to be, they want to kind of have their intellect cut off; they don't want to have to cope with that any more.

S: Yes. Right. I'm sure that this is what happens to some of the Guru Maharaji people.

Devaraja: It is, I'm sure.

Devamitra: Well, the general tendency, in looking towards a so-called spiritual movement is, I suppose, this kind of emotional compensation. Almost all sorts of spiritual groups are sort of springing up and have done over the last few years.

S: And perhaps the whole hippie movement is compensatory in this sort of way.

Lokamitra: I notice this. I can't explain it very well, but looking at myself and certain other Order members, that you will see one thing developing, maybe on the surface, one attitude or something, maybe a very emotional side, and then you'll catch glimpses of something totally opposite which is coming out at the same time, but from depths, something perhaps unconscious.

S: Like Faust and Mephistopheles.

Devaraja: Jekyll and Hyde! (laughter, continued talking)

S: Yes, right! For instance, someone you know participates in a puja [195] with great devotion, they really enjoy it and they are into it, but half an hour later they might be making snide remarks about puja.

Mamaki: The trouble with cutting off the mental side is that the feeling maybe started off as good feeling but it tends to become an emotionality, a sentimentality that's just an enjoying the feeling of the emotions. It's self-perpetuating.

S: Indulgence.

Mamaki: Yes.

Nagabodhi: We got somebody on the last course who would spend the whole evening attacking an idea of worship or puja, and really quite strongly, creating havoc, really, with the general discussion, and he'd invariably end the evening by saying, 'Well, actually I quite like it!' (laughter) Invariably he'd say, 'Well, really, I don't mind. I've got to say something, haven't I?'

S: So the head and the heart don't work together, as it were. Let Devamitra come back and we will carry on.

Lokamitra: My point, I think, was that they do. I was wondering whether there's a natural balancing process, which comes out perhaps more as one meditates and is involved in spiritual life.

S: Sure. As one gets involved with meditation and spiritual life generally, one's (?former) faculties start becoming more balanced, because they've got a central axis, then.

Nagabodhi: I've certainly felt more and more comfortable. I used to feel very uncomfortable. I just found that the two sides, or more than two sides, reconciled themselves.

S: All right then. On we go.

"Religion and Metaphysics The French sociologist, M. Guyau, says in his Non-Religion of the Future ...: 1 ... a mythical ... explanation of natural phenomena ... and historical facts ... 2. A system of dogmas ... forcibly imposed ... as absolute verities ... 3. A ... system of rites ... possessing ... propitiatory virtue. A religion without myth ... dogma ... cult ... rite, is no more than that somewhat bastard product, 'natural religion', which is resolvable to a system of metaphysical hypothesis."

S: Let's hear what Dr Suzuki says about all this first, before venturing our own opinion.

"M. Guyau seems to think that what will be left in religion ... is a system of metaphysical speculations, and that ... it is not a religion. But in my opinion ... he is right ... to strip religion of all its ephemeral elements ... but wrong when he does this at the expense of its very essence ... the inmost yearnings of the human heart." (laughter) [196]

S: I wonder if Dr Suzuki was a bit lonesome in America. (laughter)

"And this essence has no affinity with the superstitions which grow around it ... Religion is a cry from the abysmal depths of the human heart that can never be silenced until it finds that something and identifies itself with it which reveals the teleological significance of life ... If religion deprived of its dogmas ... is nothing but ... metaphysics ... we lose sight of ... its emotional element, which indeed constitutes its *raison d'etre*.

S: Let's go a little bit into what Guyau says. In a way he's right, but his sort of evaluation is wrong. First of all, there is myth. In all religions there is myth. Very many myths seem to be attempts at pseudo-scientific explanation but their real significance seems to be sort of poetic; their truth is poetic, not scientific. And such myths do have their own place and their own value. And then there are dogmas, which are not just arbitrary doctrines imposed upon you by force, at least not in Buddhism, but they're attempts to communicate through the medium of the intellect, as it were, something which goes beyond the intellect. And then, of course, there is the cult, the rite, the group, the brotherhood of believers, the fellowship, the actual practice. So these are all quite necessary components,

as in fact Suzuki points out. But he is still harping on his 'cry from the human heart' and 'emotional need' and religion as sort of an expression of, and also catering to, just that. He seems to leave the intellect, in a way, rather out in the cold and unintegrated, huh? Perhaps this was his own position to some extent. Perhaps he was a very intellectual young man and perhaps he had this quite fairly good grasp of Buddhism, intellectually, but there were many emotional needs in him unsatisfied. And he thought of religion in this sort of way. It comes over very strongly doesn't it? Again and again, like a real cry from Suzuki himself.

Devaraja: I like that what you said about it sounds like he was really lonely. I mean, I'm sure that it would be interesting to find out when he married Beatrice. She was American, I think, wasn't she?

S: Quite late in life, I think. Yes. Maybe even when he was about sixty, because he lived to a ripe old age, but he did marry as far as I know quite late in life, certainly early middle age. [He married in 1911, at the age of 41, tr.] Certainly by this time he was very single and very solitary. We don't know very much about his life, do we, except that he wrote books. I don't know if there is any biography of him.

Mamaki: Perhaps this was part of his moving to religion in the first place, that he felt that there was something there that was answering his need.

Devamitra: Do you feel that in his later works that this side of him [197] was reconciled in some way, or that he did integrate his feelings in any way?

S: Well, I've not read his later works recently, but I feel not, from my recollection. I think he mellowed. I think that in some of his later works he's much more profound than he is here, but I think there is still that tension and I'm quite sure that he tended, or seemed to tend, at least, to identify Zen and all that that means, with this non-rational and emotional side as opposed to the intellectual, and that has done great harm indirectly to the whole Buddhist movement in the West: it has justified irrationalism - not supra-rationalism but irrationalism. And this comes out very strongly in Christmas Humphreys. He's got this too.

Ratnapani: Anything silly is Zen.

S: Anything sill is Zen. Christmas Humphreys' writings and in the man himself, you know, there is this opposition of intellect and feeling. Well, it's in everybody, but in him, as in Suzuki, it assumes a directly Buddhist form and affects their exposition of Buddhism itself.

Lokamitra: Suzuki, he despised it in himself, because he obviously had quite an intellect, but it didn't get him where he wanted; there was something missing.

Vajradaka: That's interesting, because Suzuki, earlier on, described prajña and bodhi as being translated as intelligence, really bringing it down.

Devaraja: It's almost as if the intellect was what prevented him from achieving an easy sort of goal in terms of emotional satisfaction, and so it's almost like he was struggling against it.

S: He felt the intellect, perhaps, as repressive and inhibitive. I mean, as Blake did, except that Blake was very creative. I mean his figure of Urizen.

Nagabodhi: It probably accounts also for our own woolly-mindedness. I certainly remember in myself, having come along and become involved in Buddhism, I didn't tend to make the same effort, say, that I'd made at university when trying to tackle a subject; I thought, well, I should take it in more by osmosis than by ...

S: If there's any thinking to be done in the Movement, Bhante does it. (laughter) It's all on the tape; fish out a tape; all the answers are there. (more laughter)

Devamitra: Perhaps we ought to popularize the phrase 'I don't think, Bhante does my thinking for me!' [alluding to Cardinal Manning, tr.] (uproar of laughter)

Devaraja: I must admit I have noticed a tremendous tendency, particularly in the Order, that when anyone wants to confirm or assert their position or attitude, they say, 'Aha! But Bhante says such and such and such.' It's almost that [198] people are terrified to formulate their own appraisal of the situation, their own opinion. They automatically feel that when they've said 'Oh, well, Bhante says that', it's OK, they don't have to kind of ... (all talk at once)

S: Yes, right.

Vajradaka: I think that that's fallen apart a lot in this last six months. (sounds of agreement) I think that that was true far more than it is now.

Devaraja: I don't know. I must say my memories of it are pretty recent, quite recent. (babble)

Lokamitra: You can usually find some who ...

S: I am often misquoted.

Lokamitra: ... that Bhante said completely the opposite from ...

S: Right. (confused babble and much laughter)

Devamitra: That's no longer a safe curtain to hide behind as it was ...

Lokamitra: You have to be much more careful if you're going to try and use that sort of persuasion.

S: Got to have a really authentic quote! (laughter)

Ratnapani: Well, I think, often they are both authentic. (drowned by voices) at different times exactly the opposite!

S: Or out of context. Or even misquoted. For instance, I gave Ananda a little list of sayings at his request to include in a little publication, and he showed me the page that he'd typed out, and I noticed he'd carefully censored one of them. (laughter) I won't tell you which one it was! (exclamations) He'd cut it out. (gasps)

Devaraja: Why? Because it contradicted another one?

S: No, no, he cut it out.

Devamitra: He didn't like it?

S: I don't think he did.

Devaraja: Well, I must find out what that one was! (laughter) Give us an indication, please.

S: I was quite (?) to say anything, but, you know, I'm not going to say anything to him, but...

Devaraja: Well I will! (laughter)

S: He, as editor, had, you know, full right to edit as he pleases, but it was quite [199] interesting to me that he left that particular one out.

Devamitra: Did he leave any others, or just one?

S: Well, as far as I could see, just one, reading it through quickly, there was only one left out. There weren't very many; only about two dozen (drowned by babble of voices and laughter) But I think the several things have to be distinguished here. I mean, if people want to quote me, on, say, some controversial point of doctrine, to settle an issue, that may be quite in order, in a sense that nobody present is able to settle that, but if it's a line of policy, or attitude towards certain practical matters, then quoting my authority is a bit suspect, especially if it is something that could be sorted out by the people on its own merits, just using their own intelligence. If it involves some important question of Buddhist principle about which no one is really sure, and then by all means try to find out what I've had to say, if I in fact said anything about that particular matter.

Mamaki: Relying on memory is very fallible, too.

S: Right. Yes.

Vajradaka: Especially when you have your own vested interest. (expressions of agreement)

S: I heard recently that Terry Dukes was quite upset because it had been reported to him - I didn't learn by whom - that I had once ordered someone to commit suicide, which he'd promptly committed. And that's the form in which it reached Terry Dukes. (sounds of alarm) And he was all the more upset because the name of that person was also Terry, huh? Yes! Now who told him that we don't know. Probably some friend with a small 'f'. But he'd been quite upset by it and quite disturbed. (horrified sounds)

Devamitra: Have there been other horrific distortions come back to you like this?

S: That seems to be the most horrific one. I mean, there are quite a few others I can't recollect off hand. Oh, yes, there was one, for instance, what was that? No, I can't recollect the details of it, but several references have come back to me; quotes that people have made; things I was supposed to have said; and sometimes there's just a slight sort of twist given to it which rather distorts the whole meaning. And this is one of the reasons why, you know, I feel like putting important things in writing and keeping a carbon copy. And then the context of what you actually said is clear. And people are not very careful and not very scrupulous in quoting; you know, they quote very approximately and then that is repeated and then repeated by a third person and then it gets completely distorted in the end. People are not very mindful in quoting me, I'm afraid. It may be because sometimes there's a vested interest and [200] sometimes they're just plain careless and unmindful.

Sudatta: There's another problem, too, isn't there, that a teacher will sometimes have to take a contrary view to an entrenched view of a pupil in order to try and break it. He might then get the impression that the teacher was firmly ensconced in the opposite camp, whereas it was purely a waiting operation.

S: Hmm. Right. But in these particular instances, as far as I recollect, it was in connection more with practical issues and things I was supposed to have said about certain just practical matters to be decided - [such as] which [of two alternatives] I would prefer: more this kind of thing.

Devamitra: I've just recently become more aware of how guilty I am of misquoting other people. I'm making a particular effort in that direction at the moment.

S: And I usually express myself quite carefully and qualify it when necessary, and sometimes I'm quoted without the qualifying phrases and that makes quite a difference. Sometimes I say, 'Well, if so and so, well, then do so and so', but I'm quoted as simply saying: 'Do so and so!' (sounds of agreement)

Devamitra: I think also, for instance, when you speak, say, on a seminar and you qualify certain tricky points, you quite often introduce lots of 'as it weres' and 'sort ofs', and if

you were editing a transcription, and you take out all the 'as it weres' and 'sort ofs', you could end up with something meaning completely...

S: It would sound much more dogmatic. I know this is very unsatisfactory from a literary point of view. Some people have even pointed it out and asked if it is necessary, but I say, well, I feel so much that one is not saying what is, as it were, but one is trying to express as best one can, in very inadequate language, one's sort of sense of things, or even insight into things. But, you know, it isn't expressible with sort of scientific accuracy; it is a sort of poetic description, rather. So you say, 'as if', and so on. It's essentially metaphorical, even though it may sound otherwise. It's essentially poetic, however abstract the terms used may be.

Anyway, just that final paragraph, and then finish for today.

"Having this in view we proceed to see first on what metaphysical hypothesis speculative Mahayana Buddhism is built up; but the reader must remember that this phase of Mahayanism is merely a preliminary to it's more essential part, which we expound later under the heading of 'Practical Mahayanism,' in contradistinction to 'Speculative Mahayanism'."

[end of day 3 and chapter 3] [201]

[day 4, chapter 4]

"Classification of Knowledge. Three forms of Knowledge."

S: These, you'll see, are the three forms that already have been mentioned briefly in connection with the Yogacara; in this chapter Suzuki is going into them in somewhat greater detail.

"Mahayanism generally distinguishes two of three forms of knowledge. This classification is a sort of epistemology, inasmuch as it proposes to ascertain the extent and nature of human knowledge from a religious point of view."

S: Does everybody know what epistemology is?

Chorus: No.

S: Epistemology literally means the theory of knowledge, how knowledge is possible, what is meant by knowledge, in what knowledge consists, how you come to know, what are the avenues of knowledge, what sources of knowledge you have, and so on. All this is covered by the theory of knowledge. Japanese Buddhist scholars seem to be rather fond of using Western philosophical terminology, especially terms like ontology and phenomenology and epistemology and even metaphysics. Broadly speaking, Western philosophy is divided into - that is, classical philosophy - divided into ontology, which is the science or theory of being or pure being or absolute reality - sometimes also called

metaphysics - and then epistemology, which is the theory of knowledge, how knowledge is possible, and so on: how it works. And then logic, which is the science of reasoning. And then there's aesthetics, which is the theory of the beautiful, and ethics, which is the theory of good. These are the main subdivisions of Western philosophy. There are others - phenomenology and axiology - but these are the most important.

Vajradaka: What was that second one again?

S: Axiology, which means theory of values. But Suzuki, like other Japanese scholars, uses quite a few of these terms; they don't really quite fit Buddhism, especially terms like ontology. Epistemology, yes, to some extent, and this is what we are concerned with here.

"Its object is to see what kind of human knowledge is most reliable and valuable for the annihilation of ignorance and the attainment of enlightenment."

S: In other words, though one can speak of epistemology (break in tape) ... not just of theoretical interest, it's practical: its object is to see what kind of human knowledge is most reliable and valuable for the annihilation of ignorance and the attainment of enlightenment. There is a practical purpose in this enquiry.

"The Mahayana school which has given most attention to this discussion of Buddhist philosophy is the Yogacara ... The Lankavatara and ... other sutras ... teach three [202] forms of knowledge. The sutra ... does not enter into any detailed exposition ... it merely classifies ... and points out what ... is most desirable by the Buddhists."

S: In other words, the sutras generally don't engage in argumentation. They speak straight out from experience; they don't try to justify, rationally, in a systematic manner. That is done in another form of literature, as he goes on to point out.

"To obtain a fuller and more discursive elucidation, we must come to the Abhidharma Pitaka of that school."

S: Strictly speaking, there's no Abhidharma Pitaka of the Yogacara. There is an Abhidhamma for the Theravada, there's an Abhidharma for the Sarvastivada, but sometimes, loosely, the philosophical work of the Madhyamika and Yogacara schools are loosely referred to as the Mahayana Abhidharma. I believe they are classified like that in the Tibetan canon, but it is not the Hinayana Abhidhamma Pitaka that is being referred to here, but the philosophical works of the Yogacara school.

"Of the books most generally studied of the Yogacara, we may mention Vasubandhu's Vijñanamatra with its commentaries and Asanga's Comprehensive Treatise on Mahayanism. The following statements are abstracted mainly from these documents."

S: It might be helpful to mention at this stage that one of our friends, that is, the venerable Thien Chau in Paris, is a specialist in these documents, these texts, and I have

suggested to him that he come over to this country next year and hold a special study seminar for Order members in some of these texts and he has agreed to do this, and we are hoping we can arrange it for next year. He has been over before and he knows several of the older Order members, and he has been studying these things and working on them for his thesis at the Sorbonne for a number of years; up to ten years, I think. He knows the texts very well, so we are hoping to be able to organize this some time next year, but he has agreed. All right.

"The three forms of knowledge as classified by the Yogacara are: (1) Illusion (parikalpita), (2) Relative Knowledge (paratantra), and (3) Absolute Knowledge (parinispana)."

S: Now he goes on to deal with each of these three in some detail.

"Illusion. Illusion ... is a sense perception not co-ordinated by the categories of the understanding ... purely subjective ... not verified by objective reality ... So long as we make no practical application of it, it will harbour no danger; there is no evil in it, at least religiously."

S: That is to say, if you see a mirage, floating on the horizon, you see it and you may recognize, well, that is a mirage, so there is no harm done. [203] But if you start acting upon it and try to walk towards the mirage and maybe try to drink the water that you can see there, then difficulties will arise, confusion will arise.

Devamitra: Could you equate this with identifying with one's feelings, you know, sort of?

S: Well, with what one may call one's unreal feelings, feelings which do not have a real, objective source or validity, but anyway I think he'll go into that.

"Perceptual illusion is a psychical fact ... They are all illusions, however. They are ... correct interpretations of ... sense impressions ... but are not confirmed by other sense-impressions ... all ... correct behaviour must be based on critical knowledge and not on illusory premises."

S: This is quite clear and straightforward, this sort illusion, but there is a sort of application of this, morally, as it were, and spiritually, and now he goes on to that.

"Reasoning in this wise(?), the Mahayanists declare that the egoism fostered by vulgar minds belongs to this class of knowledge, though of a different order, ... because the belief in the existence of a metaphysical agent behind our mental phenomena is not confirmed by experience and sound judgement, being merely a product of unenlightened subjectivity."

S: This goes back a little to what we saw before, you remember, that the term ego or self or atman is only intended really as a label for the sum total of all our physical, mental, emotional, and so on activities; it doesn't have any existence apart from them, it merely denoted them. But if we regard the term atma as denoting or indicating some

entity apart from all those physical, mental, emotional activities, then that is an illusion, and the illusion is said to be of the same kind, although not of the same order, as the illusion which we see in the desert, when we perceive, or think we perceive, water; it isn't really there. So in the same way we think we perceive an ego, but it isn't really there. It doesn't matter that we perceive it in a way, but if we act upon it, if we act upon the assumption that this ego that we think we perceive, apart from the sum total of our physical, mental and emotional activities, is real, then we're heading for disaster. So the spiritual tradition, of the Mahayana especially, advises us not to act upon - or not to take as our basis for action and life, indeed - this illusory perception of an ego, over and above or behind, as it were, the sum total of our thoughts, words, and deeds. So any sort of emotion, any sort of attitude, which springs out of this illusory belief in the atma or self; this also is itself illusory, or is an extension of that illusion. So you see the point, huh? Really, you've got two different kinds of illusion; the sort of sense illusion is only an analogy for the metaphysical [204] illusion, as it were, or even the psychological illusion. But the Mahayana or Yogacara and, in a sense, Buddhism in general, is saying that the self that we perceive as an independent entity, apart from the sum total of thoughts, words, and deeds, has no more actual reality than the mirage that we see in the desert, and, in some way, if we take the mirage for real, and act accordingly, we'll land ourselves in trouble. In the same way, if we regard this ego-entity as real and act as though it is real, we land ourselves in trouble. And that's the samsara.

"Besides this ethical and philosophical egoism ... fetichism, idolatry, anthropomorphism ... and the like, must be cleansed under the parikalpita-laksana as doctrines have illusory premises."

S: I'm not quite sure about that. I think this is - all these isms and whatnot - rather sweeping. I think we need not go into that; I think this is just a little tangent that Dr Suzuki is flying off at. But the basic point as regards the illusoriness of the so-called ego is quite clear.

I think, perhaps, there is something to be cleared up here, though, possibly. It is not, at present, that your thoughts and your words and your deeds and all that you actually experience is illusory; it is not that. Is this clear? Yes? That may not be absolutely real, but it is not an illusion. What is illusory is only the ego-entity imagined to exist apart from all that, as something independent and separate and autonomous, huh? But your own actual experience, as you experience it, your thoughts and your feelings and acts, these are not illusory. Buddhism is not saying that. [205] [We are?] experiencing, and we'll go on experiencing, in a more and more refined form until such time as one, as it were, merges in[to] that absolute dimension and when one's knowledge becomes absolute and when one becomes enlightened. But to prematurely talk in terms of illusion and, you know, to have nothing in between illusion, complete illusion, and nirvana or sunyata is very dangerous. Take one's stand firmly on empirical reality of one's experience, experience of one's empirical self, one's empirical being; that is real, according to Buddhism. In comparison with absolute reality, well, only relatively real, but not illusory.

Devaraja: It's really like the sort of empirical self is the only foundation we have to build.

S: Right! Exactly! This is why Nagarjuna says that you realize the absolute taking your stand upon the relative, and that if there was no relative to take your stand on, there would be no realization of absolute truth, hmm? So if you reduce everything to illusion, huh, well, what have you got to take your stand on? This is why people say, 'Well, if everything is unreal, well, even making an effort is unreal, meditation is unreal, therefore why do anything?' I mean, this is what you get with these sorts of pseudo-presentations of Zen, for instance. Reject the illusory, yes, but that leaves you with the solid bedrock of the relatively real, which is most real for you, and should be real for you. Taking your stand on that, practising on that basis, you gradually advance towards the absolute. All right: "Relative Knowledge"

"Next comes the *paratantra-laksana*, a *welt-anschauung* based upon relative knowledge ... everything ... has a relative ... existence, and nothing can claim an absolute reality free from all limitations. This corresponds to the theory ... of ... scientists ... who deny our intellectual capability of transcending the law of relativity".

S: We've just been speaking of, for instance, relatively real and absolutely real. Now, what is the criterion? In Buddhist philosophy, for want of a better term, the relatively real is that which exists, sure, but exists in dependence upon conditions. The absolutely real is that which exists but which does not exist depending upon conditions if you like; it just exists, hmm? So the relatively real, the relative existence, is that whole vast network of phenomena, on different levels, phenomena which are mutually interdependent, subject to the law of conditionality and so on. So this is the criterion of conditional reality, or relative reality: things exist, but they exist in dependence upon [206] causes and conditions, therefore they come into existence and they pass out of existence, they're not absolutely real. Paratantra literally means 'depending on another' or 'other-dependent'; they're not self-dependent.

Devaraja: I just wondered if there was a kind of relationship between tantra and paratantra?

S: Only etymologically. Tantra literally means that which is woven or put together. For instance, a weaver is a *tanti*, yes? So what is woven or put together is obviously dependent on something else; I mean cloth doesn't exist absolutely, it's dependent upon thread coming together in a particular way, hmm? So you get the connection in this way. So originally the tantra simply meant something put together, something compiled. So you had compilations on mathematics, compilations on architecture, compilations on ritual and meditation, and then the term became specialized in Buddhism and confined to compilations on ritual and meditation and esoteric matters in general. In that way we get the Buddhist tantras. But in Indian literature there are many works which are called tantras which are, say, works on mathematics, just compilations. That's all the word means. Just as, say, in the West, the Bible means, in particular, the collection of the sacred scriptures, although bible, biblos, is simply just a book; but it has become specialized in that particular way: 'the book'. So in the same way 'tantra' simply meant a compilation, but now it means particularly that particular kind of compilation of that particular

kind of material. So the term 'tantra', as such, has got - I mean, etymologically speaking - no direct doctrinal significance, though Tibetan scholars have subsequently given it one. A weaving together of wisdom and compassion, for instance, etc, etc. Well, anyway, is that clear, then, hmm, that the criterion of relativity or relative existence or relative reality is dependent on causes and conditions, its lack of self-dependence? It is there, it is real, but it is arriving in accordance with conditions, passing away when the conditions are exhausted, and, you know, this is true of our empirical being as we experience it all the time; but it is not illusory, it is not totally unreal.

All right. Carry on.

"The paratantra-laksana, therefore, consists in the knowledge derived from ... the outside world ... The universe has only relative existence, and our knowledge is necessarily limited ... it is impossible ... to know the ... cause ... and end of existence; nor have we any need to go thus beyond ... which would ... involve us in the maze of mystic imagination." [207]

S: So paratantra-laksana, as a form of knowledge, is knowledge of the relative and the conditioned, hmm? You can say it's scientific knowledge; it's also common-sense knowledge; it's human knowledge in the ordinary, general sense; but it does not penetrate through into absolute reality. It is certainly valid within its own sphere, but it is not of any use - not of any direct use, at least - so far as gaining Enlightenment is concerned. This relative knowledge doesn't help us there. All right, carry on.

"The paratantra-laksana is a positivism ... or empiricism in its spirit ... it does not exhaust ... human experience (or) ... take account of our inmost consciousness ... There is a ... yearning ... in our inmost heart, which ... seems ... to contain the meaning of our existence ... We must transcend the narrow limits of conditionality and see ... the ... indispensable postulates of life (which) constitute the Yogacara's third form of knowledge called parinispanna-laksana."

S: Once again we get Suzuki's cry from the heart and all that, but this would seem to be bound up with paratantra-laksana, the sort of sense of, or dim awareness of, or even need for, a higher form of knowledge. It can't really be described as simply a cry of the heart in a purely emotional sort of sense; it goes beyond that. Anyway, we need not go too much into that; it's quite clear what this relative knowledge is.

All right, then. On to Absolute Knowledge.

"*Parinispanna-laksana* literally means the world-view founded on the most perfect knowledge. According to this view, the universe is a monistico-pantheistic system ... There must be something ... underlying and animating all existence ... This highest Will, or Intelligence, or ... God ... the Mahayanists call ... religiously dharmakaya, ontologically Bhutatathata, and psychologically Bodhi or Sambodhi ... it must be the cause of perpetual creation; it must be the principle of morality."

S: Once again we find Suzuki tending to make this transcendental principle a sort of cosmic principle, a sort of almost ontological principle, but this is going a bit further, to say the least, than the Mahayana, and certainly Buddhism, really does go. But it really doesn't matter; we can simply discount that that dimension, or that knowledge, exists.

All right. Let's carry on.

"This being so, how do we come to the recognition of its presence? The Buddhists say that when our minds are clear of illusions ... they reflect the truth like a ... mirror. The illumination thus gained ... constitutes ... parinispanna, the most perfect knowledge that leads to nirvana, finds salvation & eternal bliss." [208]

S: This is not completely clear. "The Buddhists say that when our minds are clear of illusions, prejudices, and egoistic assumptions, they become transparent and reflect the truth like a dust free mirror." That isn't necessarily so. You can certainly get rid of all your illusions, in the sense of getting rid of your parikalpita-laksana, but you aren't thereby Enlightened; you've still got to do quite a bit more: you've got to refine, as it were, your paratantra more and more, and then you can begin to reflect the parinispanna. But the general nature of the process is quite clear.

Right. Go on to the two forms of knowledge.

"World-views founded on the Three forms of Knowledge

"The reason will be obvious to the reader why the Yogacara ... distinguishes three classes of world-conception founded on the three kinds of knowledge ... what is believed by the masses is ... a parikalpita conception of the world. The material ... is to them all in all ... Their God must be transcendent and anthropopathic ..."

S: Subject to human passion: like 'God gets angry', 'God is pleased', and so on.

"... and always willing to meddle with worldly affairs ... the masses are at least a century behind ... but ... in spite of all their ignorance ... the waves of universal transformation are ever carrying them forward to a destination of which, perhaps, they have not the slightest suspicion."

S: In other words, they are being led, apparently, whether they like it or not. That's a bit suspect, and I think confuses the individual and the collective. But anyway it is true that the general world outlook is based upon what the Mahayana or the Yogacara would call parikalpita-laksana: it is just a big web or network of illusion. All the things that people are doing, all the things that people are rushing after, the greater part of their interests and activities, are based on illusion. Politics are based on illusion, most of it. Economics are based on illusion. This is quite a sobering thought; that when you go down to a place like London you're just living in the midst of a web of illusion in the strict sense, hmm? Or even when you live up in the country here, [Tittleshall in Norfolk, tr.] it's still a web of illusions, but it's not quite so finely spun. The meshes are bigger, so you've got

more room to move out, you know, move about, in between the meshes, but if you go down to London, there are so many people, there are so many egos, and the webs are overlapping and intertwining all the time, and it becomes so thick and complex and so difficult to move about - unless, of course, you are also part and parcel of that - that it becomes really very difficult. But the sort of contemporary world-view is a form of parikalpita. [209]

"The paratantra-laksana advances a step further, but ... disregards what our inmost consciousness is ... revealing to us ... In order to reach the highest truth we must ... plunge with our whole being ... where absolute darkness defying the light of the intellect is supposed to prevail."

S: This phrase "with our whole being" is very important, all the more so because Suzuki doesn't often use it. Not just with our feeling, as opposed to our emotions as opposed to our intellect, but with our whole being, hmm?

"This region ... is shunned by most ... intellectual people ... But the only way to the ... pacification of the heart-yearnings is ... to resort to the faith that has been planted in the heart as the sine qua non of its own existence and vitality."

S: Again we find him reverting to the heart in a one-sided sort of way.

Vajradaka: What does sine qua non mean?

S: Something indispensably necessary: 'without which nothing'. "Faith has been planted in the heart as the sine qua non of its own existence", that is, without which its own existence and vitality cannot be; in the absence of which.

"And by faith I mean Prajā ..."

S: Hm. Yes. I'm afraid he's a bit confusing, isn't he?

"... transcendental knowledge, that comes directly from the ... dharmakaya. A mind ... finds here complete rest ... whence this is, it does not question ... Buddhism calls this ... state nirvana or moksa; and parinirvana is a world-conception which naturally follows from this subjective, deep enlightenment."

S: At any rate, Suzuki's main point is clear: that above and beyond relative knowledge, knowledge of the relative, scientific knowledge, philosophical knowledge, there is another realm, a higher realm; if you like, a realm of absolute reality, and we can never rest satisfied with relative truth and conditioned reality, however much that may have, there is something within us, which he calls the heart or (?cry of) the heart, which remains dissatisfied until we have access to that higher realm, that absolute knowledge, that perfect knowledge, which in its fullest form is Enlightenment, and a world view, if you like, a philosophy, based upon that perfect knowledge. This of course is the ultimately satisfying world view.

Vajradaka: Presumably most religions do have - most of the greater religions, anyway - do have that?

S: That's difficult to say. One might say that there are glimpses, but very often very obscure. For instance, if you have quite literally a belief in a personal God who has, you know, created the world - if that is the central point in your philosophy - well, this is not a philosophy based on perfect knowledge. There may be other elements which do derive to some extent from perfect knowledge, but they'll be very obscured by this one. This is why, you know, when you read the lives of some of the Christian mystics, you really find them struggling to be free from the idea of God, and getting into great difficulties, and not being very happy about it, and, you know, not very happy about what seems to be a conflict with the teaching of the Church. At the same time, they don't want to deny their own experience. Some you find defying the Church, in the end, and even suffering for it; others you find not quite sure of themselves, and submitting to the church, and saying, 'No, I must have been wrong; my experience must have deceived me; it must have been the suggestion of the Devil', and so on.

Anyway, those are the three forms of knowledge, and it is quite a useful classification. And one can ask oneself, even with regard to one's own knowledge, 'well, this particular thing which I am thinking, which I think I know, well, is it illusory knowledge, or is it relative knowledge or is it absolute?' And especially is it important to distinguish between the illusory and what is relatively real, and also, I mean, important to accept that one's relative existence, the relative self, is an existing self, not just illusory. It may not be absolute, well, it is not absolute, but that it is there, it does exist, and should not, as such, be denied. That's the basis on which you stand. This is why Nagarjuna says somewhere that it is better to have the atma belief as high as Mount Sumeru rather than to have a false view of sunyata. (exclamations) Yes! Because, he says, if you are sick, the medicine can cure you, but if the medicine itself has become poison, what is there to cure you in that case? So it's much better that you are (?confused), 'my present existence is real', even that it's absolutely real, rather than think it is illusory, because if it is illusory, you've got no basis, you can make no progress. So it's even better to follow Vedanta and believe in the absolute sort of spiritual self; even that is better than thinking that everything that you experience is illusory, and that you are an illusion.

Devaraja: What was it? 'As high as Mount Sumeru rather than?'

S: The atma belief. Rather than to misunderstand the doctrine of sunyata, i.e. to think of sunyata as pure negation, as pure annihilation.

Devamitra: There is a very similar thing in the Bodhicaryavatara where Santideva quotes from the sacred scriptures. Even when the belief of individuality has risen [211] [to] the height of Mount Sumeru, even then the Will to Enlightenment can arise.

S: Right. Yes.

Devamitra: Which is a very similar kind of comparison.

S: It may be that Nagarjuna is having a reminiscence of some scriptural passage.

Devamitra: Is that the one it comes from originally?

S: No. No. Because Santideva in his Siksasamuccaya quotes many Mahayana sutras that we no longer have, at least not in Sanskrit; in some cases not in any form. It might be one of those. But Nagarjuna certainly does make the statement, possibly basing himself on a scriptural passage.

Devamitra: You just a moment ago referred to the Vedanta. It seems to me that perhaps Suzuki, with his kind of leanings towards a cosmic principle, as it were, it's almost as if he's sort of inwardly a Vedantic ...

S: Almost.

Devamitra: Do you know what I mean? It's kind of like it's expressing this Vedantic meaning in Buddhistic sort of terms and so forth.

S: Also there is the point that Buddhist thought is extremely subtle here, and it isn't easy to work it out properly and express it, and he seems not to have done that, at least, you know ...

Devaraja: I just wonder ...

S: A sort of acosmism, as I call it, of Buddhism; that Absolute Reality is not conceived of as a cosmic principle. Not that it is said that it isn't a cosmic principle, you know, that would be going to the other extreme, but, you know, Buddhism just, as it were, is content with arriving at the ultimate reality, and, you know, what it is, ultimate reality will itself tell you when you get there. I mean, Buddhism sees no point in the unenlightened man speculating about what reality is and so on, but it certainly doesn't make the statement that it is a cosmic principle, and it underlies the world process, or that it is the ground of all existence. Buddhism does simply not make these statements about ultimate reality and would regard them as being rather limiting, so, as it were, remains silent.

Devamitra: Do you think this is a basic wrong view that he has or is it that he's not really clearly stated his own understanding of things?

S: I think at this stage, at least, he was not clear in his own mind; this is the impression that I get. Almost that he didn't give himself time to stop and [212] think. This is the impression I get just reading it.

Devamitra: I just wonder, in fact, if one had kind of this sort of wrong view very deeply embedded, as it were, in one's consciousness, if it would be very, very difficult to overcome this as one progressed, you know, on the basis of that kind of misunderstanding.

S: Also, there is the point that language itself does not help: language is so constructed that you cannot help sort of making misleading statements about reality as soon as you start speaking of it, and if you take the structure of language as somehow reflecting the structure of reality, therefore take it literally, then you'll end up making these sort of statements. It may be simply no more than that, but he hasn't attained to a sort of critical self-awareness with regard to his own employment of language; he seems a bit naive in his employment of language, even though very skilful, but in a very (?) and even very poetic, but sometimes not always really knowing what he is saying, yes?

Mamaki: He's expressing where he is in himself and seeing something that, you know, writing from a poetic rather than a kind of critical intellectual kind of attitude. Perhaps his own feelings have taken over and superimposed and how he feels, so to speak, inwardly, if it ought to be to match up with his own experience at the time.

Ratnapani: Yes, I've come across people who do just what Mamaki was describing and it's been reminding me of a particular person, again and again this person, just the image flashing into mind, a person who does that constantly, mixing subjectivism with metaphysics, landing them according ...

S: So it seems, you know, watch ourselves as well. If even Dr Suzuki falls deep into this, well other people had better be very careful indeed! (laughter) Right. On to "Two Forms of Knowledge".

"The other Hindu Mahayanism, the Madhyamika school of Nagarjuna, distinguishes two, instead of three, orders of knowledge, but practically the Yogacara and the Madhyamika come to the same conclusion."

"The two kinds of knowledge ... are Samvritti-satya and Paramartha-satya ... conditional truth and transcendental truth. We read in Nagarjuna's Madhyamika Shastra ... Those who know not the distinction ... know not the essence of Buddhism which is meaningful."

"The conditional truth ... includes illusion and relative knowledge of the Yogacara school, while the transcendental truth corresponds to the absolute knowledge." [213]

"In explaining these two truths, the Madhyamika philosophers have made use of the terms *sunya* and *asunya*, void and not-void, ... which became a cause of misunderstanding by Christian scholars ... Absolute truth is void in its ultimate nature ... not ... absolute nothingness ... When considered absolutely, it can be neither empty nor not-empty, neither real nor unreal ... for naming is particularizing ... It underlies everything ... phenomenal, and does not permit itself to be a particular object of discrimination."

S: Just a few words about the use of the word 'sunya', empty, void. It can be used in all sorts of ways which can get mixed up. You can say, for instance, that something is sunya, void, empty, in the sense of being completely non-existent; in other words, that which is illusory can be described as void in that sense: that it isn't really there; it's completely illusory, it's void. That's one usage. And then the relatively real is described as being void. Now what does that mean? The relatively real is described as being void or empty not in the sense that it is non-existent and not really there, but in the sense that it arises in dependence on causes and conditions. Here, void or empty means relative, or it means, even, relativity, empirical existence, arising in dependence on causes and conditions, ceasing when those causes and conditions disappear. So when it is said that conditioned existence is void or empty, it merely means that it is conditioned, that it is relative, not that it is completely non-existent.

Now, when it is said that nirvana is void, it means that nirvana is empty of the whole cause-effect process; it's beyond that. Not that it is empty in itself or void in itself, but it is empty of that cause-effect process; there is nothing in it of conditioned existence, it is all unconditioned existence. But, again, not that it is completely non-existent. And then, in the highest sense, you can say that the dharmakaya is void, in the sense that it is empty of all discriminations. You can't say that it exists, you can't say that it doesn't, you can't say that it is this, you can't say that it is that, you can't say that it is existent or non-existent, or even void or not void; it's empty of all these terms, it transcends all these terms, it's completely void, completely empty. In that sense, again, not just non-existent.

So these are all the different ways, or some of the different ways, in which the term 'sunya' can be used. When you say that an illusion is sunya, it means one thing. When it says that relative existence is sunya, it means another. When you say nirvana is sunya, it's something else. When you say that the Absolute or the dharmakaya is void, it means something else. So you have to be very careful how you use this word. If someone says, oh, in Buddhism everything is void, well it can either mean, 'in Buddhism everything is a complete [214] illusion', or 'in Buddhism everything doesn't exist', or anything of that sort, and therefore endless misunderstandings arise. And perhaps it's best that we, in speaking about Buddhism, just don't use the word 'voidness' or 'emptiness' at all, unless we very carefully relate it to its appropriate context.

Devamitra: Could you relate the idea of sunya to relative existence, to the doctrine of anatta?

S: Well in the sense that the empirical self is unreal, not in the sense that it is illusory but that it is the subject of the law of conditionality, yes? If you say that the empirical self is unreal, you don't mean that the empirical self is an illusion, you mean the empirical self is a process governed by the law of cause and effect or law of conditionality.

Devamitra: I just asked this because I sort of was recently thinking about anatta and it seemed to me that as I understood it the doctrine of sunyata - obviously I was only thinking of sunyata in reference to a relative existence - was, in a way, a sort of re-statement of the anatta doctrine.

S: In a way, yes. In a way. (pause) I mean, they are interconnected, obviously. But when you say that the self is unreal, the self is void, or the atma is void, you must be careful you indicate which atma: whether it is the completely unreal, fictitious, ego, supposedly existing behind all mental activity, or whether it is the ego which is relatively existent as the sum total of all those mental activities. The one is illusory; the other is empirically real. The one is empty in the sense of not existing at all; the other is empty in the sense of being subject to the law of conditionality.

Vajradaka: Are these two ways that ego is usually used in our language, like by sort of Western psychologists, do they use the word ego in either one way or another, particularly?

S: I don't think modern psychology generally would use the term ego in the sense of something completely illusory, yes? I don't think so. It generally refers to the empirical self, which does actually exist, or to the centre of organization, as it were, of that empirical self.

Vajradaka: So that might be a useful thing ...

S: I see no harm in using, in a Buddhist context, in the West, the term 'ego'. And I think perhaps one must distinguish, if necessary, between the fictitious ego and the real ego, that is, the empirical ego, the empirically real ego: yourself as you do here and now experience yourself to be. [215] You can't deny that you experience yourself. But when your self-experience is not verifiable, either by your own reason or the observation and reason of others, then it's completely fictitious, as when you claim to be Napoleon. That Napoleon ego of yours is a fiction.

Nagabodhi: Does the term 'own-being', svabhava, this refers to the relative level? That things in their own being actually have no 'own being' other than the relative being?

S: Right, yes, exactly. Their own being is their own being. (laughter) It's so simple and obvious, isn't it, yes? (laughter)

Vajradaka: Yes! (Chorus of 'yes's' and more laughter)

Devamitra: It is when you don't complicate it for yourself.

S: But I think the most important point that emerges from this whole discussion is that Buddhism does not deny the relative itself as relatively real, hmm? And takes it fully into account and makes it the working basis of our spiritual practice, and this is most important. It does not dismiss it as an illusion. And being a Buddhist, or practising Buddhism, does not mean trying to think of yourself as illusory, trying to think that after all you're not really there, hmm? In that way you just alienate yourself. You must experience yourself, yes, fully, and only then you can start refining that experience.

Mamaki: The egocentricity comes from setting up the ego as a thing in itself, and then, so to speak, organizing, getting involved in craving to supply the needs one feels that this self that one's set up anyway. This is where the distortion is.

S: Selfishness is when you regard the claims of that self as absolute, whereas it is a conditioned thing and cannot possibly be the absolute and therefore cannot have any absolute claims as against others. And this is also the sort of infantile ego, which wants to be absolute; and nothing relative can be absolute: that's an illusion. So the self is illusory, one can say. This is something that hasn't been said before - I think this summarizes it - [that] the self is illusory, or any self is illusory, to the extent that it claims absoluteness, yes? Or you could put it round the other way: to the extent that it claims absoluteness, the self is an illusion, even the empirical self. Because, you know, there are these three kinds of knowledge, and they're so sharply distinguished, but in actual experience one shades off into another and you can't be quite sure where your illusory self ends and your real empirical self begins. So if you find even your real empirical self beginning [216] to make absolute claims or to have absolute demands or expectations to that extent, illusoriness is creeping in. When you, as it were, expect the whole universe to revolve around your self, to cater to your needs, then to that extent you're in the world of illusion. And there's an element of that in everyone, for sure. 'Why should this happen to me?' you know, 'Why shouldn't I have a happy life?' and so on and so forth.

Ratnapani: If one didn't listen, the craving would drop away, at least to a very large extent, wouldn't it? Anger and all the rest of it.

S: The craving which is associated with the illusory self is neurotic, you can say. There is a healthy desire associated with the empirical self, which is an expression of the physical, of the empirical self, which you must take into sensible consideration, neither allowing it to get out of hand, not trying totally to reject it, just guiding it in the right direction.

Mamaki: What I find difficult with Christianity is that it feels this is (?invalid) or wrong or sinful whereas it's the normal way in the start of life and it's a process of recognizing that illusion, that if one starts putting that as wrong or bad or sinful, then it gives it another kind of importance as well ...

S: ... a rather evil, negative life.

Mamaki: There's also the (?) of the lower self and the higher self (unclear) ... growth motivation.

S: Right. That is a (?). (pause) Even to distinguish too sharply between lower self and higher self can be a bit misleading and a bit confusing. 'Oh, that's my lower self.' That kind of thing. It almost becomes a symbol of self. It's better to say, well, it's just me. this am I, this is the raw material neither good nor bad. I mean, you don't say the clay is evil, even if you are going to shape into a pot. But as a lump of clay, it's not bad, it's just a lump of clay! I mean, one should think of one's own sort of raw material in the way of

thoughts and emotions - maybe even very crude - just as like the clay: you're going to shape them into something quite beautiful.

Lokamitra: It seems quite common, well I've seen it around the London Centre, Order members, including myself, getting into states of paranoia, which is really the extreme, I suppose, of this illusory knowledge, etc. And it seems it's like a swing, really. It seems to happen often with people involved in practising meditation or whatever. It's seems very difficult when you're in a state like that to realize it and to be able to do anything [217] about it.

S: Because if other people point it out to you, you're not usually ...

Lokamitra: It just increases the paranoia.

S: In the case of paranoia, yes, because you think, well, they're not sympathetic, they're not seeing you, they're against you, they're not very helpful, etc, etc. That is quite a tricky sort of situation. I mean, the only thing one can do, sometimes, is to say, 'Well, look, I've been through this before and come out of it. I don't feel that I'm going to come out of it, but nevertheless I know I will. I have before, and this is going to happen again. And it is paranoia. I can't feel that it is, but I know, at least from recollection of the past, that that is what it is, and it's going to go, it'll disappear shortly.' That's all one can do or say. Even if you go and sit in the shrine and meditate, you might think that the Buddha sitting there is frowning at you. (laughter) He doesn't like you any more! Or even 'he's angry with me'!

Right. Let's go on to "Transcendental Truth and Relative Understanding."

"One may say: If transcendental truth is of such an abstract nature, beyond the reach of the understanding, how can we ever hope to attain it and enjoy its blessings? But Nagarjuna says ... it is ... through the understanding ... we become acquainted with the quarter towards which our spiritual efforts should be directed ... So long as we are not yet aware of the way to enlightenment, let us not ignore the value of relative knowledge ... lokasamvrittisatya as Nagarjuna terms it."

S: You see the same attitude towards relative knowledge as to the relatively existent, but not illusory itself. The relative self is there, it's not to be denied. In the same way the fact that relative knowledge is not absolute knowledge does not mean that you should sweep relative knowledge aside; relative knowledge is all that you've got, and relative knowledge, just like the finger pointing at the moon. So Buddhism follows very much a middle path: even though it recognizes that the intellect does not have direct access to absolute truth, it can certainly, for practical purposes, point you in the direction or tell you roughly where to look for it, or put you on and the whole paratantra outlook, does not completely depreciate it or undervalue it, hmm? This is very important, because sometimes you can find [218] people making a sweeping denunciation of thinking and understanding and study and so on; they're just kicking the ladder away from beneath their own feet.

"If not by worldly knowledge,
The truth is not understood;
When the truth is not approached,
Nirvana is not attained."

S: I'm not quite sure of the construction of the sentence here; I don't get a very clear meaning.

Vajradaka: It must mean when the truth is not approached, relative truth.

Sulocana: It means you've got to have an intellect to transcend. (long pause while Bhante looks up the Sanskrit)

S: Looking at the Sanskrit verses: 'Vyavaharam anacritya paramartha na decyate', that's much clearer. It really means, if, in the absence of relative knowledge, the absolute truth is not understood, the relative knowledge itself is a means of approach to the absolute truth. It doesn't directly have access to it, but it's a means of approach. So without relative knowledge there is no realization of absolute truth in fact. Therefore you need to study Buddhism, to study the sutras, have an intellectual understanding, and have a rational understanding. This is not the same thing as the direct intuitive understanding in Enlightenment, but it is the basis for it. There's no irrationalism in Buddhism, no anti-intellectualism, just quite a sober, objective recognition of the limits of the rational approach. I think this plays havoc with a lot of sort of pseudo-Zen, doesn't it? Hm? Can see how sort of foolish it is?

Right. Carry on. He just reinforces the point.

"From this, it is to be inferred that Buddhism never discourages the scientific ... investigation of religious beliefs ... Science ... should purify the contents of a belief and ... point ... in which direction ... spiritual truth ... is to be sought ... When the path is revealed, we shall know how to avail ourselves of (it), as Prajā ... becomes the guide of life ... Spiritual facts ... are so direct ... that the uninitiated are ... at a loss to get a glimpse of them."

S: This is quite a useful short chapter: these three and two kinds of knowledge. Right, just go through and see if any further question arises out of that chapter.

Mangala: I don't know what ontological means. [219]

S: Ontology means the science of being as such. It doesn't really quite fit into Buddhism. It's more like sort of metaphysics, the science of the absolute, things as they really are; so if one thinks of this intelligence or whatever in sort of abstract metaphysical terms as a sort of ultimate principle of being, then it can be called, according to Suzuki, bhutatathata, which means the suchness of existence, literally, yes? Or if one thinks of it psychologically, in other words in terms of human experience and realization, then it is termed bodhi, according to him. But as [an] abstract principle of existence in

general, bhutatathata; as actually sort of realized and experienced by the human being, then bodhi. [219A] I'll just go on with chapter 5, then, which deals with just this bhutatathata.

Devamitra: Vajradaka's not here. (pause)

Devaraja: The 'th' in Sanskrit; how is that pronounced?

S: There are two: th and th. (laughter) [impossible to transcribe Bhante's pronunciation, but his point is that in Sanskrit, th is ALWAYS pronounced as an aspirated T, as in 'cart-horse', tr.]

Devaraja: One's a dental and one's a palative? [meaning palatal, tr.]

S: Yes, right. [strictly speaking, one is dental and the other is retroflex, tr.] For instance, you can either say Theravada or Theravada. It's strictly speaking Theravada, not Theravada. So there's th and th.

Devaraja: 'Th' [as a digraph, tr.], as such, doesn't really appear, does it?

S: Well, what about Bhutatathata?

Sudatta: Tathagata?

S: Tathagata. Tathagata, not tathagata. Usually, as far as I recollect, I won't be completely sure of this, but the dental, there's a dot under the t in the th, yes?

Mangala: Would that be the Theravada?

S: That would be [pronounced] the Theravada.

Mangala: That would be with a dot underneath it?

S: Yes, yes, right. But this is usually neglected even in proper transcriptions: they don't bother much with it, they concentrate all on the vowels, whether long or short or (?). If you like, sometime I'll make a list of all the relative 'ths', and put the little dots in the correct places. (laughter) We've got a list of all the names of Order members with all correct diacritics which is coming out with the register.

Devaraja: You always put a long A on raja.

S: This is correct.

Devaraja: Because Govinda, he puts it just with r, then a long a, then j, and a short a.

S: No, it is two long a's. I got my dictionary out. When going through this list, I checked every name with the dictionary, just to make sure.

Devamitra: Is mitra pronounced like meetra? That's creeping in more and more: meetra.

S: Ah, no. Mitra. Definitely mitra.

Vajradaka: With short i?

S: Mitra not meetra, yes. Mitra. Quite definitely.

Devamitra: And this applies to names as well as 'kalyana mitra'?

S: Yes. (unclear) say mitra.

Devamitra: I think it originated at Sarum House, actually.

Devaraja: I don't think it did, actually. (very loud laughter)

S: (drowned) ... connected with meet ... (laughter) ... or even with meat, I hope. I have heard some terrible pronunciations of Pali and Sanskrit. I had an elderly English Buddhist friend in India who couldn't say 'vihara'; he always called it the 'wee-har'. (very loud laughter) 'I'm just going along to the wee-har.' People in the same way say Rim-po-chee instead of Rimpoche.

Mangala: Even you say Nia-gara instead of Niagara. [219B]

S: Pardon? (very loud laughter) Well, that's English! You're entitled to be incorrect in your own language! (laughs) Or come to that, think of all the people who say 'Himaleya' instead of 'Himaalaya'; even in India people often say Himaleya; they've caught the English (unclear). Anybody else missing?

Lokamitra: Well these words will be anglicized sooner or later, if Buddhism grows. It's inevitable. It's like the Christian names we have were used ... um.

S: The forms are different in different European countries, aren't they? Anyway, let them be sort of euphoniously, beautifully, anglicized. I don't see how meetra is more sort of English than mitra, as it were. You don't have any difficulty in sounding that short I, do you? Mitra.

Nagabodhi: It's because it sounds a bit Latin, maybe, that people who've learned foreign languages like French or Italian maybe added. I think I do that: a name like Chintamani. It's very difficult not to say Cheentamanni. (absolute uproar)

S: Chintamani. I think most people say Chinta-money.

Devaraja: A slightly sort of squirrelish feel about it!

S: Yes. Hiding nuts. (laughs) Anyway, on to Chapter 5. [220]

"Chapter 5 Bhutatathata (Suchness)

"From the ontological point of view, Paramartha-satya or Parinispanna (transcendental truth) is called Bhutatathata, which literally means 'suchness of existence.'"

S: It also means 'thusness'. Some say 'suchness'; some say 'thusness'. This is an attempt to avoid saying anything in particular. That existence, or as it is, such as it is. It's just like that. It's thus; you can't say anything more than that. So they make it into an abstract noun 'thusness' or 'suchness' and bhuta is the exist... (drowned by sneezing)

"As Buddhism does not separate being from thought nor thought from being, what is suchness in the objective world, is transcendental truth in the subjective world, and vice versa. Bhutatathata, then is the Godhead of Buddhism, ..."

S: I think that's very dubious, you know, that sort of expression, but anyway, just let's go on.

"and it marks the consummation of all our mental efforts to reach the highest principle, which unifies all possible contradictions and spontaneously directs the course of world events."

S: Hmm. This "spontaneously directs the course of world events" again wrenching it into a cosmic principle. This is something not very Buddhistic.

"In short it is the ultimate postulate of existence ... it does not belong to ... sensuous experience, ... unknowable by ... intellection ... and grasped ... only by minds that are capable of exercising what might be called religious intuition."

S: OK, carry on.

"Asvaghosa argues ... for the indefinability of this first principle ... he thinks the best expression he can give to it is Bhutatathata, i.e., 'suchness of existence' or simply, 'suchness'"

S: Carry on. That's quite clear.

"Bhutatathata (suchness), thus absolutely viewed, does not fall under the category of being or non-being ... Says Nagarjuna in his Sastra (Ch XV):

'Between thisness (svabhava) and thatness (parabhava)
Between being and non-being,
Who discriminates,

The Truth of Buddhism he perceives not."

S: That is, discriminates with regard to ultimate reality, saying the ultimate reality is this or is that, is existent or non-existent, he doesn't see the truth of Buddhism. [221]

"To think 'it is', is eternalism,
To think 'it is not', is nihilism:
Being and not being,
The wise cling not to either."

S: Still referring to absolute reality; the absolute.

"Again, 'The dualism of 'to be 'and 'not to be' ... The wise stand not even in the middle."

S: Right. Straight on.

"To quote again, from the awakening of Faith ... it is independent of an unreal, particularizing consciousness."

S: So in this section Suzuki is simply making it clear that Bhutatathata, perfect knowledge, as it were ontologically considered, must be regarded as transcending all possible predicates. You can't speak of it as existent or non-existent, especially. If you speak of it as non-existent, there's the heresy, the one-sided view, of annihilationism; if you talk of it as existent, then you make it a particular something or other and you fall into the opposite extreme of eternalism. So therefore, with regard to the ultimate principle, don't think of it either one way or the other. It is ineffable. It is indefinable. Now we've got a section on indefinability, so let's go on to that.

"Indefinability. Absolute Suchness ... thus defies all definitions ... existence and non-existence are relative terms as much a subject and object, mind and matter ..."

S: And relative terms can't apply to that which is, by definition, absolute.

"... this and that ... 'It is not so (na iti),' therefore may be the only way our imperfect human tongue can express it. So the Mahayanists generally designate absolute suchness as Sunyata or void."

S: This is very important: that the Mahayana speaks of the ultimate, the absolutely real, or the absolute, as void; it doesn't mean that its empty, it doesn't mean that it's non-existent, it simply means that no possible predicates, no possible terms, can apply to it, especially the terms existent or non-existent, so in this sense, in this context, sunyata, empty or emptiness, means simply indefinable, ineffable, beyond thought, beyond speech. All right, carry on.

"But when this most significant word Sunyata is to be more fully interpreted ... it is neither that which is unity nor that which is plurality; neither that which is at once ... nor not at once ... unity and plurality." [222]

S: In other words, it rejects these terms as applied to the absolute, in any possible combination or arrangement.

"Nagarjuna's famous doctrine of 'the middle path of eight nos' ... declares: 'There is no death, no birth, no destruction, no persistence, no oneness, no manyness, no coming, no departing'."

S: That is, from the standpoint of absolute truth.

"Elsewhere, he expresses the same idea ... making the historical Buddha a real ... manifestation of Suchness: ... 'He is above all contrasts, to be and not to be.'"

S: Here the Buddha is at one with the highest truth. In the same way that no statements can really be made about the highest truth, no statements really can be made about the Buddha as Buddha, the ultimate sense.

"This view of Suchness as no-ness ..."

S: As no-ness: no thing in particular.

"... abounds in the literature of the Dhyana school of Mahayanism."

S: Ah, here we get a reference to the famous Zen: Dhyana, Ch'an, or Zen.

"When Bodhi-Dhamma, the founder of the Dhyana sect ... was asked ... the first principle of the holy doctrine ... he replied, 'Vast emptiness and nothing holy.'"

S: The first principle was the vast emptiness, that is to say, reality itself, perfect knowledge itself, nirvana, Enlightenment, in which there is no distinction even between holy and not-holy, pure and impure. This is the first principle of Buddhism. This is in effect what Bodhidharma said, or is supposed to have said.

"The Emperor was bewildered and ... ventured another question: 'Who is he, then, that stands before me?'"

S: After all, I mean, 'I am perceiving something!' He seems to have taken that absolute void in the sense of nothingness, and therefore said, 'Well, you're here; who stands before me?' If nothingness is the absolute principle, well, who or what are you? Aren't you here? Aren't you existing?

"By this he meant to repudiate the doctrine ... Bodhi-Dharma, however, was a mystic ... convinced of the insufficiency of the human tongue to express the highest truth ... his answer was, 'I do not know'." (laughter)

S: Well, that may have had the right effect on the Emperor Wu, but it isn't really very complete. One can say, quite frankly, that in the light of what we've previously considered with regard to the three kinds of knowledge, it's as though these three haven't been sufficiently distinguished, you know, for the benefit of the emperor, huh? [223]

"This 'I do not know' is not to be understood in the spirit of agnosticism ... It was to avoid these ... misinterpretations that the Mahayanists ... made the paradoxical assertions that ... Suchness is empty and not empty ... one and many, this and that."

S: If one, of course, retells the story of Bodhidharma and the emperor, you know, just like that, only confusion and misunderstanding are created. Sure, Bodhidharma announced that the highest principle is the void, but it isn't enough to do that: you must also announce the relative truth on the basis of which that absolute truth is to be realized. That relative truth also has to be pointed out, and how it is to be made a basis for the realization of the absolute truth. If you merely assert the absolute truth - sunyata in the full sense - to someone who isn't prepared to accept it or who can't, as it were, intuit it, it cannot but appear to him as entire negation, and therefore, obviously, has a bewildering effect. So your next step, if you are proceeding in this way, has to be to establish the relative truth, and show the person how to take a stand on the relative truth so as to realize the absolute truth. This is why one of the bodhisattva precepts is not to preach the doctrine of sunyata to those who are spiritually unprepared, because they cannot but interpret it nihilistically. So it's no good at all sort of taking up your sort of half-baked understanding of the Perfection of Wisdom philosophy and sunyata and trying to put it across to someone; they'll only understand it in a quite negative sort of way. But even if you are able to put across the absolute truth, as Bodhidharma was, even then, you've got to point out the relative truth as the basis for the realization of the absolute truth. Otherwise you'll just bewilder the person, as appears to have happened in this case.

"The Thunderous Silence. There yet remains another mode of explaining ... it is the 'Thunderous Silence' of Vimalakirti ... to an enquiry concerning the nature of Suchness, to the 'Dharma of Non-duality', as it is termed in the Sutra."

S: Right. Carry on. He just explains that.

"Bodhisattva Vimalakirti once asked a host of bodhisattvas ... to explain their views as to how to enter into the Dharma of Non-duality."

S: Dharma here in the sense of ultimate principle.

"Some replied, 'Birth and death are two, but the Dharma itself was never born and will never die' ... this is called entering into the Dharma of Non-duality."

Devaraja: Many more answers of similar nature ... 'to know this is said to enter into the Dharma of Non-duality.'

"Finally the host Vimalakirti himself was demanded by Manjusri to express his [224] idea ... but he kept completely silent ... Manjusri exclaimed, 'Well done, well done!'"

S: Sadhu! Sadhu! hmm?

"The Dharma of Non-duality is truly above letters and words!"

S: This is quite important and significant. Of course, it must be borne in mind that this silence is also sort of pregnant silence. It is the silence of knowledge, not the silence of ignorance, so you mustn't just sort of keep silent and think that you're keeping silent in the Vimalakirti way. It must be, as it were, at the appropriate moment of tension, sort of dialectical tension, and it must be a silence of understanding and experience, not just a silence of battlement or the silence of ignorance. So this is, in a way, a way of explaining suchness: just by silence. All right, carry on.

"Now, of the Suchness, the Mahayanists distinguish two aspects ... conditional and non-conditional ... This distinction corresponds to that of relative truth and transcendental truth."

S: In other words, just as there is a relative truth and a transcendental truth, there is a relative being and an absolute being, [or] as it were relative tathata and an absolute tathata. Here we are getting a bit cosmological, but anyway, let's not just take any notice of that for the time being. Go straight on and see what suchness conditioned is.

"Absolute transcendental Suchness defying all means of characterization does not ... have any direct significance in ... human life. When it does, it must become conditioned Suchness as *Gesetzmassigkeit* ..."

S: I don't know what that means. Obviously it is some technical term from German philosophy. [*Gesetzmassigkeit*: 'conformity with a natural law' (Langenscheidt), tr.] I'll think we'll just have to ignore that.

"... in nature and as ethical order in our practical life ... To become the more of our conscious activities ... Suchness must surrender its 'splendid isolation', must abandon its absoluteness."

S: What do you think Suzuki seems to be doing here? (confusion of voices)

S: The technical term for this is 'reification of concepts'; in other words, making a concept into a real thing. He's talking about suchness as though it sort of actually exists like a sort of thing.

Sulocana: He makes it behave how he wants.

S: Yes, right! Almost personified, which is quite un-Buddhistic. [225]

Nagabodhi: Really confusing, isn't it?

S: So you can speak of the suchness of the absolute? The absolute is ineffable, even the suchness of conditioned existence, even conditioned existence is so rich and so complex you can't really communicate about it. But then he speaks of the absolute suchness not being able to maintain its aloofness and coming down into conditioned things and manifesting itself: this is absolute sort of, well, as I say, reification of concepts; and this is what I meant a little while ago by saying Suzuki didn't always know what he was saying. There was not a sufficient awareness of his own instrument of expression, i.e. in this case, the English language as used by him. But we can see it very clearly. Perhaps - I don't know - linguistic philosophy has become a bit dominant and maybe we are just a bit more sophisticated nowadays about these things. Is it that? But it seems very naive and sort of, well, personalizing.

Devamitra: It's almost like he's using suchness in the wrong ... I mean, he's not using the right word in that ... in what he's saying there. Like it might be possible to speak about ... would it be possible to speak about, well, say, the bodhicitta entering into consciousness?

S: Yes. I think it would be... (both talk at once) ... that's psychological as it were; it's not ontological or even cosmological.

Devaraja: He seems to almost, sort of, almost, just throw around these words and not use ...

S: I think Sulocana put it very well: that he sort of personifies the concept of bhutatathata, and then makes it behave. This is exactly what he does.

Sulocana: He's even saying what it must do! (laughter) Surrender its splendid isolation! ... (Sulocana and S. both speak at once) ... I mean, you could say this is a sort of poetic way of putting it, but it is very misleading, huh? It's pseudo-poetic rather than really poetic. Anyway, carry on, because he makes it behave a bit more. (laughter) Let's see it all, huh? But then, of course, don't forget that we do this ourselves, and especially politically! 'Freedom has come!' you know, 'Democracy is amongst us!' and things like that.

"When Suchness comes down from its sovereign seat in the realm of unthinkability (laughter) we have this universe unfolded before our eyes in all its diversity and magnificence."

S: Yes, you see, he's trying to use bhutatathata as a sort of cosmic principle, [226] almost a principle of creation, and tries to give an almost Buddhist version of creation itself, and of course really there is no such thing. Anyway, he gets very poetical here, so don't spoil him.

"Twinkling stars inlaid the vaulted sky, the ... summer heavens ornamented with fleecy clouds and on earth all branches and leaves growing in abundant luxury; ... all these ... are naught else than the work of conditional Suchness in nature."

S: This is certainly personifying and then making behave. Really, nothing has been said, really. But it's quite constructive in a way, because I rather suspect there's a really big streak of this in Japanese Buddhism, yes? I don't think it is just Suzuki. I think this is, to a great extent, what the Japanese, for example, have done with, not to say, yes, done with, or done to, Buddhism - or Mahayana Buddhism - has been somewhat cosmologically twisted, and bhutatathata invoked as a sort of cosmic creative principle, you know, which is just not Buddhism at all.

Devaraja: Also there's a sort of heavily Shinto influence.

S: It could even be that: I mean, very remotely, sort of emotional.

"When we turn to human life ... we have the work of conditional Suchness manifested ... as passions, aspirations ... desire to eat ... keeps children in merriment ... braces men and women bravely to carry the burden of life."

S: Well, orthodox Buddhism says, at least in some cases here, it's not suchness at work but trsna at work, or craving at work.

"When we are oppressed, it causes us to cry, 'Let us have liberty or die'; ... it leads us to even murder, fire and revolution."

S: Perhaps you do get the Japanese spirit creeping in here.

"When our noble sentiments are aroused to the highest pitch it makes us ready to sacrifice all ... All the kaleidoscopic changes of this phenomenal world ... come from the playing hands of conditional Suchness."

(break in tape)

S: ... and so many people derive their information from Suzuki's writings, and they are all to some extent rather slipshod and a bit confused in style and expression. And perhaps he is the most widely read of all Buddhist authors. And this is, you know, a sobering thought. You're probably much better to stick to reliably translated texts. For instance, when we read through the Bodhicaryavatara, it was noticeable how clear it was, how precise, as well as how inspired and how intense; very very clear, very very precise, you certainly never had to make any (?). Even Dr Matics, the translator, was [227] very, very careful in his introduction, very scrupulous. There were only one or two very slight points that we weren't quite happy about as regards expression, in a very lengthy introduction.

Vajradaka: Do you think Dr Suzuki's got slightly complacent, or got slightly complacent in his being a Buddhist, and Dr Matics, by the very fact that he wasn't a Buddhist, really didn't want to make any mistakes?

S: I think, perhaps, that the born Buddhist tends to take it for granted that he understands Buddhism. I think there's a tendency of that sort, and therefore, perhaps, is sometimes betrayed into carelessness. Usually, in a way, he thinks he knows; it's been born with him, but it can't be, you know. Spiritual understanding can't be born with you, hmm?

Devamitra: Kind of like it automatically makes you into an authority.

S: Yes, right. I mean, Indians certainly feel this way about Hinduism: they're born authorities on Hinduism, if not on all other religions under the sun! It is quite astonishing to see this.

Devaraja: I was saying, I think, yesterday evening, that perhaps one of the reasons for the accuracy of Matics' work was the fact that he was working and thinking quite closely in conjunction with Geshe Wangyal.

S: This is also true. Geshe Wangyal's own book, the Door of Liberation, is scrupulously accurate and very good as regards the letter and very good as regards the spirit. I must say the Tibetans do have this great conscientiousness with regard to anything connected with the Dharma. They will always make absolutely sure. They may be almost sort of pedantic, sometimes, but they get it absolutely right - on whatever level. It may be just a level of ordinary custom or behaviour, or manners, or ritual, or doctrinal accuracy, or as to what steps you take in meditation, what preparations you make; they're absolutely accurate. That is because they take it with full seriousness, you know, and that's because they believe in it. Just as the scientist in the laboratory doesn't say, well, you know, a bit of this and a bit of that. He scrupulously weighs the exact quantity with the most accurate possible instrument, and every step in his scientific procedure is meticulously carried out; it's not done in a slap-dash sort of way. The Tibetans have got that sort of spirit in religious affairs, in spiritual affairs.

Devaraja: This is really mindfulness; they're very mindful about ...

S: Yes, yes. It's an application of mindfulness.

Devaraja: It strikes me sometimes that - I don't know to what extent this is true but [228] - amongst the more sort of emotional, sort of devotional, manifestations of Buddhist practice in Japan is that there's not such an emphasis on things like mindfulness.

S: Hmm, that's true. The other thing that occurs to me is that the Tibetans are very concerned with the Dharma; they're not using the Dharma, they're devoting themselves to the Dharma! But very often, if we're not careful, we use the Dharma as a sort of medium to express purely subjective feelings. And I think that Suzuki is doing this to some ex-

tent, especially this sort of famous split between the intellect and the heart and the cry of the heart and all that. One gets the impression he's not just objectively, as it were, expounding the Dharma and looking and trying to see what the Dharma is saying, and really listening carefully. To some extent, yes, but he often seems to be using the medium to say what he wants to say, what he feels, you know, just the sort of quite raw Suzuki, as it were. I mean it's all right to say what you think and feel about the Dharma if you have become one with the Dharma; then you express what you think and feel, you are expressing the Dharma, because the two have become one, and in the case of the Buddha they are completely one, so whatever the Buddha says is the Dharma, and he doesn't have to sort of look at the Dharma out there and describe it; he is the Dharma. But the ordinary person has to look at the Dharma and see what the Dharma is and try to give a completely accurate account, hmm? But we find that many authors just use the Dharma. And especially, say, many writers on Zen, just use the thing to express something of their own, but not in a wholesome way, but in a sort of illegitimate way, saying it is the Dharma when it is merely just them. So we have to be very, very careful that we really do reflect the Dharma and not just let off a bit of steam of our own. We say, for instance, Buddhism says this, Buddhism says that - but does Buddhism really say that? We must make very sure! Or is it just us saying what we think and dignifying it with the name of Buddhism? We've every right to say what we think, but let us just distinguish, huh, that this is what Buddhism says [and] now I'm saying what I think. And the two don't altogether agree. We must be quite honest about that, or be honest in that sort of situation. I must say the shin people, traditionally, in Japan, are very strict about this. A Shin minister - they don't strictly speaking have monks or priests - can say anything he likes, provided he sharply distinguishes what is the official teaching of the text and what is his own opinion. Even from the pulpit he can express his own opinion provided he says 'this is my own opinion'. But with Zen it seems a bit otherwise - or at least some writers on Zen - they don't seem quite such good, you know... [229]

Lokamitra: It's as if he doesn't know, though, what's his own opinion here. He's very confused.

S: Yes. A bit of confusion, yes.

Devamitra: I must say that when I first read the first ninety pages of (?) book, a lot of it I thought was beyond me, but looking at it from the view of your understanding, as it were, I see that it is just a sort of woolly kind of thinking.

S: So surely one must follow a middle way here; towards what we do not understand have an attitude of reverence, but not sort of think, 'oh, I don't understand, it's beyond me', when it is really not clear enough to be understood! (sounds of agreement) And not be intimidated or imposed upon by sort of well, just verbiage.

Lokamitra: This comes back to point mentioned yesterday about teachers, hmm? And just remember Devamitra when he came back from the sesshin where Zengo declared himself to be Maitreya, he said, 'Well, how can I say because I don't, you know, I don't

know.' And he was very confused as a result. A very difficult situation to be in and to know what to do.

S: Well, I had no hesitation when I heard about it, and said, 'Well, he isn't Maitreya.'

Lokamitra: Ah, but it's more difficult, it's difficult for us who don't have, say, understanding, a clearer understanding.

S: Well, at least you should be very reserved, because, after all, Maitreya Buddha is a Buddha, and you know that Buddhas appear very rarely. At least you know that. So the chances of you actually being in contact with a real live Buddha, well, Maitreya, you know, are pretty remote, even just looking at it arithmetically, so a sort of cautious reserve is indicated anyway.

Mangala: I think it would be easier if we were all sort of simple pious Buddhists, you know, but we're all sort of sophisticated, and we've all read too much and that, you know, we can no longer respond in that way. You know, we all know we are all inherent Buddhas, if you like, potential Buddhas, and that. How much of the scriptures do we take literally and how much of it is, you know, metaphorical and such?

S: Well, I took my stand on the simple statement of sutras that, I mean, that rightfully a Buddha doesn't appear until all traces of the sasana of Sakyamuni Buddha disappear. That is the function of a Buddha: to appear, you know, [230] when all trace of the Dharma is lost. We still have large slices of the Dharma left to us, so therefore I conclude logically that Maitreya cannot be present among us! (laughing)

Mangala: But then when you have Maitreya telling you the scriptures are all just old hat anyway and rubbish and not to be listened to, well ...

S: Well, you see, if you're not to listen to the scriptures, it just comes back to him and me, and I prefer me. (pause)

Well if we dispense with the scriptures, where does that leave us? It leaves us without the ideal of Buddhahood, without the ideal of Maitreya, which - the name Maitreya comes from the scriptures - it leaves just him and me. OK, well let's sort it out on that basis. You and me. But you can't sort of say dismiss the scriptures and then go on calling yourself Maitreya Buddha, using terms which belong to those scriptures. Then you just become Mr So-and-so, that's all. And I'm Mr So-and-so too. Fair enough, I don't mind, and then we just sort out (laughter) what you know and what I know.

Lokamitra: Maitreya I don't think was necessarily the essence of the question, but that someone who had obviously attained higher states of consciousness, and so on, claiming certain things on top of this, as in this book, he's sort of putting down something quite, well, the idea of it is very good, but he's also bringing in something of himself too.

S: Well, then you must also question, well, [you say] someone who had attained a higher state of consciousness. Had he? Do you know? I mean, for instance, in Zengo's case, when people doubted that he was Maitreya, he became upset. I mean, can you become upset, even momentarily, if you've really gained a higher state of consciousness? So, it seems to me that simply he had access, from time to time, to a more intense degree of consciousness, hmm? or sort of psychic energy, but not, as it were, to a higher level of consciousness in any more sort of permanent sense, otherwise he couldn't possibly have been disturbed by anyone's doubts about him. Even if he wasn't Maitreya, if he'd at least had a higher state of consciousness he wouldn't have been bothered by what anyone had said or didn't say, or thought or didn't think.

Devamitra: Would you have said that more intense state of consciousness, the dhyanas, or something else?

S: It doesn't seem even to be the dhyanas. I mean, even the dhyanas would give you great peace of mind and stability and tranquillity. It doesn't seem even to be the dhyanas, to me.

Devamitra: I'm not quite sure then, what ... [231]

S: It's almost a sort of intensely based upon neurotic unease. You know, a neurotic person can have great intensity, even communicate that intensity, just out of sheer desperation of his need, and this can affect and impress others very much, and if you are not careful you can mistake it for something else.

Devaraja: There were two points related to that. I mean, one I heard through somebody else - well both actually. One was that, at that particular sesshin, that he said that before the sesshin started he'd sat for two days without any kind of any thought coming into his mind. And the second was that a woman who comes along sometimes to our Wednesday class, and quite a good friend of the community, said he came around to tea once and she said 'Well, I don't believe that you are Maitreya', and she said that an image of a Buddha sort of appeared from the top of him and he looked like a Buddha figure. Can you comment on that?

S: Well, it can be almost anything. Pure illusion. It could have been her projection, or he might have had a few magic tricks up his sleeve. Who knows, huh? But even so, you know, none of these things adds up to very much.

Devaraja: And what about the two days?

S: I don't know. He might have done, but if he was really able to sit for two days without thought - not in just a pathological sense, but as meditation - I doubt very much whether he could be disturbed by what people said about him. So therefore I'm very doubtful whether he was sitting for two days without thoughts. Maybe certain thoughts, perhaps, but he might have been having the thought that he was Maitreya or something like that, and that would still be a thought. It's very difficult because one has to steer a middle

way; one doesn't want to be prematurely cynical or to have, you know, a lack of faith and so on and so forth. On the other hand, one simply doesn't want to be taken in, or to be imposed upon, no.

Sulocana: I was there after you left, for a week.

Devamitra: That was a subsequent sesshin, actually.

Sulocana: Oh, was it?

S: But, I mean, in all Buddhist traditions we are warned again and again not to come to a halt, thinking that you are there when you are not. And you could take a fairly sort of simple view that he had got so far, maybe further than most people, but had just become stuck there, and this is one possibility. It doesn't really seem like that to me, I must say, there are certain almost [232] neurotic elements, it seems to me, in all this.

Ratnapani: This is a different view that I picked up second hand: I heard that you said that in contrast to some other teachers who we've been talking about, that Zengo, I mean, misquote, had something truly spiritual.

S: Oh yes, I do say that. I don't say that he's a complete fraud or just a neurotic, no. There is something genuine there too, and I still say this. This is what makes it sort of difficult, huh? This is again what I feel about Terry Dukes: there is much that is good and genuine, but it's mixed up with a lot of rubbish, and it becomes so difficult to sort out, you know, and you've got the complete person, complete in the sense of all the bits and pieces: some bits you're very happy and joyful with, others you don't like it at all. What are you to do? This is quite difficult.

Ratnapani: On the Hui Neng seminar I suggested that Zengo was clinging to the void, and you nodded, which I took to be agreement. That sounds like ...

S: Well, we didn't sort out in that seminar, you know, what was meant by the void.

Ratnapani: No. We got four definitions of void. (laughs)

S: I think I could say I think Zengo was clinging to an unreal self-image. Of course, the question is why? And I think there are neurotic elements in it.

Vajradaka: The first form of knowledge, in fact.

S: No. The first of the three kinds of, well, knowledge in inverted commas. This isn't a real knowledge. I mean he had an unreal self-image, i.e. of himself as Maitreya Buddha. And I think that, way back somewhere, I get the feeling there is a lot of insecurity and it's, you know, built up that image of himself.

Lokamitra: There are stories I have heard since then that have sort of built up that.

S: But, at the same time, there is much that is good and genuine, and certainly people could learn from him, you know, so long as that whole self-image didn't get in the way. Some people are very sort of uneven, you know, they're not all of a piece, by any means. But this sort of person, I mean, if rather high-powered, can do quite a lot of damage, unfortunately. Luckily, at least for other people, he isn't very high-powered, so he can't do very much, but there are some people of this kind who are very high-powered indeed, and can do ten times as much as a normal person can. I mean, their motor energy is the sort of motor energy of neurosis, and this is very clear.

Mamaki: It's as though people can get in touch with a kind of archetypal energy which, if they haven't so to speak recognized the illusion of ego, then that [233] energy, that power, which does seem to be there, somehow gets tied up with the ego-illusion, and they do have a lot of power and quite often quite an acute understanding and perception, kind of psychic power. But because of still the attachment of ego, then their judgement can sometimes be completely way off. And then there's this sensitivity about, which sounds very much ego-defensive, you know, if anybody doubts them or anything like that.

Nagabodhi: And it's much easier to carry that off in a sort of 'spiritual' context where you can just sort of throw people's doubts back at them, you know.

Ratnapani: 'Oh, ye of little faith' [quoting a rebuke often used by Jesus of Nazareth, tr.]

Nagabodhi: If it's a politician, you know, you've got to answer people's doubts, but a teacher can just say, well, I'm just mirroring your ..."

S: (chorus of agreement) Yes. Right. 'I'm just testing you; testing your faith.'

Mamaki: It's not a pretence, though, because the person is caught up with it.

S: Yes, right. They are not consciously and deliberately deceiving you. I think myself this hardly ever happens in the religious sphere. I don't think I've actually met any instances of this in my whole experience: that sort of cold-bloodedly deceiving of others - no, I don't think you could, I don't think you could keep it up. You have to believe yourself in it to some extent. In that sense, you can't deceive others until you've first deceived yourself; you are your own first victim.

Mamaki: And it's said by the people who want to believe you to be that. It's quite a difficult situation to be in.

S: Mutual parasitism. I think there's quite a strong element of this in the Divine Light movement, the Guru Maharaji. Anyway, we just have to watch out and be careful. Let's carry on then. Top of page 111. We won't bother about the footnote, I don't think there's anything really there.

"Asvaghosa in his Awakening of Faith speaks of the heart (hrdaya) of Suchness ...
Herein all things are organized. Hereby all things are created."

S: Here the bhutatathata is definitely a sort of creative principle. From what I remember of the translation of 'The Awakening of Faith' that we studied, which seemed to be a quite careful piece of work - not Suzuki's own translation - this sort of interpretation isn't really very justified. I don't remember any sort of sentence like 'Hereby all things are created'. That sounds quite Christian rather than Buddhist. Anyway, let's go on. He does partly correct himself.

Ratnapani: Bhante, I didn't understand really a word of that. Was there anything that ...
[234]

S: Well, he is interpreting bhutatathata as a sort of creative principle, the absolute bhutatathata coming down, as it were, into the world of particulars and being active there.

Ratnapani: I was saying I didn't understand a word of what Suzuki had written. Was that the only thing he does say on all that?

S: Well, he does also say that it's through the fragmentary manifestation of the bhutatathata in the world of conditionality that we are enabled to reach the absolute bhutatathata. He doesn't make this very clear and, as he says later on, this is all from the ontological standpoint. I think it's just best quietly to leave it.

"The above is from the ontological standpoint."

S: We should say the extent to which Buddhism has an ontological standpoint at all, or the extent to which the Mahayana can be interpreted ontologically, or Mahayana philosophy can be interpreted ontologically, is very much open to question, to say the least. So before any such statements could be made at all, there would have to be a very thorough examination of the question as to what extent the ontological standpoint is to be found at all in Buddhism.

"When viewed psychologically, the heart of Suchness is enlightenment ... It is like the emptiness of space ... Nothing goes out of it, nothing enters into it, nothing is annihilated, nothing is destroyed."

S: This is, of course, from the absolute standpoint.

"It is one eternal soul, no forms of defilement can defile it ... it ... is not to be sort in ... abstract philosophical formulae, but in ... everyday life ... the heart of suchness acts and does not abstract, it synthesizes and does not 'dissect to murder'"

S: He's misquoting. It's 'murder to dissect', Wordsworth. [Our meddling instinct misshapes the beauteous forms of things: we murder to dissect', The Tables Turned' 1798, tr.] In this section we find Dr Suzuki getting into difficulties. I think he's got himself into

the difficulty, and we might as well leave him there, but anyway (laughter) read it straight through.

"Questions defying solution. Speaking of the world as a manifestation of Suchness, we are ... beset with the most puzzling questions ... and the significance of life entirely hangs on our interpretation of them."

S: Now Suzuki says, "Why did absolute Suchness ever become conditional Suchness?" Well, Buddhism doesn't say that it did, hmm? Quite clearly, if you study the Pali literature, and even Sanskrit literature, nowhere is it said that the absolute has, as it were, become the phenomenal, that the world has emerged [235] from any cosmic principle, or that it has been created, huh? So there is no problem or question, therefore, for Buddhism. Anyway, Suzuki comes a bit back onto the orthodox rails in his next paragraph, so let's see that.

"Buddhism confesses that the mystery is unsolvable purely by the human mind ... the mystery can only be solved ... when we attain Buddhahood ... in which the Bodhi with its unimpeded supernatural light directly looks into the very abyss of Suchness."

S: That's quite a good expression. That's quite well put: 'which the Bodhi with its unimpeded supernatural light directly looks into the very abyss of Suchness.'

"The bodhi or Intelligence ... is a partial realization in us of Suchness. When this intelligence ... expands ... it at once ... realizes its ... significance in life."

S: You might ask, well, what is the Buddhist view? Well, the Buddhist view is that when we look at the world process, or when we look at what Buddhism calls the samsara, and when we try to trace it back to its origin, we go back and back and back, and however far we go we can never reach a point of absolute first beginning, hmm? This is the statement. In other words, it's as though the human mind is so constituted that it cannot perceive an absolute first beginning. Buddhism doesn't actually say that, but it says however far back in time we go we never come to a point where we can stop and say, well, from this point everything starts. Now looking at it in the light, say, of modern knowledge, we can say that this is because time itself is part of our way of looking at things. In other words, time is, in a sense, subjective. So to expect the mind to go back and back to a beginning - the beginning of things - in a sense the beginning of time, is self-contradictory. Where there is a mind, there will be a world perceived by that mind, so the mind - that is to say the ordinary mind, consciousness - can never get back to a point where there is nothing to perceive, where everything begins, and where only the mind is left. [loud aircraft noise. I think the words are:] ?(When world ceases, mind ceases; when mind ceases, world ceases.)

So therefore, since the mind never gets back to a point of first origination, there is no question of where everything comes from and why. So Buddhism simply makes the statement: however far back you go in time, as regards the cosmic process, no absolute first beginning. That's all you can say. If you try to say anything more than that, you land

yourself in these sorts of difficulties. But Buddhism does say that above and beyond the cosmic process, as it were, above and beyond space and time, there is this transcendental principle, [236] transcendental dimension, in which there is no space, in which there is no time, in which there is no subject, no object, which you, as it were, can experience, with which you, as it were, can become one, and then you see, huh? You may not be able to express, you may not even be able to grasp with the mind, but then you will see, hmm? And strict classical Buddhism, whether Hinayana or Mahayana, says no more than that, and that is all that is necessary for practical purposes. And it refuses, especially in its Hinayana form, or contemporary Theravada form, refuses to say a word more than that, so it doesn't get itself into any difficulties, as Christianity does: 'God created the world.' [Genesis 1:1, tr.] Well, why did he create it? If God is good, why is there so much misery in the world? Could not God have created a better world? What was God doing before he created the world? How did sin originate? If God is good, well, how did sin come into the world? Where did wickedness come from? Well it came from free will. Well, God gave man free will. Well, why did he give him free will if he knew that he'd make such a terrible misuse of it? 'Well he couldn't help it.' Well, God is all powerful, surely he could have devised some sort of way, some sort of means, some sort of system, in which people had free will, but even though they had free will they never misused it? Couldn't God have done that? And then there's the problem, if you say, - as, say, the Vedanta says - that the whole cosmic process emerges from the absolute, evolves out of it, and the purpose of life and the purpose of living is to get back from where you started from; then what's the guarantee that the whole thing won't start up all over again? That Enlightenment is not permanent? That you get 'de-evolved' after a time? If, after all, the world process could come out of the absolute once, it can do it again. So all your effort of getting back there is wasted! You'll be ejected after a while, presumably, again. So Buddhism avoids all these difficulties, and it does not make any causal nexus as between the cosmic process and what we may call the absolute. Yes?

Devaraja: What about where it says that the Buddha saw all his previous lives before him? Before, you know, his present life.

S: It didn't say he saw all of them. He went back and back and he saw many but it doesn't say all. [e.g. Majjhima Nikaya i.22, tr.] But he went back and then he just couldn't be bothered, as it were, to go back any further. Hm? But to the best of my recollection, it nowhere says that he saw all of his previous lives. In Buddhism we say however far you go back, there are still lives before and you never get ... and, you know, it's as though the human mind is so constituted that that is what must happen. Otherwise [237] it's like trying to have, you know, one side of the coin without the other. So long as mind is there, some object is there, the universe is there. If you want to get to the end of the world - as he told one of his disciples - you must stop the mind; that is to say, the conditioned mind, the empirical mind; then you get into a sphere of pure or perfect knowledge, where there is no space, no time, no subject, no object. That's the end of existence, that is, conditioned existence. And there, there is no beginning just as there's no end either.

Anyway, let's go straight on: page 114, second paragraph.

"Buddhism is a religion and leaves many topics of metaphysics unsolved ... Buddhism is dogmatic and assumes many propositions without revealing their dialectical processes ... and the intellect ... has to try her best to put them together in a coherent system."

S: Funny we make the intellect feminine. I wonder why? Hm? Anyway, maybe it doesn't matter. Right. Carry straight on.

"The solution, then, by Buddhism ... cannot be said to be very logical ... but practically it serves all required purposes and is conducive to religious discipline. By this I mean the Buddhist theory of Nescience or ignorance (avidya)."

S: Right. Let's go on to that then.

"Theory of Ignorance. The theory of nescience ... is an attempt ... to solve the relation between absolute suchness, between dharmakaya and Sarvasattva, ..."

S: All-being.

"... between wisdom (bodhi) and sin (klesa), between Nirvana and Samsara."

S: I think this statement, taken literally, can be doubted: that the theory of ignorance is intended to solve the relation between the one and the many, etc. I think it is very doubtful. Certainly it doesn't apply to the Hinayana.

"But Buddhism does not give us any systematic exposition of the doctrine. What it says is ... dogmatic. 'This universe is really the Dharmadhatu ... emptiness ... But, because of nescience, there are ... five skandha ... twelve nidana ... Everything ... subject to ... birth and death exists only because of ignorance and karma."

S: I think Suzuki here tends again to reify comments. There is a difference, say, between our conditioned knowledge, our knowledge of relative things, and perfect knowledge, absolute knowledge. So you could say, metaphorically, [238] that there is a veil between us and perfect knowledge or absolute truth. Or you can say that there is a veil of ignorance between us. But then you must be careful not to start invoking ignorance as a sort of principle of explanation. Hm? Strictly speaking, classical Buddhism will, as it were, be quite content to say, well, there is this level of knowledge and there is that - this is relative, that is absolute, and you must ascend from this to that. But Suzuki, quoting *The Awakening of Faith*, brings in the principle of avidya, ignorance, saying it's all due to ignorance, ignorance creates this distinction, and ignorance, therefore, has to be overcome. But this is just a way of putting it, and meanwhile you are sort of almost dangerously personalizing, or at least reifying, that particular concept of ignorance. You aren't really explaining when you put things in this way. Do you see the difference? (sounds of agreement) Yes? But a lot of even scientific explanation is of this kind, yes? Even in psychology, you know, you get people, despite, you know, Jung's warnings, talking about, you know, anima and animus and archetypes as though they actually ex-

isted and were sort of archetypes - almost sort of gods - sort of behind the scenes of your psychic life sort of pulling strings; whereas, I mean, Jung has guarded against this misunderstanding most carefully, but people insist on reifying them. (pause) All right.

"Such statements as these are found almost everywhere in Buddhist literature ... but why ... ignorance came ... in ... Suchness ... we are at a loss to find ... an answer."

S: The sutras quite wisely don't give any such answer. They don't raise any such question. (pause) So many explanations are pseudo-explanations, hmm? For instance, you [might] say why does a flower grow? What makes it grow? Huh? And the answer is it is activated by a principle of growth, hmm? This is not an explanation; you're merely stating the same thing in a more inflated way and treating it as a principle of explanation. And this is happening all the time. I mean, why do we have so many thoughts? Because we've got a principle of thought. And so on and so forth, and even in much more complicated ways.

Mamaki: That seems to assume almost a personality, and then people feel they get rid of like this kind of being reproducing itself.

S: Yes, right.

Devamitra: It's kind of like there has to be a sort of starting point in order to explain something from, but something which is absolutely definite. [239]

S: Yes, right. Fact. Just as Buddhism starts with the fact - well, it maintains that it is a fact - that there are different levels of consciousness and different levels of knowledge, and it says that this is within the range of experience: you can actually go from one to the other; but it doesn't bother - not in its classical form - explaining why there are these, and what made them, what differentiated them, and so on.

Ratnapani: I was saying the other day, a book like this, picked up by someone with no real knowledge of Buddhism, will be very misleading, because what hasn't been mentioned is the fact that Shakyamuni Buddha gained Enlightenment, and if you don't start from that, you don't know what you're talking about.

S: Yes, this is true - the historical context. This is what I personally always start with, you know, the Buddha: the Buddha gained Enlightenment; what is Enlightenment, the content of Enlightenment, as far as we can see? And the Dharma is the Buddha's attempt to communicate that and help others to reach the same level of being and knowledge. That is putting it in a nutshell, yes, and all your other - you know, Yogacara, Madhyamika, yes? - you can bring that in later. (pause) All right. Carry on. He really lets himself go a little in this next paragraph. Whoever reads it ought to be good at polysyllables, huh?

"One thing, however, is certain, which is this: ignorance ... creates ... phenomena ... and starts ... metapsychosis ... rolling ... that transforms ... Suchness to ... duality ... and leads many confused minds to egoism with all its pernicious corollaries."

S: Well, it's certainly a vivid statement of the position. (laughter) But it seems in a way unnecessary. Do you see that?

Mamaki: Well he's building it up himself.

S: He's building it up, yes.

Devaraja: It's interesting. I'm reminded that - you talking about this process of reification - in Hui Neng's sutra he talks about something like you're allowing the sutra to turn you around, rather than you turning the sutra around. It seems that, with this constant process of reification, it's almost like the ignorance is turning him around rather than him sort of repossessing it, almost ... ignorance ...

S: Turned the contents, which are used, and which have to be used, and not being used, they're using you, and, you know, gaining, in that process, as it were, an independent life of their own [240] and of course you are behind them; you were doing it. I mean, it's really, you know, like having this little puppet show for your own benefit, with your own fingers behind the figures, and then you start moving them about, and then you think they are moving of their own accord, you know, when your arm goes numb and you forget it's your arm and the fingers continue moving, and you just watch this, fascinated, and you think it's all happening out there, but you, in fact, are doing it. Of course again I must say that, you know, it's all right to laugh at Dr Suzuki, but we do it all the time. We have therefore, you know, to keep constant watch and make sure that we don't do it when someone asks us a question about Buddhism: we don't just reify a concept and, you know, set it working and, you know, treat that as an explanation or an answer to the question.

Nagabodhi: It's an easy way out.

S: Right. On we go.

"Perhaps, the best way to attack the problem of ignorance is to understand ... Buddhism is ... idealistic ... and that psychologically ... should Suchness be conceived, and ... that nescience is inherent in Suchness ... only hypothetically ... and not really in any sense."

S: Well what does that mean? (laughter, babble of chatter) "Inherent in Suchness, though only hypothetically, illusively, apparently and not really in any sense." I think we'd better leave that. I think he's getting into difficulties.

"According to Brahmanism, there was in the beginning only one being; and this being willed to be two; ... In Buddhism ... ignorance ... potentially ... existed in ... Suchness; and when Suchness ... affirmed itself, it did so by negating itself ... by permitting itself to

be conditioned by the principle of ignorance or individuation." (Half way down the paragraph)

S: I think there's some trace of Hegelianism here.

"The later ... is no more than an illusion ... (Down to end of paragraph) ... we come to realize the illusiveness of all evils."

S: I'm afraid we are still continuing to be in difficulties because suchness is being treated as a sort of cosmic, not to say, creative, principle. So let's just go straight on.

"To return to the subject: .the unfolding of consciousness implies the separation of subject and object, mind and matter." [241]

S: Carry straight on.

"The eternal abyss of Suchness, so called, is the point where subjectivity are merged ... a state of transcendental consciousness, where ... conceptual images vanish ... consciousness ... disappears ... but ... we do not have ... a state of ... nothingness ... Bodhi ... is the term for the spiritual power that brings about this enlightenment." (p.120)

S: This is very good. One can say this is very clear. Here Suzuki is considering, as it were, suchness in the sense of the perfect knowledge, the ultimate principle, without any sort of cosmological or creator considerations. He is seeing it and describing it just as it is in him in itself, and here, of course, he as it were comes into his own; here he is really good, and very clear, and, you know, one feels there isn't any of this dichotomy of intellect and emotion any more; he's somehow brought the two together in this passage. There is no sort of tension of that kind, so he does achieve a very fine statement.

Mangala: Is it true to say, though, that "in the field of our mental activities there is an abyss where consciousness sometimes suddenly disappears"? He refers to this as being "a state of absolute unconsciousness".

S: Ah, yes. He is rather fond of this term 'unconscious', but my own feeling is that it is 'non-conscious' rather than 'unconscious'; it's unconscious in the sense that there is no consciousness, i.e. subject-object distinction on which, you know, normal consciousness depends; but there is consciousness itself, you know, with no subject, with no object. But his terminology is a little misleading, you know, sometimes.

Mangala: And he also goes on to say, "this region beyond the threshold of awareness", you know, which ...

Voice: We haven't really got a proper term for that.

S: We don't have, no. Jung speaks of the unconscious, doesn't he? But it's quite clear from what he actually says that it is not unconscious as it were in itself, but merely that

the ordinary waking consciousness is not conscious of it, but, as it were in itself, it is lit up with consciousness, hmm? I sometimes use a comparison of the underground cavern: that there's a vast underground cavern, brilliantly lit up within, but there is no entry into it, everything is closed, so you see nothing whatever, so you are separate in your own little room but you are not able to look out of your room into that underground chamber. So you, within that little room, have no sort of outlet into that underground chamber, and you're not conscious of it, so you [242] could say, well, it's unconscious, but within itself it is brilliantly lit up, but you can't see that it is brilliantly lit up until you open a passage from your little room into that underground chamber. Then the light which is in the little room will as it were merge with the light in the underground chamber, but, meanwhile, it's as though there's no light because there is no aperture, no corridor or anything of that sort. So you speak of it from the standpoint of your position in your room outside as not lit up, as dark, as unconscious, hmm? (pause)

"When the mind emerges from this state of sameness, consciousness spontaneously comes back as it vanished before ..."

S: Subject-object consciousness.

"... retaining the memory of the experience ... The transition ... is like a flash of lightning ... (The) awakening of subjectivity ... marks the start of ignorance ... Therefore ... ignorance must be considered synonymous with the awakening of consciousness in a sentient being."

S: In other words, ignorance is, as it were, relative knowledge. Relative knowledge is based on the subject-object duality, huh? So where there is subject-object duality there is only relative knowledge, there is not absolute knowledge, there is not perfect knowledge. In that sense, there is ignorance, but one must beware of treating ignorance as Suzuki tends to, as a sort of thing in itself, in its own right, and as a sort of creative principle. Actually, the position is quite simple and quite clear. (unclear) going to get baffled again. (laughter)

"Here we have the most mysterious fact ... which is: How ... has ignorance ... ever been awakened ... ? ... we shall vainly hope to awaken in him the said impression with the same degree of intensity and realness."

S: Just go straight on.

"It is for this reason that ... Mahayanists declare that the rising of consciousness ... is felt only by Buddhas ... The why of ignorance nobody can explain as much as the why of Suchness."

S: Any more than the why of suchness.

"But when we personally experience this ... we feel no more need of ... doubt about how or why ... This religious experience is the most unique phenomenon in the life of a sentient being."

S: All right. Let's go straight on to the last section of the chapter which is [243] "Dualism and Moral Evil". (p.122)

"As we cannot think ... (down to) ... even one with Suchness."

"We must, however remember that ... the separation of subject and object ... is nothing but a realization of the cosmic mind. (dharmakaya)."

S: That's going rather too far from a Mahayana point of view. Anyway, let's just go on.

"As such, ignorance performs an essential function in the evolution of the world-totality."

S: Very dubious. This seems to be popularized Hegelianism.

"Ignorance is inherent in Buddhas as well as in all sentient beings."

S: Hmm. Don't agree with that.

"Every one of us cannot help perceiving an external world ... for it is not our fault, but that of the cosmic soul from which and in which we have our being."

S: Hmm. This whole cosmic soul idea again is very dubious.

Mangala: It's as if he's saying like, you know, we cannot help perceiving the external world as if there's something wrong with it.

S: Yes. Even though he's said that there isn't anything wrong with it - you know, the external world being there to begin with - he doesn't seem quite happy about the situation, somehow. All right, let's go on.

"Ignorance has produced everywhere a state of relativity ... Birth is ... linked with death ... Buddha with Devadatta, ..."

S: Poor Devadatta. It should be Mara! (laughs)

"... etc, etc, ad infinitum. These are necessary conditions of existence ... their abolition ... means absolute nothingness ... an impossibility as long as we exist."

S: Of course if you regard the world as somehow lapsed from the absolute, then you must regard it as a sort of fall, and therefore in a sense evil, hmm? By virtue of the mere fact that it does not represent some sort of lapse, some sort of degeneration, however you try to justify it, it's almost as though he's saying, well, there's nothing wrong with ig-

norance, nothing wrong with the world, because it is through ignorance that we get back to the absolute! But then you say that that is the purpose of ignorance, so it's all right. But it was ignorance that brought about the fall in the first place! So it all becomes just very self contradictory and confused, hmm? [244]

Mamaki: It's kind of all going on in the head, anyway.

S: Yes. So it's best just to stick with the very strict limited original Buddhist statement, about the world process and there not being any causal nexus that we can perceive, however far back we go, between the world process and the absolute. These are sort of dimensions - to use the term - which the finite mind cannot simultaneously perceive, and therefore which it cannot embrace in a sort of intellectual synthesis in this sort of way.

Devaraja: He seems to exhibit a lot of the problems, and I think a lot of the difficulties, that Christian teachers find in teaching Christianity, that is, this confusion between the spiritually true and the materially true, and the whole thing sort of bound up into a kind of mish-mash, and there's no clear separation.

S: Hmm, yes. Theravada Buddhism, though a bit sort of limited in some ways, is very clear on these sorts of points, and won't go a step beyond, you know, what the sutras say. And that seems, on the whole, the best; you know, you can embroider the practices as much as you like, but the basic principles must be very clear and very sort of clean, as it were. All right. Let's go straight on.

"The work of ignorance in the world ... is quite innocent ... Those who speak of the curse of existence ... are considered by Buddhists to be unable to understand the significance of ignorance."

S: All right. Straight on.

"Is there no fault to be found with ignorance? ... When we are ignorant of ignorance."

S: Hmm, he's really getting into difficulties here! He might just as well say there's nothing wrong with defilement; it's only when we are defiled by it that (drowned by laughter). But this is all, you know, quite unnecessary, I would say. But anyway, let's read it and take it as a warning to ourselves at least.

"It is wrong to cling to the dualism of subject and object as final and act accordingly ... Egoism is the most fundamental of all evils and errors. When we speak of ignorance of hindering the light of intelligence ... we understand the term ... as confused subjectivity ... Its ... actualization in our ... life is altogether unwarranted and brings on us a series of dire calamities." [245]

S: In other words, it's all right to be ignorant, but you mustn't act ignorant. The problem is, if you are ignorant, well I think you usually will act ignorant! Anyway, let's leave it there for today.

Mamaki: (unclear) with his own mind, there, isn't he?

S: Hm?

Mamaki: He's completely turned himself...

S: It does rather seem like that, yes. I'm a little surprised actually.

Vajradaka: What does nexus mean? Causal nexus?

S: A link. A link. As in 'connection', 'linking together'. We are getting on quite well, although we are one chapter behind, actually, if we are to finish the whole text in ten days. I hope we can do a double chapter quite soon, two big chapters in one day. That means we shall be able to finish the whole thing in ten days, which is very good. We will have covered quite a good amount of ground. Even though we aren't able to agree with everything, it's still very instructive.

Nagabodhi: The chapters are getting longer, I think, as we ... (amusement)

Mamaki: Perhaps we'd better get in our double one soon!

Nagabodhi: Yes!

S: We've got through 124 pages in four days. That's pretty good going.

Sudatta: Although one can't find any beginning to ignorance, it seems sort of primordial, almost a primordial principle. Is it at all useful to think of it in terms of the whole Darwinian system of evolution - assuming that this is the case - could not have taken place without the principle of ignorance, because we've got survival of the species, selective mortality; without the principle of ignorance we couldn't have evolved, so that ...

S: Well, you can say principle of ignorance, or you can just describe the process of evolution. You don't have to bring in a principle of ignorance as a principle of explanation. Darwin didn't find it necessary! And you can say that, I mean, you can go back and back in the evolutionary process - Darwin only covered the biological part of that process - you go back and back. But Buddhism simply says that however far back you go, you won't come to an absolute first beginning - you just go back and back indefinitely. So you can say that that is due to a principle of ignorance if you like. In [246] that case, it means however far back you go you find the principle of ignorance because your own conditioned mind is still there, hmm? So how can there not be a principle of ignorance?

Nagabodhi: You don't find ...

S: It's the absolute first beginning, hmm, that Buddhism refuses to admit, or which it says is imperceptible by the perceiving consciousness.

Vajradaka: It actually says that?

S: Yes. In the Pali canon. [e.g. Samyutta-Nikaya ii.178, tr.]

Mangala: Like, in fact, for there to be a principle of ignorance it would have to be transcendental itself, really, wouldn't it? You know, to exist as such, because, I mean ...

S: Well, that is Christianity. God himself is this transcendental principle of ignorance who creates the world, hmm? And we know what difficulties, you know, Christian theology gets into with that. But, I mean, here are we with Buddhism, sort of clearly out of it all, but Suzuki, you know, seems to be sort of bringing it all back in. Admittedly some Mahayana sutras, even, are a bit incautious in some of their statements and have to be sort of carefully interpreted in the light of the total Buddhist tradition. Some Mahayana thinkers - and even people who compiled sutras - seem to have rather let themselves go; but the earlier literature is much more sober and much more clear.

Lokamitra: Was Suzuki always a Buddhist? He wasn't brought up as a Christian, first of all?

S: To the best of my knowledge, he was always a Buddhist, but I can't absolutely swear to it. I learned, for instance, only recently, that Zengo was by birth a Christian.

Voice: Really?

S: Yes.

Sulocana: Suzuki married an American lady, whom might have been a Christian.

S: She might have been originally, but he married her quite late in life and she did at least become a Buddhist. I think he had at university a rather strong diet of slightly de-based Hegelian phraseology. I do know that Hegel was quite current in Japanese universities at the end of the last century; he probably just caught that, a lot of the phraseology. [247] All right, Chapter 6, "Tathagatagarbha and the Alaya-vijana".

"Suchness (Bhutatathata), the ultimate principle of existence, is know by ... many different names ... The Tathagatagarbha ... is(the) ... aspect of Suchness that I here propose to consider at some length."

S: All right. Straight on.

"The Tathagatagarbha and Ignorance. Tathagatagarbha literally means ... treasure or store ... from which issues forth the multitudinousness of things, mental as well as physical."

S: This gives a slightly cosmological touch to the Tathagatagarbha. Right, carry straight on.

"The Tathagatagarbha, therefore, may be explained ontologically as a state of Suchness quickened by Ignorance and ready to be realized in the world of particulars, ..."

S: This is, of course, a bit contradictory: that suchness has to be quickened by ignorance in order to realize itself. Again, Suzuki is getting himself a bit involved in cosmological speculation.

I think I had better stop at this point and just say, very briefly, why there is this Tathagatagarbha doctrine at all, and what it really represents. In a way, we may say, the Tathagatagarbha teaching isn't necessary; well, the doctrine isn't necessary: it's a speculative philosophical presentation of a quite straightforward spiritual fact. The spiritual fact is that if you make an effort, you can become Enlightened, yes? Right? Yes? That's all that it's really about. So you can therefore say that since, if you make an effort, you can become Enlightened, even when you're not Enlightened you are potentially Enlightened, hmm? Right? You can then go a step forward and say that that potentiality is in you, right? You can go a step forward then, and reify that concept of potentiality and say that there is something in you which is Enlightenment, though not yet realized, [it's] covered up. That is the Tathagatagarbha, hmm? Yes?

Devaraja: Is it false to do that? I mean, is it a false kind of logic to do that? Or ...

S: In a way, it is. If it is in a manner of speaking for presentation, it's OK that, yes, you are potentially Enlightened, etc, etc, but it isn't really necessary and the Buddha didn't do it. As far as we know from the texts, the early Pali texts, the Buddha never said, 'You are really enlightened, you are all Buddhas, you've only got to uncover, take off the veil,' hmm? [248] He said make the effort and you can reach Nirvana. That's just the straightforward, common-sense way of putting it, hmm? But to speak in terms of 'you are potentially Buddhas', and then a potentiality, as an actually existent thing, yes? This is sort of, again, reification of concepts, hmm? So very often what the Mahayana does - certainly Mahayana philosophy - is simply to reify concepts in this way, play about with them a bit. No doubt this does make things intelligible with a certain class of people, perhaps more intellectually inclined, but we have to be very careful, one, that it doesn't become an end in itself, and two, it doesn't confuse the issue to such an extent that we forget what we actually have to do. Do you see this? Yes? So let's bear that in mind, or otherwise, you know, Suzuki's just going round and round unnecessarily, almost.

Devaraja: By reifying it, it almost divorces the Buddhahood from our empirical self.

S: Right. Yes.

Devaraja: And it almost sort of divorces, it breaks down, the relationship between ourselves and that.

S: Yes, yes, because you are so concerned with that abstract potentiality. It can be a bit misleading. And of course a lot of Zen literature - much of it inspired by Suzuki - has taken over these things, and this idea of 'you are Buddha, it's all there, it's all inside you, you already are that, just wake up to the fact', in a sense it is true, from a highly metaphysical point of view, but then it isn't very helpful in terms of practice, and it can be misleading. It's much better to say, 'Well, look. There is a state of enlightenment we haven't yet reached, but if we make the effort we can reach it.'

Nagabodhi: Other people interpret the story about polishing a tile as being an excuse for saying, 'Well, you're not meant to sit; you're not meant to do a lot of practice sitting', you know? they take that as part of the story. [This is a reference to a story in Suzuki's 'Zen Mind, Beginner's Mind' (p.80). The 'punchline' is: student, 'How is it possible to make a jewel by polishing a tile?' Zen master: 'How is it possible to become a Buddha by practising zazen?', tr.]

S: It's really very dangerous when you popularize metaphysics in that sort of way. Of course, it is true that outside time and outside space you are that, you are Buddha; that's completely valid doctrine, but the point is, to what extent is it a useful thing to say to the average beginner, hmm?

Mamaki: I wonder whether it's come about because it's opposed to the Christian idea - at any rate the Christian idea that I've heard a lot of - where you can't do anything about developing spiritually; something from outside has to come in to you and do it. [249] Or you've only got to realize it.

S: But then if you present Buddhist teaching in that way, it amounts almost to the same thing: that your own personal effort is stultified, because if you are already that, and you don't have to do anything, well then you might just as well start with that from the beginning, and say, well, look, whatever you are, you are now, or may be now, you can grow, you can develop. I know sometimes people do say - for instance, the Vedanta was preached in this way by Swami Vivekananda - he used to say that Christianity says you are all sinners, but Vedanta says that you are all divine, you are all God. Well, this might have been all right in the very early days, you know, when people were deeply imbued with a sense of sinfulness - it was good to tell them they were something divine - but that can be so easily misunderstood. So it's best that, if they need encouragement, and if we need to counteract this negative view of human nature, to do it almost in a more psychological way and say that even though you are not a sinner, there are good positive sides of you which can be developed and you can grow and you can progress towards Enlightenment. But not say 'you are Buddha', because that can only be a concept to them; it can't be anything more than that. (pause) And I think certainly popularized Zen has taken over a lot of this sort of language and therefore created a very great deal of confusion, yes?

Lokamitra: The idea of the seed of the lotus seems a much better - there's something there that has to be, has to ...

S: Right. This is quite valid again, yes, if you just speak in terms of a seed, but that is, you know, just both stopping at the stage of potentiality, hmm? As I said, stage one is, as it were, you say, 'You are not Enlightened but you can become Enlightened if you made the effort.' Stage two is 'You have a potentiality for Enlightenment, a seed.' Well, that's OK, even that, you know, can't be much misunderstood. But then you reify that concept of potentiality and that is dangerous. So this is really what Tathagatagarbha doctrine is mainly all about. So then, let's get on, bearing that in mind, and maybe then we don't need to, you know, to go into much in detail.

"That is, when it is about to transform itself to the duality of subject and object ... it is the transcendental soul of man just coming under the bondage of the law of karmic causation."

S: It seems to me that as Buddhism comes to England we shall be sort of pruning its metaphysical exuberance, you know, which is, in a way, what the Chinese did too. [250] They weren't so metaphysically exuberant or as speculatively wild as the Indians were. We've got the whole sort of heritage, the whole sort of tradition, and it seems to me that, you know, we'll just have to cut things down to a plainer and more common-sense form, bearing in mind, to some extent, the model of the Pali scriptures, especially the archaic Buddhist teaching, which preceded even the Hinayana.

Right, on we go, then.

"Though pure and free in its nature as the expression of Suchness in man, the transcendental soul ... is now influenced by the principle of birth and death and subjects itself to organic determinations."

S: You see, having reified the concept, he now sort of sets it moving. Do you see this?

"As it is, it is yet devoid of differentiation ... (to end of paragraph), the Garbha is always in association with passions and desires that are of ignorance."

S: I don't know why 'hypothetically'.

Nagabodhi: It sounds pedantic, I think. You know this idea of groaning under the bonds of ...

S: I don't think you even need really direct influence of Vedanta, but when you start speaking of the Absolute - you know, to use a neutral term - as it were, cosmologically, as invoking it as a principle of cosmic explanation, you are automatically landed up with all this sort of language, whether it's within Buddhism or Hinduism or Christian theology.

"We read in the Srimala-sutra ... (to end of paragraph) ... it is in this capacity that the Garbha is called Alaya-vijāna."

S: It just occurs to me that perhaps one of the reasons why Suzuki became so interested in Zen, or so involved with Zen, in later life is that Zen presented itself to him as a means of getting beyond the intellect, and that he'd involved himself so much in sort of intellectual confusion that he wanted, you know, rather desperately, to cut it all, as it were, with one stroke, and he therefore invoked Zen. But it wasn't really a getting beyond the intellect; it was only a sort of desperate cutting through intellectual confusion which need not have arisen, yes? What one needed was not so much Zen - I mean, Zen's cutting through of the intellect would come, I would say, at a much more advanced stage - but just a return to common sense and a more straight-forward approach; even, sort of, you know, tentatively, a psychological approach, you know, more than a metaphysical one, hmm? So we find, I think, in some of his works on Zen, as [251] far as I remember, a lot of this sort of intellectual verbiage - as it is, you know, very often - suddenly cut through, you know, with a few Zen stories, and this tends to be presented as a sort of getting beyond the intellect. But it isn't, huh? It's just a rather violent cutting through mental confusion, or sudden jettisoning of the mental confusion, but I don't think it really solves the question. You're solving bad metaphysics with, well, a sort of reaction to a sort of 'Alice in Wonderland' irrationality, hmm? This is what tends to happen, and it's a rather terrible verdict, but I do feel this with Suzuki. Do you see what I mean? And I'm afraid you find the same thing to some extent - though more restrained - with Christmas Humphreys in his books on, you know, Buddhism and Zen; you do get this sort of mental confusion suddenly put an end to with a flippant Zen story, hmm? And this is presented as, you know, an example of the difficulties the intellect, per se, gets itself into; and then Zen as transcending those dichotomies. But they're not real dichotomies, not real intellectual koans, just mental confusions that should never have been allowed to arise, and they're certainly not inherent in the intellect itself: that sort of antimony is of a quite different order and is arrived at by true thinkers, not by people who are just mentally confused or just playing around with reified concepts, hmm? If you want to see how a real thinker works out his antimonies, then you must go to Kant ... (break in recording) ... in which we perceive things, not a thing in itself, yes? The thing in itself, he says, you cannot know. That's another aspect of his philosophy. (pause) So there is a difference between really coming to the frontiers of the intellect and merely confusing yourself by thinking badly, yes? And when you've thought so badly you can't even sort it all out, you just invoke some of these funny little Zen stories to just get you out of it all and consider that as a transcending of the intellect, when all you need is a strong dose of common sense. (laughs) It seems really ridiculous, hmm? You are going to be throwing all sorts of books out of your bookshelf, I think. (laughs)

Mamaki: (unclear) books get together.

Devamitra: Something just occurred to me after what you've just said, and that was [that] in order to transcend one's own intellect, presumably one doesn't have to be as gifted a thinker as Nagarjuna?

S: Well, it's your own intellect you've got to transcend, not Nagarjuna's. (laughter)

Devamitra: I mean, one doesn't have to be sort of penetrating - he obviously had a particularly gifted talent, as far as thinking was concerned - one doesn't have to [252] develop one's ability to that extent in order ...

S: Well one just has to develop one's own ability to think, and, I mean, it's all on the same level but there's just a degree of refinement is different, and you can transcend your degree of refinement without having to develop Nagarjuna's degree of refinement before you can transcend it.

Devamitra: Ah, yes. That's just what I wanted to know.

S: It's only a degree of refinement - and extra complication - really. But, you know, just suddenly jettisoning your own intellectual muddle in an impatient sort of way: that is not transcending the intellect. It did occur to me just now that, in a way, you're safer with a list of formulae, yes? Do you see this? A list of doctrinal terms with no argument or discussion at all. You just consider them, hmm? This has its advantages. The mere fact that it's a bit sort of dry means that you have no chance of getting into an intellectual muddle - or mental muddle; there's no such thing as an intellectual muddle. Anyway, let's carry on and just sort of observe what is happening.

"As we have seen, the Alaya-vijāna ... is a ... expression ... of the ... Garbha ... It is this 'psychic germ' ... which works on the Alaya through the six senses (vijāna)."

"Mahayanism is essentially idealistic ... (to end of paragraph) ... the innate and intrinsic goodness of the Alaya and the Garbha."

S: Do they? (pause)

Voice: No.

Voice: I don't know.

Vajradaka: They're neutral in the storehouse consciousness.

S: They're neutral, yes. A storehouse - I mean, looking at it in terms of the alaya - contains or conserves the seed of, you know, both good and evil, or pure and impure seeds, in Buddhist terms. But the alaya itself is neither, so one can't really speak of the "innate and intrinsic goodness of the Alaya", the garbha, or nirvana, or enlightenment, "innate and intrinsically", they go beyond, you know, the distinction. Of course, for practical purposes, we think of them, certainly, as good, as positive; as, say, spiritual as opposed to non-spiritual; but ultimately - and he does say "innate and intrinsic" - that distinction is transcended. So he's a bit careless with his language.

"Says Asvaghosa in his Awakening of Faith ... (To end of paragraph) ... Arise a-dancing, a-rolling." [253]

S: Carry straight on. (p.130)

"But all the psychical activities ... (to end of paragraph) ... the Lankavatara Sutra."

"The saline crystal and its red-bluishness, (to end of paragraph) ... The five Vijanas are the differentiating senses."

S: You can see that, in a broader perspective, the alaya-vijana, sort of ontologically interpreted, becomes a sort of principle of cosmic explanation, and then you get this well-known simile, you know, of the alaya being a sort of great ocean with the wind of ignorance coming along and stirring up all sorts of waves, and these waves are the individual mentations, and so on and so forth. This doesn't really explain anything; it's probably much easier and much simpler just to think in terms of original Buddhism: that here we are, you know, with our present limited mental life and our present conditioned feelings, but we can develop, we can grow, into a higher and a wider dimension, even into something which we call Enlightenment. But to talk about that as a potentiality for enlightenment, and then about enlightenment as actually existing, or alaya actually existing, and then of that alaya as having transformed itself into what we are now and then how did all that happen - this just seems really unnecessary; it doesn't really seem very helpful, not if you look at it cosmologically, though there is, of course, a part of this whole alaya-vijana teaching which is helpful: when it just discriminates the different kinds of consciousness and so on, when it sort of stratifies them; this is more helpful, hmm? But not so much the ontological and the cosmological side. But anyway, we come now more into the psychology, as it were; this may be more helpful.

"The Manas. The Alaya-vijana ... (To end of paragraph) ... marks the dawn of consciousness in the universe."

"The Manas, deriving it's reason of consciousness from the Citta or Alaya, reflects on it as well as on an external world, and becomes conscious of the distinction between me and not-me."

S: In other words, the manas is the empirical consciousness, the ordinary, as it were, me.

"But since this not-I ... is nothing but an unfolding of the Alaya ... the Alaya ... in a sense ... the Kantian 'ego of transcendental appreciation',

S: Suzuki seems rather fond of these comparisons with Western philosophy. [254]

"... while the Manas is the actual centre of self-consciousness. But the Manas and the Alaya are not two different things in the sense that one emanates from the other or that one is created by the other."

S: He has certainly given that impression, though.

"It is better to understand the Manas as a state or condition of the citta in its evolution."

S: Well perhaps it's best of all just to say, well, here am I with a mind of this sort which is working in this way, (laughter) and just leave it at that hmm? I mean, it seems as though Suzuki, in a way, really did need Zen. All right. Carry on.

"Now the Manas is not only contemplative, but capable of volition ... (To end of paragraph) ... all the modes of mentation come into play with the awakening of the Manas."

Vajradaka: What does 'mentation' mean?

S: Mental activity.

Nagabodhi: He says "the absolute identity of suchness is here forever departed", which seems to be denying the possibility of Enlightenment.

S: I think he just uses 'forever' very loosely, hmm? I mean, 'so long as ignorance persists', or 'as long as the samsara continues', hmm? But he is very loose.

"According to Asvaghosa ... (To end of paragraph) ... (p.134) ... according to circumstances."

S: This seems quite clear and straightforward. Any question on this?

Sulocana: 'The motility' ... I'm not quite sure?

S: Yes, that is a bit, er, vaguer. 'Motility' really means 'capacity for movement', but he's using it in a very special sense: the movement of the will. First of all he enumerates (1) motility, (2) the power to perceive, and then he sort of paraphrases himself: "Through the exercise of these five functions, the Manas is able to create according to its will,"; that corresponds to motility. So motility, here, seems to be volitional activity, the activity of the will, which, of course, is what creates karma. And then, after that: "to be a perceiving subject", you know, to perceive things, to take in perceptions, 'to respond to the stimuli of an external world', that is, to be a living thing, not just a dead thing, something that does respond, 'to deliver judgements over what it likes, what it dislikes': value judgements, as they are called: this is good and this is bad, to express preference, and finally: 'to retain all its own karma seeds in the past and [255] to mature them for the future, according to circumstances". In other words, to be subject to a sort of conditioning, either good or bad, negative or positive. So these do seem to be quite real characteristics of the manas, hmm?

Nagabodhi: In his language, maybe, he seems to be setting up a bit of an atman, because he's saying "with the Manas there arise" these, as if the manas is distinct from them.

S: Yes, yes, right, right, yes, this is true. It shows how cautious one has to be when using language. That the manas is the sum total of these, hmm? Yes, exactly the ...

Vajradaka: Would it have been all right to say 'from the manas'?

S: Well, no, not really. It would be better to say, well, there are these five mental activities, the sum total of which we designate the manas, yes? Just [as] in the more orthodox central position you say, there are these five skandhas: in their totality they're referred to as the self; the self is merely a label for the five skandhas, it does not exist as something and unchanging apart from them, hmm?

Devaraja: Yes, he's almost treating the manas like - I think this is the correct term - like gestalt.

S: Yes, right.

Devaraja: He's almost treating the categories not as qualities of the mind but as sort of individual, separate, parts comprising it.

S: I've got a little bit about this in 'Crossing the stream'. Do you remember, when I talked about separating the attributes from the subject, hmm, and the substances from the attributes, and then considering the substance as abstracted from the attributes as a thing in itself, and I say 'this is the primal sin', you know, if you want to use that expression at all. It is this that brought about the fall, as it were, or brings about the fall of man all the time; it's that same thing. I know I've discussed it rather more poetically that, you know, I do in my later years, but it's the same thing. Anyone remember that passage?

Nagabodhi: Isn't it in the 'Three Jewels'?

S: Pardon?

Nagabodhi: Isn't it in the 'Three Jewels'? [256]

S: No, it's in 'Crossing the Stream'. [Crossing the Stream, chapter 19: 'An Old Saw Resharpener', tr.]

Nagabodhi: I know you talk about the colour of the leaf in 'The Three Jewels'.

S: Pardon? Yes, the colour of the leaf. That again is the same sort of thing. (pause) But, of course, bear in mind that it's not only Dr Suzuki; we do it all the time.

Mamaki: Is it common to people generally, or is it something that, say in the West, that we do particularly? Can you ... ?

S: Well no one does it more than the Indian! It isn't just the West, and a lot of people in the West ... it's more educated people who do [it]. People at universities do it terribly! Most of the questions you get when you have an intellectual audience, after you've given a lecture about Buddhism, are of this kind, yes? and are based upon this misunderstanding, nearly all of them. And such people are mentally very active, so you get a plethora of questions of this sort. People who are not sort of - well, someone used the expression 'intellectually debauched' - well, people who are not of that kind; sort of more simple, straightforward people who are accustomed to doing practical things and are certainly highly intelligent but not 'intellectually' - in inverted commas - they never ask questions of this sort, except to the extent that language itself, you know, the intellectuals at university probably just play around with these things in all sorts of fields with regard to all sorts of subjects, whether it's politics, economics, so on and so forth, and you also get it when you go and speak about Buddhism, and unless you know really what is happening you can be very confusing and you can never get sort of caught up in it all and then they'll do their best to tie you in knots. The fact that they're tying themselves in knots, too, or have in fact tied themselves in knots, they don't seem to mind very much, hmm? But you get a great deal of this ding-dong sort of intellectual battle and all that kind of thing. But I don't think it's the West as opposed to the East, for you certainly get it with educated Indians. Not just Western-educated Indians; they're of the traditional type, they're very fond of this sort of discussion, in fact, even in quite sort of traditional circles. The Tibetans never, never, engage in it, even though they are good Mahayana Buddhists: it's quite unthinkable, it's impossible [257] for them, as it were. And the Theravadins don't, on principle, not as regards Buddhism anyway, not the Thais or the Burmese. The Japanese seem to have inherited this medieval Indian peculiarity, because it is not only Suzuki who writes like this: other Japanese Buddhist scholars do too.

Devamitra: It's rather odd that Buddhism went from China to Japan. Sort of presumably it lost a lot of that wild Indian speculation in China and yet re-emerged in Japan.

S: Well it seems to have re-emerged, you know, in more modern times, when some Japanese scholars have received Western education, yes?

Devaraja: So presumably Indian scholars of the medieval period of Indian Buddhism, or that development of Mahayana Buddhism: did they get themselves into this kind of mess?

S: No, I don't think they did, huh? I mean, they're certainly highly intellectual, but they have a certain precision that Suzuki doesn't have. I must say that some of the later sutras are a bit wild, huh? (amusement) Well, look at the Lankavatara. I mean read the verse section of the Lankavatara! Anybody read this? The Sagathakam? Read that! It's very enlightening. You just wonder where on earth it came from! It has been translated by Suzuki. It's right at the end of the Lankavatara. So no one has read straight through

the Lankavatara Sutra, huh? Well, if you start reading the Lankavatara Sutra you'll probably just never get to the last chapter, but when you get the opportunity, just turn to that last chapter, it's the verse chapter, and see what you make of it, and then you'll understand what I mean by a sutra, even being a bit wild. I just don't know how it got there.

Vajradaka: Could you say that all this thing that Suzuki is doing - and that the Indian scholars do and that scholars at lectures do - is abstracting the real situation, the experiential, existential situation, and making it once removed?

S: Yes. Yes. Once or twice removed. But they haven't got their eye on the ball, huh? Hmm? They're not looking at the object. They're making statements about it. They're taking a concept originally derived from experience. They are taking it as something real and investing it with a life of its own - which is often their subjective emotional life which they don't realize - and just playing around with it. And this is really terrible! And this is one of the reasons why, I mean, I personally have quite a distaste for going into these sort of circles, and, you know. And also you get the impression [258] that when they are doing this, there is a tremendous amount of negative emotion around. I don't know whether anyone has any such experience, yes? It's as though there's a real sort of split. I don't get the impression that Suzuki has any negative emotion; in fact, far from it: he seems rather sort of sincere and almost a bit desperate sometimes - but the sort of negative emotion you get: irony, cynicism, sarcasm, all these sort of, you know, feelings of superiority, conceit: you get all this. That is the emotional tone of the whole thing.

Lokamitra: In regard to discussing Buddhism, it's as though they are cutting the ground from underneath their feet. They're not giving themselves to ... they don't really want to give themselves a chance to understand.

S: No, they don't, no! It's become just, you know, a sort of game.

Lokamitra: So it is destructive?

S: Hmm, yes! And this is done, you know, it's done a lot in politics, political discussion, even though, you know, very real issues are very often involved, but political discussion often takes this turn - you know, pub discussion and so on - unless people are very genuine and not of the intellectual type.

Mamaki: Very self-protective, isn't it, because it puts up such a defence against anything new that nothing new or different is ever going to get through that.

S: Right, yes. There's no communication, among other things; they're not really listening to what you have to say.

Sulocana: Isn't this what is taught in schools, mainly that way of thinking?

S: I don't know. I mean, I must say that when I have spoken to sixth formers or fifth formers in schools, intelligence is still there, hmm? Sometimes one or two of the brighter

sixth formers may ask questions of this sort, but on the whole they are intelligent questions, I would say. I don't know whether anyone else has anything to say about this? Yes? Would you say that?

Lokamitra: Related to experience.

S: Yes. A bit more, or very much so. But, I mean, by the time, you know, you get involved with university, it's almost as though intelligence disappears by that time and is replaced by this very sort of pseudo-intellectualism, unless you're into quite practical disciplines. I think people who are in contact [259] with practical, as it were, quantitative disciplines like engineers and physicists; they are much better. It's the people who get into philosophy and literature who seem to be the worst, or the worst affected.

I've noticed, when I've talked to scientists - even, you know, really advanced scientists, as when I spoke at the Cambridge Cavendish Laboratory once - their approach was quite sincere and humble, as though they're confronted with, you know, certain new phenomena and are just trying to ascertain what it's all about, you know, not in the least trying to be clever or anything like that, though they were quite highly qualified people. So in this sense the scientific mind seems much better and more receptive and more serious and more sober, yes? The philosophical-cum-literary dilettante, you know, is really the chief offender. Engineers, too, are quite all right. Even doctors. I mean, the worst of course, are those who study philosophy and comparative religion, very often.

Mangala: Or art!

S: Or art. I mean art from a more theoretical point of view. I mean, artists are sometimes OK.

Devaraja: Yes, it's as if, when you were talking about the sixth formers, the phrase that came to mind was that they still had enquiring minds, which would apply to scientists as well, whereas the other type you are talking about, it's as though they've got a position that they really want to defend.

S: Right. Well, this is what Mamaki meant, I assume, when she used the word defensive, yes? Yes, it is as though they've got positions, whatever that may mean, as though they know, they are the experts, they are the authorities, yes? That's what I meant by sort of conceit.

Lokamitra: They certainly don't want to have to change their ideas.

S: Not that they have any ideas, but they don't want to change them! (laughter)

Ratnapani: Change their conception of (he laughs)

S: But again, I must say, you know, (?unclear) exception, I didn't find this [260] in Glasgow. When I went to the university there, I didn't find that; it seemed a different attitude, different atmosphere. It's not one of the best universities, Glasgow.

Devaraja: What about America?

S: At Yale I didn't, not with my own students, I didn't find it; well, one or two, perhaps, yes, but on the whole, not. They seemed genuinely more inquiring. You seem to get this more at the older universities. I'm sorry to say that Oxford and Cambridge, very often, where they're terribly intellectually effete, really, you know. It seems rather like that.
(sounds of agreement)

Lokamitra: It's almost something stagnant.

S: Hmm, yes. Anyway enough of that. Let's go on. First paragraph on p.134.

"With the advent of the Manas, the evolution of the Citta is complete ... (to end of paragraph) ... authority, unity and permanency."

"As is evident, the Manas is a double-edged sword. It may ... destroy all the misconceptions that arise from a wrong interpretation of the principle of ignorance."

S: This is quite important. "The Manas is a double-edged sword. It may destroy itself by clinging to the error of ego-conception, or it may, by a judicious exercise of its reasoning faculty, destroy all the misconceptions." Hmm? So it's, as he says, a double-edged sword. You can either use your mind or your reason, even soberly, judiciously, to think things out in a common-sense sort of way, or you can let it run loose in a riot of speculation of the type that we've just been talking about, hmm?

"The Manas destroys itself by being overwhelmed by dualism ... making itself a willing prey of an indomitable able egoism religiously and morally."

S: Of course we mustn't take the 'I' and 'the other' as final irreducible realities, but also one mustn't consider them as realities, but also one mustn't consider them as illusions. They are there. They are the data with which one has to work. And even though one is quite willing to go beyond them, for the time being they do represent the framework within which all one's operations take place.

"On the other hand, when it sees an error in the conception of the absolute ... it ... transcends ... particularity and becomes the ... harbinger of eternal Enlightenment."

S: Of course, one can make progress without those sort of quasi-philosophical [261] reflections, just by thinking that you are changing yourself, purifying yourself bit by bit, and so on and so forth. But these explanations may be helpful to some people, but they are certainly not necessary for all.

"Buddhists, therefore, do not see any error or evil in the evolution of the mind ... so long as our Manas keeps aloof from the contamination of false egoism."

S: This is very true, though in a slightly different way from what Suzuki says, that is to say, there's nothing evil about having a conscious individuality, even though it is, you know, not the absolute or the ultimate reality; all that is evil is when you regard this as ultimate and absolute, hmm? But just to accept it as relatively real, as your empirical basis, on which and from which you are working towards something higher: there's nothing wrong with this at all, in fact it is good.

"The greatest error, however ... (to end of paragraph) ... the abuse of the functions of the Manas."

"Though Mahayanism most emphatically denied the existence of a personal ego ... what is most persistently negated by them is not the existence of ego, but it's final, ultimate reality."

S: This is very correct.

"But to discuss this more fully we have a special chapter below devoted to 'atman'."

S: "What is most persistently negated by them is not the existence of ego, but it's final, ultimate reality." Not that 'yourself' does not exist, hmm? Simply, it is not ultimately real. So here also there's a middle way. When he's clear, he's very clear. When he's muddled, he's really muddled. And I must say, in fairness, that as far as I recollect, in his later works he does become clearer and clearer. The best, I think, is the study of the Lankavatara Sutra, but anyway, that's separate. All right, on to the "Samkhya Philosophy and Mahayanism".

"If we draw a comparison between the Samkhya philosophy and Mahayanism, the Alaya-vijāna may be considered a unification of soul (purusa) and nature (prakrti),"

S: I'm not really sure about this, but I think we'll just read it through and not go into it very much.

Vajradaka: Before we do, can you explain what Samkhya is?

S: Yes. Samkhya is one of the six schools of so-called orthodox Hindu philosophy. That is to say, Samkhya yoga, and then there is [262] Nyaya and Vaisheshika, and then there is Purva- and Uttara-Mimamsa - Uttara-Mimamsa is often called Vedanta - these are the satdarshana - the six systems. The Samkhya is probably the most ancient; it's at least partly pre-Buddhistic. And it's a sort of evolutionary philosophy, and it's dualistic: it posits first of all the purusa - purusa literally means male, purusa is pure spirit. Prakrti is nature. So it posits these two, and it maintains that purusa, or pure spirit, does not evolve - it's immutable, impersonal - but due to the proximity of purusa, prakrti evolves. Prakrti is nature and she is made up of the three gunas (of sattva, rajas, and tamas) and prakrti

evolves, as I said, due to the proximity of purusa, and the whole cosmic process is just this evolutionary prakrti - the cosmic process both material and mental. So this is broadly the Samkhya position. It's worked out in great detail and is non-theistic and dualistic, and Suzuki's trying to draw a comparison between the Samkhya philosophy and Mahayanism. The comparison seems a bit shaky to me, so we'll just read it through. It doesn't seem very relevant to go into it all deeply.

"... and the Mano-vijāna a combination of Buddhi (intellect) ... (to end of paragraph) ... what the samkhya splits into two, Mahayanism puts together in one."

S: Just carry straight on.

"So is the parallelism between the Manovijāna and Buddhi and Ahankara."

S: Ahankara literally means the 'I-maker', i.e. egoism. That's both the Samkhya and the Buddhist.

"Buddhi, intellect, is defined as *adhyavasaya*, while Ahankara is interpreted as *abhi-manas*, which is evidently self-consciousness."

S: Literally, it's high mindedness, or pride.

"As to the exact meaning of *adhyavasaya*, there is a divergence of opinion ... But the inner significance of buddhi is clear enough; it indicates the awakening of knowledge ... on the dark recesses of unconsciousness; ..."

S: This is, of course, the buddhi of the Samkhya philosophy and, in fact, in a way, of general Indian philosophy.

Sulocana: Is buddhi here a different word than buddi: the one that left out the 'h'? Or is that just a misprint?

S: It's just a misprint.

"... so the commentators give as the synonyms ... (down to) ... teum and neum, ... "
[263]

S: "Teum and meum", you and me, mine and thine.

"... while in the Samkhya ... (to end of paragraph) ... we have the Buddhist unity."

S: 'Buddhists come out tops again' is my impression. (laughter) Suzuki has a thing about unity. A bit significant. When do you have a thing about unity?

(Chorus of answers)

Voice: When you're split.

S: When you're split, yes, hmm. (laughter) Right, carry on. It's just a bit instructive.

"Another point we have to take notice of ... is the Samkhya ... pluralizes the Soul ... while Buddhism postulates one universal Citta or Alaya."

S: Buddhism's going to really come out on top here again, I think. (laughter)

"According to the followers of Kapila ... there are as many souls as individuals ... whereas Buddhism denies the existence of any individual mind apart from the All-Conserving mind (Alaya) ... The quintessence of the mind is Suchness ... and, becoming specialized, gives rise to individual souls."

S: Go to chapter 7. I had, by the way, a long letter from Manjuvajra this morning, giving quite a bit of news about Truro, and among other things he mentions that they have discontinued their discussion group and they've started up a dream group instead. So I'm just wondering, it did occur to me, whether they weren't going from one extreme to the other, because he suggested that within the discussion group, you know, it got a bit sort of wild and woolly, but it could well, you know, go to the opposite extreme with the dream group.

Lokamitra: Is he really qualified to take a dream group?

S: Well, yes. I don't know what his idea about a dream group is. It may be simply that people talk about their dreams. So I was wondering whether you [to Mamaki] had anything to say about that, whether you might not even like to write to him and give him a few hints - I mean since they are doing it - about pitfalls to avoid, the way in which it might be structured? I'll show you his letter when you come back.

Mamaki: Yes, all right. Actually he did have - not always, but quite a lot of the time - he did have quite an intuitive feel, so I think that if he were to keep his feet on the ground, and kept strictly within a structure, he probably wouldn't go much ...

S: It might be a good if you could write and just outline a structure, or remind him of it (laughter)[264]

Ratnapani: I'm kicking your soul, Bhante. (noises and laughter) I just stole your soul.

S: You can have it! (laughter)

Vajradaka: Thank you!

S: Thanks for nothing! (laughter) Are you all switched on now?

Devamitra: We have been for about two minutes.

S: All right, then. You'll probably have to excise a little bit from your transcription. (laughter) Anyway, Chapter 7: The Theory of Non-atman or Non-Ego.

"If I requested to formulate the ground-principles of ... Mahayanism ... I would suggest ... (1) All is momentary. (2) All is empty. (3) All is without self. (4) All is such as it is."

S: This seems to be his own version of the laksanas. There are three laksanas generally in Buddhism, in Mahayana sometimes four, but I take it everybody knows what these three laksanas or three characteristics are? This is basic Buddhist teaching.

Ratnapani: No, I can't... No.

S: Oh, well, everybody should.

Sulocana: Suffering.

Vajradaka: First noble truth.

S: Suffering, huh?

Devamitra: Non-atma. (babble)

S: Fair enough. Impermanence and condition ... no atma: no permanent, unchanging separate self.

Devaraja: What does laksana actually mean?

S: Laksana means literally a characteristic, a sign. So these are the three signs of conditioned existence. When you see these things present, then you know that you are dealing with conditioned existence, not unconditioned existence. And the fourth one in the Mahayana is 'nirvana is the true peace' or 'the only peace'. But he has drawn up his own list now. 'All is momentary' which replaces 'all is impermanent'. There is a difference between momentary, in this, and impermanence. The early Buddhists were [265] quite satisfied [with] saying 'everything is impermanent', but some later Buddhist philosophers developed that into a doctrine of momentariness: that each dharma, each of the basic elements of existence, lasted only for one single moment, and they developed a whole doctrine of momentariness, and so they got themselves, you know, rather tied up into knots over this. It's probably just better to stick with 'impermanence' and not try to specialize it in this way, hmm? 'All is empty' and 'all is without self' seem to overlap a bit, hmm? And 'all is such as it is' seems to correspond to 'nirvana is the only calm'. This is the more, you know, sort of transcendental aspect. But anyway, it's a fair enough summary, as he says, of the "ground-principles of the philosophy of Mahayana". All right, let's carry on.

"These four tenets ... the various schools of Buddhism ... all concur at least on these four principle propositions."

S: You notice he's gone from Mahayana Buddhism to Buddhism, huh? The Theravadins certainly wouldn't [say] 'all is such as it is'. They might even not accept 'all is momentary'; they might insist on just sticking with 'impermanence' and not going into the doctrine of momentariness. Again, he's not being quite careful in his terminology.

"Of these four propositions, the first, second and fourth have been elucidated ... If the existence of a relative world is the work of ignorance ... it must be considered illusory and empty: ..."

S: It doesn't have to be considered illusory because it is relative. That is an overstatement. It's just relative.

Vajradaka: ... annihilated all his previous statements about ...

S: It's just relative.

"... though it does not necessarily follow that on this account our life is not worth living."

S: Well, it doesn't follow because our life is relatively real, but it would follow if our life was completely illusory, huh?

"We must not confuse the moral value of existence with the ontological problem of its phenomenality."

S: That's true, but that's exactly what he has done, at least as regards language.

"It all depends on our subjective attitude ... When the illusiveness or phenomenality of individual existence is granted ... " [266]

S: Illusiveness is not phenomenality. Phenomenality is relatively real. Illusiveness is quite another matter. I must say, even in the Indian Buddhist texts, you do get some confusion of this sort, because you could say that as is the illusive to the relatively real, so is the relatively real to the absolutely real. You could say that, but it would be quite dangerous just to speak of the relatively real as illusory without very clearly indicating - only from the standpoint of absolute truth - but then it's hardly worth making that statement, and psychologically it might undermine someone's sense of reality, i.e. relative reality, empirical reality, and that wouldn't be, you know, worthwhile at all. And sometimes people confronting Buddhism for the first time, and believing they are being told 'everything's unreal, everything's an illusion', will rightly wonder, well, you know, what is expected of us? What happens to the path? And so on and so forth. So it may well be true - well, it is true - that as the illusory is to the relative, so is the relative to the absolute, and from the standpoint of the absolute the relative is illusory. But we are not at that standpoint, so we've no right to speak in that way. It would be dangerous to do so.

Sometimes in sutras, when they say that existence is illusory, it's not clear that they are not speaking of strict illusion - that is, illusion which is illusion even from the standpoint of relative reality - but they are speaking from the standpoint of absolute reality. And from that standpoint, looking at relative reality, which then does appear illusory, that isn't made clear. It's as though they are standing on the level of relative reality and speaking about that as illusory, hmm?

Ratnapani: Simply a capital 'I' can go a long way to causing misunderstanding, can't it?

S: Hmm, yes, yes, sometimes, yes.

"... and we use the world accordingly, that is, 'as not abusing it,' ... (to end of paragraph) ... to the All that is Suchness and Reality."

S: No. Things are relatively real, "so long as they are particular things and not thought of in reference to the All", hmm? And how can you relate an illusion at all? All right. Let's carry on.

"From this, it logically follows that in this world of relativity all is momentary ... (to end of paragraph) ... if otherwise, people would never have sought for immortality."

"If this be granted as a fact ... (to end of paragraph) ... it cannot be otherwise than in a state of constant vicissitude and therefore of universal transitoriness." [267]

"Now, the Buddhist argument for the theory of Non-ego is this: ... (to end of paragraph) ... This is ... the Buddhist theory of non-atman or non-ego."

S: It seems as though in the Buddha's day one of the connotations of the term atma was autonomy, that is to say, it was self-dependent, whereas the empirical self, we quite clearly see, is not self-dependent, it arises in dependence on causes and conditions. How we are at any given moment is affected by all sorts of causes and conditions, we are not, therefore, autonomous, we are not, as it were, therefore, self-existent; therefore we are an atman in the sense of an autonomous atman. This is another approach to this subject of ego, hmm?

Vajradaka: Isn't there a danger if one sees that absolute reality is separate from relative reality - as he has been sort of making a distinction between the two - that you just change the ego of being separate from the relative self for the nirvana or reality, and so instead of saying, oh yes, there is a separate ego behind and motivating this process, there is reality behind and motivating this process of the five skandhas?

S: Yes, except that, of course, even though reality isn't behind and motivating, there is that absolute reality; it does actually exist, hmm? Whereas the ego, as such, is pure illusion, that is, the ego conceived as something existing apart from the five skandhas and not just as a label for them: this is pure illusion. The danger is that instead of orienting yourself towards absolute reality, or at least a higher reality, you are orienting yourself

merely to a concept of it. But at the same time, of course, some concept of it is indispensable; this is the only way we can have any intimation of it. So I don't think the danger is a very great one unless our sort of concept of reality or something higher is quite distorted and taken literally. Only then, I think, it becomes dangerous. Right, on to atman, then.

"Atman. Buddhists use the term atman in two senses: first, in the sense of personal ego, and secondly in that of thing-in-itself ... Let us use ... 'atman' here in its first sense as equivalent to *bhutatman* ..."

S: I don't think this is an actual Sanskrit term; I think he almost sort of coins it himself. Anyway, let's go on.

"... for we going first to treat of the doctrine of non-ego, and later of that of no-thing-in-itself."

"Atman is usually translated 'life' ... or 'soul' ... Buddhists ... positively denies its existence as such." [268]

S: It's not clear here whether he's speaking of the relative empirical self or the illusory self or ego, and in which of these two senses Buddhism is supposed to be denying its existence. This doesn't seem very clear. If you take "this vulgar, materialistic conception of the soul" to be simply the empirical personality, Buddhism certainly doesn't deny its relative reality, but if you take it, of course, in the sense of the completely illusory, imagined, ego-soul, abstracted from the five skandhas and standing separate from them, then, of course, Buddhism does deny the existence of that self or that atman.

"If we, for convenience' sake distinguish between the phenomenal and the noumenal ... ego, ... the atman of Buddhism is the phenomenal ego ... while the atman of Vedantists is the noumenal ego as the *raison d'etre* of our physical life."

S: From this it seems that the phenomenal ego of Buddhism, as he says, is the relatively real self. But certainly Buddhism doesn't deny the existence of that; not from the standpoint of relative reality anyway.

"the one is in fact material ... the other is highly metaphysical conception ... the latter may be identified with Paramatman and the former with Jivatman."

S: These are, of course, Vedantic terms: 'supreme self' and 'living self'.

"Paramatman is a universal soul ... corresponds to the Tathagatagarbha ... Jivatman is the ego-soul ... as an independent entity ... It is this latter which was found to be void by Buddha when he arose from his long meditation."

S: Yes and no. Void in the sense of relatively real, if you are speaking of the relative or the empirical self, but not void in the sense of complete illusion. Anyway, let's have a look at this verse.

"Many a life to transmigrate,
Long quest, no rest, hath been my fate,
Tent-designer inquisitive for:
Painful birth from state to state."

S: It's quite a nice little translation, but 'tent-designer' is quite wrong. [It's] gahakaraka, which means house maker, house builder, or even architect. I don't know where the tent comes in. because it is quite clearly house: it's 'gaha' or 'griha'. This is from the Dhammapada [verse 154, tr.].

"Tent-designer! I know thee now;
Never again to build art thou;
Quite out are all thy joyful fires,
Rafter broken and roof-tree gone,"[269]
Gain eternity - dead desires."

S: It's quite a good translation, apart from that. But I think we have to be really careful not to take this tent designer, or rather house builder, as a sort of metaphysical agent actually building, hmm? Building is going on, the orthodox Buddhist would say, but there is no builder, apart from the actual process of the building going on. That doesn't seem to have been very helpful, that little section, does it?

Lokamitra: Confusing.

S: Confusing, yes, because confused. But anyway, we're not going to let ourselves get confused. I think, harking back to that earlier short chapter which was very helpful, it is quite clear that illusory ego is not the same as the relatively real empirical self, and that there is this transcendental dimension beyond, towards which we are working. This is the great thing to bear in mind, this sort of threefold distinction.

Nagabodhi: Is it worth in any way looking for links between them or trying to make any kind of links between them?

S: Between what?

Nagabodhi: Between the illusory or the relative and the absolute? The problems seem to occur when one tries to create links between them.

S: Yes, and to explain how one has evolved out of the other. It's better to stick to the facts, they're what we've got, they're the sort of data on the basis of which we proceed, and this is what early Buddhism does, simply. I mean, as regards the first two, we know from our own experience; as regards the third, we have the word of the Buddha for it;

and we have the word, in any case, of a great array of mystics and sages, all of whom might not actually have got there, but been well on the way. So we can see a sort of ascending hierarchy of saints and sages with higher levels of consciousness, and if we read the records of their lives, and we read what some of them have written, it's quite clear. We feel we are in contact with something higher, and that's all that we really need to know: that we are bound in that same direction, we are treading on that same stair or ladder, we are also evolving in that direction. This is all we need to know. You know, how the illusory consciousness developed from the empirical and how both developed out of the absolute: we just don't need to know this; in fact, it isn't a thing to be known, it's only a way of putting the matter and then turning it into a question and trying to find an answer, hmm? But all we need for our spiritual life and development is just the facts as they exist, and it's mainly there that Theravada Buddhism [270] stays. It is a great merit, in a way. Just this. (pause) Of course, it is a great help to have the Buddha around personally, (laughter) because that's... Anyway, hmm? "The Buddha's First Line of Inquiry". Let's see what that was.

"Buddhism finds the source of all evils in the vulgar material conception of the ego-soul ..."

S: Not necessarily. It's in this illusive ego, hmm, not so much the empirical self, though in the long run from that too. Perhaps this is going a bit too quickly.

"... and concentrates its entire ethical force upon the destruction of the egocentric actions and desires."

S: Yes, but to which ego are they egocentric? I mean, we have to distinguish between denying the illusory self and denying the empirical self. In the long run we have to deny the empirical self too, but I think we had better get rid of the illusive self first, and then, not so much destroy the empirical self but make it more and more positive and more and more refined until it sort of evaporates in some, you know, higher atmosphere or higher dimension. The whole idea of attacking and destroying the empirical self doesn't seem very sort of healthy, or very helpful. All right. Let's go on.

"The Buddha seems, since the beginning of his wandering life, to have conceived the idea that the way of salvation must lie somehow in the removal of this egoistic prejudice, ..."

S: So far as we know from old sources, the Buddha was mainly concerned with the getting rid of dukkha. That was the, you know, the angle from which he seems to have approached it: just to get rid of suffering, pain, discomfort, and get into some dimension that was higher and more satisfying and more real.

"... for so long as we are not liberated from its curse, we are ... the prey of ... covetousness, infatuation and anger ... thus ... his first instructions from ... Arada ... did not teach how to abandon this ego-souls self."

S: This can't be taken quite literally. We know from the earlier sources that the Buddha did seek instruction from forest sages, but what in fact did he learn from them, according to these early sources? Do you remember?

Devaraja: Yes. He attained to other spheres ...

S: Right.

Devaraja: The spheres of, er ... [271]

Nagabodhi: Neither perception nor non-perception.

S: Yes, and?

Lokamitra: No-thing-ness.

Devaraja: And no-thing-ness, yes.

S: Yes, right. So, in these early accounts, is there any reference to receiving instruction in Samkhya philosophy?

Devaraja: No.

S: No there isn't. This comes later. In fact, he quotes Asvaghosa's *Buddhacarita*. Not, of course, the Asvaghosa who was supposed to have written 'The Awakening of Faith', but in this very much later poetical account. That is to say, it must have been written, oh, very nearly a thousand years after the Buddha, this poetical account of his life. Asvaghosa has made one of these early teachers a Samkhya follower, and has represented him as teaching the Buddha the Samkhya philosophy. This is partly because, in the meantime, the Samkhya philosophy had become properly codified and was quite influential, and he wanted to show that the Buddha had found it inadequate, but there is no historical evidence that that was what the Buddha studied at that time. But Suzuki is taking Asvaghosa's account as quite historical and as based on historical fact, and therefore proceeds on the assumption that the Buddha did study Samkhya philosophy and was not satisfied with this 'ego-souls' assumption. But there seems to be no evidence for this at all. What the Buddha felt was simply that the stage of consciousness that he had reached with these forest sages through meditation was not ultimate, hmm? He continued to feel dissatisfaction, therefore he continued his search. There's no reference to any sort of teaching about an ego-soul and him being dissatisfied with that. That's a quite later - a thousand years later - interpretation, not to say interpolation. Suzuki, though a scholar, is not handling his material very critically. All right. 'The Buddha argued ...' This is how Asvaghosa represents the Buddha in this particular text.

"The Buddha argued: ... (to end of paragraph) ... so long as the ego-souls remains, there can be no absolute abandonment of it, there can be no real abandonment of egoism."

S: In other words, a sort of contemporary philosophical situation and debate is being read back right into the very early days of Buddhism, or even before Buddhism itself, rather as though someone writing about the life of Christ had represented him as not satisfied with St Anselm's arguments about the incarnation or something of that kind, [272] St Anselm living a thousand years after Christ! So here, Asvaghosa is making the Buddha consider a development of the Samkhya philosophy which didn't take place until many hundreds of years later; so there's no sort of historical sense in this.

Anyway, just wait a minute. You can see what is happening. The Buddhacarita, from a poetical point of view, is a really beautiful work, but it doesn't necessarily reflect historical facts very closely.

Devaraja: Are there any good translations available?

S: Yes. Well, there are two, one better than the other. One is in the Sacred Books of the East [series] and the other is by Johnston, E.H. Johnston.

Devamitra: Which is the better?

S: I think the second. In two volumes. It is available, I think, though printed sometime ago, but it is very good, you know, a quite beautiful epic life of the Buddha in a sort of classical Indian epic style.

Voice: E.H. Johnston?

S: Hmm? I think it is E.H. A very polished and very poetical and very moving, but sort of, you know, in modern terms and from a modern point of view, not very reliable as regards historical accuracy, but certainly giving the spirit of the whole thing, you know, very beautifully and elegantly.

Devaraja: There's a very nice poetic version in a book called 'Chinese Buddhist Verse'. [by Richard H Robinson, tr.] Do you know it? It's a selection.

S: Yes, yes.

Devaraja: That's very poetic.

S: Yes. That is from the Chinese translations, isn't it?

Devamitra: I could get that for the shop, actually, because they've got that at the Buddhist Society.

S: Which is that?

Devamitra: Sorry, I beg your pardon, the Johnston translation.

S: Yes, I think we should. All right, let's go on then.

"The Buddha then proceeded to indicate the path ... and declares: 'There is no real separation of the qualities and their subject: for fire cannot be conceived apart from its heat and form.'" [273]

S: This is an argument, of course, against the illusive ego, and not the empirical self.

"When this argument is logically carried out, it leads ... to the Buddhist doctrine of non-atman ... it is absurd to think ... there is an independent soul-agent which makes our consciousness its workshop."

S: Here the argument is quite clearly and quite correctly directed against the illusory ego-self that has been abstracted from the concrete complex of the five skandhas.

"To imagine that an object can be abstracted from its qualities ... is wrong ... and it is impossible for our ... ego ... to be any exception to this universal condition of things."

S: This is very correct and very clear. Do you see the line of the argument? Yes?

Ratnapani: I don't see that the argument necessarily holds good, when you can argue about a wheel, certainly, quite safely, but one can simply say, well, 'human beings are different to that, I can feel my soul, I can feel God moving in my soul', and I don't think the argument does anything to counteract that, if you want to argue that way.

Nagabodhi: Well the Buddha asked people, say, well, tell me where it is. And he'd take them on a journey through their own head until they realized ...

Lokamitra: He does this later on, I think.

S: Yes. For instance, you may have an experience or perception of something which you call your unchanging soul, your real self, but then you can be asked to inquire, well, what is that really? Has it always been there, or did it come into existence? And so on and so forth. In the end you find that don't have, in fact, any such thing; it is illusory.

Mamaki: He does rather sort of go on about it. Do you think that he was a bit confused?

S: Well sometimes he is very clear. For instance here. But he sometimes, as you say, does go on about it, seems to be trying to come to some sort of point and not really arriving, but he does arrive here, but, I mean, just in this paragraph, where he says ...

Mamaki: He touches it from time to time, and then gets lost again.

S: Yes. I mean, for instance, where he says "To imagine that an object can be abstracted from its qualities, not only logically but in reality, that there is some unknown

quantity that is in possession of such and such characteristic [274] marks whereby it makes itself perceivable by our senses, says Buddhism, is wrong and unwarranted by reason." Well, this is absolutely correct, but he seems to depart from this so often, and then, having stated the general position very clearly, he points out that this is to be applied to the so-called self, that is, you know, to the empirical self, and that we should not abstract this fictitious illusive ego from that relative self and set it up as something different from, or even in opposition to, it. Well, here you're on perfectly sound, firm ground. It's as though sometimes he sees, but sometimes he doesn't see, or isn't aware that he doesn't see. It seems to come out very clearly, doesn't it? It's almost as though the book was written very hastily.

Mamaki: Or as if he was trying to work it out in his mind as he went along, because it does seem to keep going on about much the same sort of thing, and to progress as though, you know, he was trying to work it out and get hold of it in the writing of it.

S: That could be so, but he doesn't always seem to know when he got it, or to realize when he hasn't got it, so he gets it by accident and loses it without quite knowing why, hmm? It's almost as though he doesn't know when he's right and when he's wrong. But he certainly becomes very clear when he's right, doesn't he? He seems to flow in a different sort of way, and he's almost concise, not wordy. I mean, this particular paragraph is quite excellent. Anyway, let's go on.

"Let me in this connection state an interesting incident in the history of China ... (to end of paragraph), and his soul was pacified once and for all." (laughter)

S: But there seem to be two things here. Well, perhaps Hui-K'e was trying to identify and locate an ego-soul in the sense of an illusive one and didn't succeed in finding it, and then, due to Bodhidharma's remarks, realized that there was no such thing. That is, you know, certainly a possible way of looking at it, but, I mean, this wouldn't necessarily satisfy people who feel trouble and distress in, as it were, their empirical self. You can't adopt the same attitude towards that; it is actually there, hmm? Maybe, from the standpoint of the highest Enlightenment, it doesn't exist, but how are you going to get there? That isn't all that easy. I think we should be very careful about invoking this story. Like so many Zen stories, they no doubt produce their effect in that particular set of circumstances, in the case of that particular person, but just to trot them out and apply them to all and sundry indiscriminately [275] seems about the worst thing you can do sometimes. You are much safer off with a formula. (pause) It's interesting, you know, to see these little bits of Zen coming in gradually in this particular book. (break in tape) Anyway, we come now to some quite sort of basic, general Buddhism which it'll be quite useful to read through. The skandhas.

"When the five skandhas are combined according to their previous karma ... (to end of paragraph) ... with the existence of a sentient being, and there is no need of hypostasizing a fabulous ego-monster behind the combination of the five skandhas."

S: So please don't do it any more, Dr Suzuki! (laughter) Anyway, carry straight on. This is quite clear.

"Skandha (khandha in Pali) literally means 'aggregate' ... The first of the five ... is matter (rupa), whose essential quality is thought to consist in resistance."

S: 'Matter' doesn't really properly translate rupa; it's literally 'form'. There's a very good discussion of what rupa really means in Buddhism by Dr Guenther in 'Psychology and Philosophy in the Abhidharma'. That's a very uneven book, but it's very, very good in parts, quite exceptionally so, and there's some very useful and very interesting discussion of rupa, in fact of all five skandhas, in one of the chapters of this work.

Vajradaka: 'Philosophy and Psychology'?

S: '... in the Abhidharma'. I think its psychology and philosophy, not the other way around. [It's 'Philosophy and Psychology', tr.]

Devamitra: It's out of print, I'm afraid.

S: Is it? I believe there's two copies in the Order library at Sarum House.

Devaraja: You've defined it as the objective content of the perceptual situation?

S: Right, yes. Guenther defines it in the same sort of way and discusses it in that sort of way, but much more thoroughly and at length than I have done in any of my writings. I think I've described it in that way in a lecture, not in writing, hmm? I think in my writings I've followed the fairly sort of common-sense Theravadin-type approach to it.

Ratnapani: In the karma of hydrogen and oxygen Suzuki's usual ...

S: Yes ... imprecision of language. He's using them metaphorically, at best. There [276] can be karma, strictly speaking, only where there is will: will is karma. All right, let's get on then.

"The material part of our existence in the five sense organs ... The second skandha is called sensation or sense-impression (vedana) ..."

S: Literally, feeling.

"... which results from contact of the sense with the external world. The third is samjna ... which is the psychic power by which we are enabled to form abstract images of particular objects."

S: From which we are able to generalize, as it were. It also includes recognition: that this is that, which usually, of course, proceeds via the reference of a particular thing to a particular class, and of course the class is represented by the general concept.

"The fourth is *sanskara* which may be rendered action or deed.

S: It's more like the tendencies to action than the action itself.

"Our intelligent consciousness, responding to impressions ... note accordingly; and these acts bear fruit in the coming generations."

"*Sanskara*, the fourth constituent of being, comprises two categories, mental (*caitta*) and non-mental (*cittaviprayukta*)."

S: That means 'separated from *citta* or mind'.

"The mental is subdivided into six: fundamental (*mahabhumi*), good (*kusala*), tormenting (*klesa*), ..."

S: Usually translated as 'defilements', 'mental impurities'.

"... evil (*akusala*), ..."

S: The unskillful, or unwholesome.

"... tormenting minor ..."

S: Or 'minor tormenting' that is: 'subsidiary defilements'.

"... and indefinite (*aniyata*)."

S: Not particularly classified as one or the other.

"It may be interesting to enumerate what all these *sankaras* are, as they shed light on the practical ethics of Buddhism."

S: I must observe that here we've gone into the *Abhidharma*. He's drawing this literature, without much in the way of explanation, from the *Sarvastivadin* [277] *Abhidharma*, which goes rather beyond the *sutras*, or it systematizes the *sutras*. But anyway, let's just go into it, because it is a bit informative, or will give us some impression about the nature of the *skandhas* - though, of course, in the early texts the *skandhas* are not explained in this detailed sort of way.

"There are ten fundamental *sankaras* belonging to the category of mental or psychic activities: 1. *cetana* (mentation), 2. *sparsa* (contact), ..."

S: *Sparsa*. He follows the French system of transliteration here, so the 'c' with the little hook beneath it is 'sh' [but indicated throughout this transcript as s, tr.]

"3. chanda (desire), 4. mati (understanding), 5. smrti (recollection), 6. manaskara (concentration), 7. adhimoksa (unfettered intelligence), 8. Samadhi (meditation). The ten good sanskaras are: 1. sraddha (faith), 2. virya (energy), 3. upeksha (complacency),"

S: We usually translate upeksha as 'equanimity' or 'tranquillity'. (laughter)

"4. hri (modesty), 5. apatrapa (shame), 6. alobha (non-covetousness), 7. advesa (freedom from hatred), 8. ahimsa (gentleness of heart), ..."

S: Literally 'non-violence', 'non-harm'.

"9. prasradbhi [sic] (mental repose),"

S: He's got it wrong way round; it's prarab-dhi.

"10. apramada (attentiveness)."

S: So you notice here that he's subdividing sanskaras or volitional activities and there are various kinds: the ten fundamental sanskaras, also the basic volitions which go on all the time regardless and which can't be regarded as kusala or akusala, either good or bad, which may even accompany bad as well as good volitions, and then there's those which are definitely wholesome, and again those that are definitely unwholesome. That is the basic classification. So let's just go on, it just gives us a little of the complexity of the Abhidharma. These are all subdivisions of that one skandha, i.e. sanskaras. Sometimes all the other skandhas are equally subdivided.

"The six tormenting sanskaras are as follows: 1. moha (folly),"

Devamitra: (breaking off the reading) Isn't this usually translated as ...?

S: Bewilderment, confusion, or even delusion.

"2. pramada (wantonness),"

S: 'Heedlessness', it's usually translated. [278]

"3. kausidya (indolence), 4. asraddhya (scepticism), 5. styana (slothfulness), 6. auddhatpa (unsteadiness)."

S: These are quite important. These are the six main unwholesome, unskillful, volitional tendencies - the main defilements, as it were. And this is, of course, self evident.

"The two minor evil sanskaras are: 1. ahrikata (state of not being modest, or arrogance, or self-assertiveness), 2. anapatrapa (being lost to shame, or to be without conscience)."

"The ten minor tormenting sanskaras are: 1. krodha (anger), 2. mraksa (secretiveness), 3. matsarya (niggardliness), 4. irsyā (envy), 5. pradasa (uneasiness), 6. vihimsa (noxiousness),"

S: Extreme harmfulness.

"7. upanaha (malignity), 8. maya (trickiness), 9. sathya (dishonesty), 10. mada (arrogance)."

S: You see what is happening? Don't get lost in the details. In Buddhist literature, say in the suttas, you get all sorts of terms and mental states referred to. So the Buddha is giving a talk, and in one context he might say, 'Monks, you should avoid greediness. Don't be greedy.' In another context he might say, 'jealousy is an unskilful thing', and so on and so forth. So you get a whole lot of terms - you got jealousy, greediness, a lack of shame, immodesty, ignorance, cruelty - [and] one of the works of the Abhidharma literature is to classify all these: they take all these terms out of the sutra literature and they classify them. And as regards these sort of terms - that is, which have been rather roughly classified as 'volitional', in the sense that whether skilful or unskilful they will they will all have some sort of karmic effect - so they brought them together and they tried to sort them out into main groups, sometimes not very successfully.

With regard to, for instance, some of these terms, you don't really see why they should be in one group rather than in another. For instance, what about vihimsa? This is 'extreme harmfulness'. Why should this be a 'minor tormenting sanskara'? I would have thought it was a major one! Huh? Yes? (sounds of agreement) So one mustn't take all this too seriously. The Abhidharma was essentially a sorting out operation, at least from one point of view, and they had all these terms in the suttas which were used, not with any strict precision, but in a very general way, and they gathered them all together and tried to sort them out into [279] different groups. And these are all included under the heading of 'sanskara' or volitions of various kinds, karma-creating mental factors of various kinds. And then they're sorted out into various sub-divisions, but again, one isn't to take this too seriously. But it gives one - this whole passage - just a general idea of the sort of way in which the Abhidharma proceeds, huh?

Lokamitra: Presumably, if they were taken as you said, if it was compiled as you said, then it needn't be exhaustive, so there could easily be more than ten minor tormenting sanskaras.

S: Right, yes. I mean there might be a quite hot discussion between different scholars whether there are ten or eleven, or whether a particular term should be included in the group of the minor defilements or in the major defilements, and so on and so forth. There was a lot of discussion of this sort among the Abhidharma philosophers. But you can certainly see that up to a point it was a useful operation, hmm? and helped give content and meaning to this sort of general conception of sanskara, but also it can become an end in itself: this documenting, compiling system of the Abhidharma; and it did, in the end, I'm afraid. But anyway, let's just carry on.

"The eight indefinite sanskaras are: ... 8. vicikitsa (doubting)."

S: In what sense they are called indefinite I don't know. One would have to refer to the Sarvastivadin texts themselves.

"The second grand category of sanskaras which is not included under 'mental' or 'psychic' comprises fourteen items as follows: 1. prapti (attainment), 2. aprapti (non-attainment)."

S: This is quite interesting. This is Sarvastivadin theory. Prapti and aprapti. These are not terms found in the sutras. The Sarvastivadins seem to have coined them themselves, and this is just an example of their scholasticism, their also reification of concepts. They were a Hinayana school - the most important of the Hinayana schools - they did go into Abhidharma and a certain amount of speculation, though within rather strict limits. And they had this theory of 'prapti'. Now just to give you a rather crude account of it - this is a caricature, they were much more subtle than this! - they wanted to explain everything; and, for instance, they wanted to explain everything in terms of, you know, all their different Abhidharma categories; and they wanted to explain, among other things, say, the attainment of nirvana. So they raised the question, well, what is it that enables you to attain nirvana? Well, obviously, what helps you - [280] or what enables you - to attain nirvana is something called prapti or attainment - that when this attainment comes into operation, then you attain nirvana. In other words, they reified this concept of prapti or attainment, and juggled with it in much the same way that we saw Dr Suzuki struggling with this, well, with various Mahayana concepts. And then of course they had this concept of aprapti, non-attainment. What is it that keeps us in the samsara, for instance, huh? well, it's aprapti keeping us down, hmm? So there you get a reification of concepts again. Conze has discussed this in his 'Buddhist Philosophy in India' to some extent, as far as I recollect, and he has indicated that in the end they got into such difficulties with their concepts of prapti that even the Sarvastivadins had to abandon it. So here, into their Abhidharma classifications, they're not only including terms from sutras, terms describing actual mental phenomena, but abstract categories, abstract conceptual categories of their own, which they've invented, which don't in fact correspond to anything concrete, and they're having to include them somewhere, because, after all, the five skandhas classification is traditional, so they're including them under the sanskara category.

Devaraja: Could you have, I mean, because in the Heart Sutra I've seen prapti and aprapti ...

S: Exactly!

Devaraja: Could it be a sort of misuse of the fact that it says 'no attainment or non-attainment'?

S: But then, why are those terms included in the Heart Sutra? (pause)

Nagabodhi: In order to be negated.

S: In order to be negated. And according to Conze's interpretation, the Heart Sutra enumerates all the traditional terms of Buddhism, also including the Sarvastivada - it mentions some of its main technical terms - in order to wipe away the whole lot, hmm? So they can get beyond all this sort of reification of concepts. The Heart Sutra, though a sutra, if you look at it historically, is a document composed or compiled after the Sarvastivadin development, and it's negating the Abhidharma outlook. Hence Sariputra! Sariputra is associated with the Abhidharma tradition. So Avalokitesvara is speaking to Sariputra. I think I've gone into this a bit in my lecture on the Heart Sutra: it's the higher consciousness addressing the lower consciousness as it were, hmm? It's almost the Buddha [281] addressing the Abhidharmika, hmm? So it's no accident that in the Heart Sutra you get prapti and aprapti, and it says 'in reality, no prapti, no aprapti'. Quite right. Of course, whoever compiled the Heart Sutra could not look at it historically and see what had happened and how it had all developed; he had to take these concepts as sort of genuine Buddhist concepts. They did belong to the Abhidharma tradition and that was attributed to the Buddha, even by most of the Mahayanists. So he couldn't sort of embark on an historical criticism of that whole process of development that, you know, ended with the creation of these abstract concepts; he had to take the whole thing as he found it. But from a spiritual point of view he wasn't satisfied, hmm? so he negated, from the highest spiritual standpoint, as it were, accepting that, yes, these were valid categories on their own level, they did belong to the Buddhist tradition, and so on and so forth, he just simply rose straight above them. In other words the Heart Sutra is saying, among other things, that the standpoint of the Abhidharma, with all its abstract categories, is not absolute, it does not pertain to the highest truth, to perfect knowledge. Conze has gone into this in his commentary on the Heart Sutra in 'Two Buddhist Wisdom Books'. Right, let's carry on.

"3. sabhagata (grouping), 4. asanjnika (unconsciousness),"

S: Just read the English translations; I think the Sanskrit doesn't tell us very much, anyway.

"5. unconscious absorption in religious meditation,"

S: See what a rag-bag here! (laughter) The trances coming in as well as these abstract concepts! I mean, the Sarvastivadin, or the Abhidharmikas in general, they just want to find a place for everything! So sometimes it isn't a very appropriate place!

"6. annihilation trance of a heretic, ... 14. sentence."

S: The Sarvastivadins tended to reify all these things. You see what the Abhidharma tried to do? It was a sort of pluralism, a sort of radical pluralism. It started off with this comparatively simple Dharma theory, or Dharma doctrine; it just tried to reduce everything in the universe to a fixed number of ultimate entities, and then juggled these

around so as to produce everything: a sort of atomism. So therefore it had a large number of categories. In the end I think it had seventy-five categories altogether: seventy-two conditioned and three unconditioned. It tried to arrange and rearrange them so as to account for everything in the universe. This was [282] the pluralistic philosophy of the Sarvastivadins, which the Madhyamika criticized, pointing out that many of their so-called entities were in fact only concepts, and so on and so forth, and - as for instance we find in the Heart Sutra - dissolving the whole system. In fact, one of the growing points of the Mahayana, especially the Madhyamika, was its criticism of this radical pluralism - as it's sometimes called - of the Sarvastivada. It started off innocently enough, but eventually it went to extremes. 'Pluralistic realism' it's sometimes called. I mean, there are many reals: reality is not just one entity; there is a plurality of actually existing, real, entities. The Sarvastivadins enumerated seventy-five, in other Abhidharmas there were even more, and the Yogacara ended up with a sort of Abhidharma on its own account.

Mangala: How could you have three categories of unconditioned?

S: Well, they did. They had two kinds of nirvana and space. Space was regarded as unconditioned. It was regarded as a 'thing' in the Abhidharma.

Nagabodhi: Did they feel these three categories as being absolute in themselves, or only on a relative level?

S: No, they regarded them as ultimates, yes, therefore it's 'pluralistic realism'. Perhaps that should not be stressed too much, perhaps it would be fairer to say they treated them all as though they were real. But it's as though the unconditioned elements were in a sense on the same level as the conditioned elements; they were all real. It was a quite impressive and to some extent quite consistent system, but it did become rather too, as it were, cut and dried in the end - rather too rigid, too schematic, too scholastic - and it was strongly criticized by the Madhyamikas, on the one hand, and the Sautrantikas on the other. The Sautrantikas didn't accept the whole Abhidharma development; they are called the 'critical realists'.

Nagabodhi: What was the point of it all?

S: (amusement) Well people get carried away! (amusement) Well, it happens, you know, you all do it yourselves! I'm sure you've done it in the dream groups sometimes, you know, yes? And you do it when there's any sort of general discussion: you get carried away with yourself; you forget what you are really talking about; you don't have your eye on the ball any more. You do it when you talk about politics - anything - hmm? [283]

Nagabodhi: So, because you're getting more and more lost, you create more and more landmarks (laughter) until you can't see where you're going for landmarks! (laughter)

S: Well, you could say the Abhidharma did exactly this, in the later stages of its development. Of course, in its early stages, it's very fruitful - I don't want to run the Abhid-

harma down - but all along the line it has very interesting discussions of different aspects of Buddhist life and thought, sometimes very valuable, so it certainly has its place, and one can even now make use of it. Some of Guenther's material in 'Philosophy and Psychology in the Abhidharma' is very interesting and very useful, very helpful, so one certainly mustn't run it down too much, but just be aware of its limitations. It was, in broad outline, just an attempt to sort out the sutras and to systematize them to some extent, and to classify, to clarify terms, and to compare the term in one context with a term in another. You can't help engaging in this type of activity. It is necessary up to a point, even with the spiritual life, but it cannot be carried to extremes or made an end in itself or an intellectual hobby. For instance, suppose you got on tape various lectures by me, and in one lecture I give one account of the five skandhas and in another lecture a slightly different account; you can't help wanting to compare the two and asking yourself, well, why has he given two slightly different accounts? What is the reason for that? Is it to be derived from the context or is there some other reason? That is Abhidharma, hmm? This is the start of Abhidharma; that's all it is! But, you know, it does go to extremes. They had a thousand years Abhidharma studies. Some of the best minds in Buddhism, in Indian Buddhism, devoted themselves to Abhidharma studies, you know, with a vast sort of architectural enclave, and much of it very valuable - some of the sort of subsidiary discussions are really quite fascinating, about the nature of meditation... They also systematized the path of practice, which was very important, and tried to find a place in a sort of systematic scheme of self-development for all the different spiritual exercises and insights and so on. And this sort of development of the Sarvastivadins is the foundation, ultimately, of works like the 'Jewel Ornament of Liberation', yes? They continue that tradition, quite directly, huh? (pause) All right, let's carry on.

"Now, to return to the main problem. The fifth skandha is called vijāna, commonly rendered consciousness, which, however, is not quite correct. The vijāna is intelligence or mentality; it is the psychic power of [284] discrimination, and in many cases it can be translated by sense. There are, according to Hinayanists, six vijānas or sense: visual, auditory, olfactory, gustatory, tactual and cognitive; according to the Mahayana there are eight vijānas: the manovijāna and the alayavijāna being added to the above six. The psychological phase of Mahayana philosophy is principally worked out by the Yogacara School, whose leading thinkers are Asanga and Vasubandhu."

S: By the way, about the Abhidharma, I think I've given a lecture on the Abhidharma, haven't I? (several affirmations) In that series, the first series, on 'Aspects of Buddhist Psychology'. Has anybody heard that or not? (general replies: yes, a long time ago) Maybe it would be quite useful to play it again, and just listen to it in the light of this whole discussion. All right. Let's go on to King Milinda and Nagasena.

"Buddhist literature ... abounds with expositions of the doctrine of non-ego, as it is one of the most important foundation stones on which the magnificent temple of Buddhism is built."

S: It's interesting, this architectural metaphor coming straight after the Abhidharma material hmm?

"The dialogue between King Milinda and Nagasena ... is full of suggestive thoughts, and we have the following discussion ... concerning the problem of ego abstracted from the dialogue."

S: Are many people familiar with this text? (negative responses) It exists in Pali, hmm? though it is believed to be a Sarvastivadin work, but there is so little emphasis on specifically Sarvastivadin points that it has been sort of adopted by the Theravadins and incorporated, not exactly into their canon - because it doesn't (?) with the Buddha's teaching - but certainly into works which they very much use, and in fact it is very popular in the Theravadin countries, and it is just a series of dialogues between the Buddhist teacher Nagasena and the Graeco-Bactrian King Milinda or Milanda. So it's a sort of meeting of East and West, and many of Milinda's questions are concerned with apparent contradictions in the teaching: [that] the Buddha said this in such and such a passage, but he said this in another passage; how do you reconcile the two? This is, in a way, a sort of Abhidharma operation, and Nagasena gives apparently quite satisfactory replies. There are two translations of this work in English: one by [T.W.] Rhys Davids and one by I.B. Horner, so it's quite easy to get hold of it to study.

[end of volume 1 and start of volume 2 of original transcript]

[285]

Devaraja: Was there much difference between the Sarvastivadins and the Theravadins in terms of doctrine or ...?

S: On the Abhidharma level, with regard to the finer points of doctrine, yes. But their general attitude towards Buddhism and the spiritual life, the monastic organization, and so on: very very similar.

Vajradaka: Sarvastivadin was particularly Mahayana wasn't it?

S: No it was Hinayana.

Sulocana: "At their first meeting the king asks Nagasena, 'How is your reverence known, and what is your name?' [laughter, because the paragraph was so short that Ratnaguna had lost his place and was not ready to continue.]

Ratnaguna: "To this the monk-philosopher replies, 'I am known as Nagasena, .. but this Nagasena .. is only a generally understood term, a designation in common use. For there is no permanent self involved in the matter.'

Mamaki: "Being greatly surprised by this answer, the king volleys upon Nagasena a series of questions as follows:

Nagabodhi: "If there be no permanent self involved in the matter, who is it, pray, who gives you .. your robes and food?.. Who is it who lives a life of righteousness?.. Who commits any one of the five sins?.. If that be so there is .. neither merit nor demerit,.. neither doer nor cause,.. nor fruit of good or evil karma... Were a man to kill you there would be no murder,.. your ordinations are void... What is this Nagasena? Is the hair Nagasena?" (laughter)

S: So you see, when Nagasena said that there was no unchanging soul or self, as it were, the king thought that the whole empirical, relatively real, self was being denied, and that therefore nothing was left, hmm? Presumably it wasn't that that Nagasena was denying, but only the illusive self illegitimately abstracted from the five skandhas making up that empirical self and regarded as something existing separately in its own right. Anyway, let's carry on.

Devaraja: "This last query being denied by the Buddhist sage, the king asks, 'Or is it the nails, the skin .. or the brain .. that is Nagasena?'

Mangala: "Is it the material form that is Nagasena, or the sensations or the ideas, or the confections (deeds) or the consciousness, that is Nagasena?'[286]

Lokamitra: "To all these questions the king, having received a uniform denial, exclaims in excitement, 'Then .. I can discover no Nagasena... Who .. is this Nagasena that we see before us? Is it a falsehood your reverence has spoken? An untruth?'

Devaraja: "Nagasena does not give any direct answer... Ascertaining that he came in a carriage,.. he asks, 'Is it the wheel, or the framework, or the ropes, or the spokes of the wheel, or the goad, that are the chariot?'

Sona: "To this the king says no, and continues, 'It is on account of its having all these things that it comes under .. the designation .. of chariot.'

Vajradaka: "'Very good,' says Nagasena, 'Your majesty has rightly grasped the meaning of "chariot". And just even so it is .. that I come under the generally understood term, the designation in common use, of "Nagasena."'

Sudatta: Then the sage quotes .. from the Samyutta Nikaya: 'Just as it is by the condition precedent of the co-existence of its various parts that the word "chariot" is used, just so it is that when the skandhas are there we talk of a "being".'

S: So this is quite clear, you know, which kind of 'self' is being denied. I must say, though, that there is some possibility of further misunderstanding due to this analogy of the chariot as applied to a human being; if we aren't careful, if we take it too literally, we think of the human being (or we think that Buddhism is thinking of the human being) in a mechanical sort of fashion, as though it's just made up of psychic cogs and wheels, and it is only the parts as it were in separation, sort of laid out side by side, not the parts as a living working whole. So this sort of danger is to be guarded against. To some extent,

the analysis into parts is arbitrary; it's sort of one thing to take apart, you know, the different parts of a carriage or a motor car; you can't take a human being apart in quite the same way. Govinda goes into this quite a bit in his writings, doesn't he? this sort of mechanistic presentation of this sort of teaching or this sort of analogy. All right. Straight on then.

Sulocana: "To further illustrate the theory of non-atman .. from the Jataka tales (no.244)

Ratnaguna: "The Bodhisattva said to a pilgrim, 'Will you have a drink of Ganges water?' The pilgrim tried to catch him out:.. 'What is the Ganges?.. The sand?.. The water?.. Is the further bank the Ganges?'

Mamaki: "But the bodhisattva retorted, 'If you accept the water, the sand, the hither bank and the further bank, where can you find any Ganges?'[287]

Nagabodhi: "Following this argument we might say, 'Where is the ego-soul except imagination, volition, intellection, desire, aspiration, etc?'

S: The 'ego-soul' is real, it does exist, but it's the sum total of all these factors working together as an organic whole.

Vajradaka: So that means that the imagination, as such, to bring it out from all the others, is relatively real?

S: You can say that, yes. But be careful, otherwise you'll be reifying that and you'll be in the same position as Suzuki was with his 'ignorance', you know, whether the ignorance that results in the bhutatathata descending from its unconditionality into conditionality is a real ignorance or not; you know, you have to be careful about that too.

Devamitra: "*Ananda's Attempt to Locate the Soul*: In the *Surangama Sutra*, Buddha exposes the absurdity of the hypothesis of an individual concrete soul-substance by subverting Ananda's seven successive attempts to determine its whereabouts. Most people who firmly believe in personal immortality will see how vague and chimerical and logically untenable is their notion of the soul, when it is critically examined as in the following case. Ananda's conception of the soul is somewhat puerile, but I doubt whether even in our enlightened age the belief entertained by the multitude in any better than his."

S: This *Surangama Sutra* has been translated in the *The Buddhist Bible*, hasn't it?

Devamitra: There is also a translation by Charles Luk.

S: Yes, a slightly different one.

Devamitra: Oh, is it a different text?

S: It seems to be a different original text. There seem to be various versions. I've also referred to the whole dialogue in my 'Essence of Zen'. All right, let's carry on.

Mangala: "When questioned by the Buddha as to the locality of the soul, Ananda asserts that it resides within the body. Thereupon, the Buddha says, 'If your intelligent soul resides within your corporeal body, how is it that it does not see your inside first? If it does not see the inside, surely it cannot be said to reside within the body?'"

Lokamitra: "Ananda now proposes locating the soul outside the body, but the Buddha argues that 'it is impossible, as then there is no relationship between the two. As far as there is a correspondence between the soul and the body, the soul cannot be said to be residing outside the body.'"[288] (and so on to the end of the discussion on p.163.)

Vajradaka: "By way of summary of the above, let me remark that the Buddhists do not deny the existence of the so-called empirical ego... Vasubandhu declares that the existence of atma and dharma is only hypothetical,.. and not in any sense real and ultimate... Psychologically,.. everyone .. has an ego,.. and physically this world of phenomena is real either as a manifestation of one's energy or as a composite of atoms or electrons, [sic] as is considered by physicists.

S: Once again, we mustn't confuse the empirical reality of the self with the illusive non-reality of the fictional ego.

Nagabodhi: When he says either/or: "either as a manifestation of one's energy or as a composite of..."

S: Well you can take it either psychologically or physically, it's real either way, i.e. empirical ego. In neither case is it (?reductive).

Sudatta: "To confine ourselves to the psychological question, what Buddhism insists on is the non-existence of a concrete .. irreducible soul-substance... Buddhism knows how far the principle could safely and consistently be carried out."

S: You notice that even Buddhism is in a way reified! I mean we do this always, we do this ourselves. But we have to be rather careful: 'Buddhism says this', or 'Buddhism doesn't say that', or 'Buddhism does something else', or doesn't do something else. Or even 'the Yogacara school or the Madhyamaka school does this' or doesn't do this. Or even Zen, you know, 'Zen does this' or 'Zen says that'.

Mangala: But I can't quite see the danger, I mean, in that.

S: Well you're treating it, you know, as a single something, whereas very often it's complex and there isn't a sort of single point of view, huh? Or even, you know, sort of treating Buddhism almost as a person, you know, sort of personifying it.

Devaraja: An absolute principle, rather than a process or a system. (sounds of agreement)

S: I mean sometimes you can treat 'Buddhism' in that way without giving any content to the word, or, for instance, someone who doesn't know anything about Buddhism at all says, 'Oh I don't like Buddhism, it's so ascetic!' as though Buddhism is some concrete thing which is being ascetic, almost like someone who is behaving ascetically and you don't like that, and you [289] haven't even investigated whether Buddhism even is ascetic or in what sense, hm? You just dislike Buddhism for being ascetic.

Devamitra: But when you're talking, though, in general terms about Buddhism or about the tradition, how can one actually avoid this process of reification?

S: Well you can't, in a way, at least verbally, but when you speak about Buddhism you should, in principle, be making a statement which is true of all informed Buddhists regardless of school, hm? When you say Buddhism believes in nirvana, what do you really mean? That the Buddha himself and all other enlightened or at least understanding and well-informed Buddhists down the ages and also today do accept the existence of such a principle? There's no such thing as 'Buddhism' that is accepting it! (pause) So you must be very careful what you say is true of Buddhism and what you say is true of Mahayana, and not say, for instance, 'Buddhism teaches the koan' when it isn't Buddhism that teaches the koan, it's Zen that is teaching the koan, and not even Zen, (but) some particular forms of Zen. So to use the term 'Buddhism' just as a sort of shorthand, you know, but we must recognize that it is that, hm? I mean we are doing it all the time, you see? We say 'the centre is very lively nowadays'; well what do you mean by that? You mean, really, the majority of people who go to the centre are rather lively nowadays, you don't mean that the centre is in fact lively.

Lokamitra: There is much liveliness at the centre.

S: AT the centre, yes! But often we say the centre is very lively, don't we, hm? Or 'the Order is really waking up', hm? This is quite legitimate, provided we know what we are doing. I mean we are using these expressions all the time, but we have to be careful that we ourselves don't start taking them rather literally. And lots of discussions are pseudo-discussions because they are based upon this, and taking literally the expressions which are not meant to be taken literally.

Devaraja: But for instance in the case of the centre, it does sometimes seem to acquire a very tangible quality, actually when walking into the building, even when it's empty, if there has been a period of particularly intensive practice there.

S: Yes but where has that come from? It has come from individuals.

Ratnaguna: It's the atmosphere in the building then, isn't it?[290]

S: Yes, right.

Ratnaguna: The coffee bar's not going to dance, whatever you do.

Devaraja: The atmosphere at the centre has become very ... rich.

S: Rich is the word! (amusement) Not to say 'ripe'! I am assured that that has recently changed! Anyway, let's carry on. This is all rather by the way.

Sudatta: "And its followers will not forget where they stop and destroy the wall .. of individualism... To think that there is a mysterious something behind the empirical ego .. is not Buddhistic.

Sulocana: "What I would remark here in connection with this .. soul, is its relation to .. the alayavijāna, of which the Buddha was very reluctant to talk on account of its easily being confounded with the notion of ego... The manas is the first offspring of the alaya,.. and from the wrongful use of its discrimination there arises in the manas the conception of the alaya as the ego - the real concrete substratum.

Ratnaguna: "The alaya, however,.. is a state of suchness... When the manas finds out its error,.. it .. becomes convinced of the ultimate nature of the soul, so called. For the soul is not individual but supra-individual."

S: In other words, he's saying that above and beyond the empirical self is a supra-individual state of consciousness or being, another dimension to which we have access, through our spiritual practice, and into which we can enter, and into which, as it were, we can be transformed. All right. "*Atman and the Old Man*". Let's see what it's all about.

Mamaki: "When the Buddhists exclaim, 'Put away your egoism,'.. Christian readers may think,.. 'What will become of .. individuality?'. What Buddhism understands by ego .. corresponds .. to the Christian notion of 'flesh' or 'the old man'... The 'I' .. crucified is our false notion of an ego-soul;.. the 'I' .. living through the grace of God is the bodhi, a reflex in us of the Dharmakaya.

Nagabodhi: "When Christians put the spirit and flesh in contrast,.. Buddhism .. prefers philosophical terms which are better understood than popular language which often leads to confusion."

S: It seems to me it's the philosophical terms that often lead to confusion, not the popular language!

Nagabodhi: "Compared with the Buddhist's conception of atman, 'the flesh' lacks in perspicuity and exactitude, not to speak of its dualistic tendency which [291] is extremely offensive to the Buddhists."

S: What's your feeling about this comparison of the 'atman idea' - that is, the ego-illusion - with the Christian conception of 'the flesh'?

Ratnaguna: I think it's completely up the pole, completely wrong.

Nagabodhi: Spurious.

S: What do you think the Christian concept of the flesh is all about then?

Devaraja: I think it's ... the Christian sort of conception of flesh may be, well, it's a disgust with desires and cravings of the body and sort of unconscious activity in the world: completely thrown around by unconscious desires and cravings.

Lokamitra: They're both eternalistic.

S: But Buddhists can get fed up with that too, can't they?

Devaraja: But I mean I feel he's inaccurate in drawing a parallel between the two. I feel that when Christians are talking about the flesh they're not talking about a disgust with the atman.

S: Hmm. You mean the Christian disgust with the flesh is more reactive?

Devaraja: Yes, yes, it's a kind of repulsion.

Sulocana: They seem to muddle up the illusory soul with the empirical.

S: It's as though the Buddhist - the ideal Buddhist that is - will sort of clearly and maybe quite coolly see, well, the empirical self has its limitations, it is only empirical, it is only relatively real, and I must rise above that. But the Christian sort of wants to fight with the flesh and subdue it and kill it. All that sort of thing. It's more a difference of tone and feeling and attitude.

Mamaki: It is outdated, though, this view of Christianity.

S: It is, yes, it is.

Ratnaguna: But I think it's quite unforgivable that he should have even tried this, though. Unnecessary, at the very least. He has to mutilate both religions to come to the comparison.

S: Perhaps he felt obliged to make some sort of comparison because he was living in a Christian milieu, no doubt even under some sort of pressure from Christian influence all around him.

Ratnaguna: But I mean, I suppose [as] I understand it, ordinary Christianity has [unclear] [292] about a soul, an eternal soul; Buddhism doesn't. And they go on from there. And you just can't twist anything that happens to look a bit the same.

S: No.

Nagabodhi: What I feel is: it prompts him to go to an extreme which he needn't go to, when he's talking about the annihilation of the ego-soul. By having to compare that with the crucifixion he therefore means that that can only lead to living through the grace of .. in the Dharmakaya, when it could just be a healthy psychological perception of oneself on an empirical level. It needn't be a mystical or transcendental state.

S: Right. Yes. I mean one could even say that this whole sort of way of thinking, all this image of the crucifixion, though it may have its own value, is really quite foreign to Buddhism. Buddhism would talk in terms of 'seeing through' something, or recognizing its limitations, but not of crucifying it. If you crucify it, you make it more real, hmm? Buddhism would perhaps speak more in terms of dissolving it or, as I said, seeing through it, transcending it, recognizing its limitations, and so on. I mean, 'to crucify', it's certainly very vivid and very appealing, but it seems to involve, in the spiritual life, very crude emotions and attitudes which don't really help very much.

Devaraja: Instead of sort of transforming hatred, it sort of tries to use it, in a way.

S: Mmm, yes.

Devaraja: It's almost like they're incapable of transforming their hatred into a higher energy, so they try...

S: [unclear] to Christianity, yes. You find this with many sort of active Christians. There's something rather hectic about them, even rather frenzied about them, you know, as though nothing has been transformed, you know, it's all been just enlisted under the banner of Christianity in a rather formal, official, sense. And it's justified in that way.

Lokamitra: The flesh idea is much more akin to the Vedantic idea, isn't it?

S: Yes, in a way it is.

Lokamitra: At the dualism there.

S: Yes, disassociation from the [?...sheets] and so on.

Lokamitra: And you find this happening in Hindu practices. They go to extremes to try [293] and get out of the 'flesh' or whatever.

S: Yes, right, or, you know, to make you transcend your, sort of, bodily limitations in a quite sort of ordinary way, not through any sort of spiritual discipline or any sort of change of attitude, but quite literally, as when you sort of sit on a bed of nails, you know.

Devaraja: I think perhaps one of the most extreme examples of that is - what I read recently - is that one of the Naga monastic sects in India, which apparently takes precedence over all the other sects of the Kumbha-mela...

S: The naked ones?

Devaraja: Yes ... is apparently that they sever the nerve that causes an erection in the penis so that there can't be any physical gratification, and that would seem to me really to express that.

S: So that isn't really even like sitting on a bed of nails; it's sort of doing direct damage, as it were. That's even sort of worse than that.

Vajradaka: It doesn't seem to get at the real root of things, which is desire.

S: Anyway, "its dualistic tendency which is extremely offensive to the Buddhists". [laughter] I don't know whether this is a general practice, you know. I think many wouldn't be in agreement with this, many Hindus or even many Vedantists. It seems a rather desperate sort of measure.

Devaraja: Apparently they're one of the most, certainly the Kumbha-mela, according to the report I read, the ones that, the twelve-year [unclear] sort of festival, they apparently take precedence over all the other ones.

S: Oh this is true, they do, yes. They are considered the most extreme - not only extreme in this sort of sense but, you know, as developed and enlightened and so on, and I mean they are regarded very very highly. All right. Well I'm afraid we've got to "The Vedantic Conception" now, so let's just look into this, maybe just reading it through. It isn't very long.

Devamitra: "*The Vedantic Conception*. Though the doctrine of non-atman is predominantly pre-Buddhistic, other Hindu philosophers did not neglect to acknowledge its importance in our religious life."

S: Other *Indian* philosophers.

Devamitra: Having grown in the same soil, the following passage, taken from the *Yogavasistha*, sounds almost like Buddhistic."

S: Does anyone know the *Yogavasistha*? It's a quite interesting and important [294] work, originating in South India. It's quite popular there. I have read a translation of it and, according to some scholars - [and] this was my own impression when I read it - there's a definite historical Buddhistic influence there. It's Vedantic, yes, but it's certainly not like the standard Vedanta, and I do suspect some Yogacara influence, so it isn't surprising that Suzuki says this.

Mangala: "I am absolute... I am not bound by thee, the seed of egoism."

S: This is quite a dangerous statement, in a way: "I am absolute"! I mean, which is this 'I'? Huh? You know? And these sorts of things can be - these sort of attributes - can become attached, you know, to the empirical self, or even to the illusive self! And then you've got a very dangerous situation indeed. So Buddhism doesn't normally use this sort of language. Only a little, in the tantras. That 'I am Heruka', for instance. Otherwise Buddhism doesn't encourage the attitude 'I am the Buddha', 'I am Enlightened'. It strongly discourages this sort of language and normally never uses it. It's never used in the Theravada. And it's never used in the Mahayana, except a touch of it here and there. And only sometimes in the Vajrayana, which is, in principle, very advanced, and under special sort of circumstances, when you identify yourself with the deity in the middle of the mandala. And there [are], of course, all sorts of safeguards and supports, and your own teacher of course, keeping an eye on you all the time. I mean I've seen this in India, that there are Hindus who say 'I am the Brahman, I am the Absolute'. It just leads to a sort of, in a sense, state of inflation. It doesn't seem at all helpful. Those who just adopt the sort of devotional bhaktic attitude seem to get on much better, practically. All right. On we go.

Lokamitra: "The author then argues: where shall we consider the ego-soul .. to be residing?.. Where and what is that which we call ego?"

Devaraja: "Then comes the conclusion: In reality there is no such thing as the ego-soul,.. nothing but the manifestation of the universal soul which is the light of pure intelligence."

S: It's not clear which has been negated: the illusive pseudo-self, the empirical self, or both. This doesn't seem clear, but anyway I think we need not bother very much about it, since we have it clear in our own minds, I hope. It doesn't really matter very much whether it's very clear in the Vedanta.[295] Right. On to "*Nagarjuna and the Soul*".

Sona: "In conclusion, let me quote some passage bearing on the subject from Nagarjuna's discourse on the Middle Path (chapter 9): '... It must be admitted that being (i.e. soul) existed prior to those (manifestations)."

Vajradaka: "But this hypothesis of the prior existence of the soul is wrong... (Are not all things relative and conditioning one another?) [and so on to paragraph 7, bottom of p.169.]

Nagabodhi: "If seeing, hearing, feeling, etc have no soul that exists prior to them, they too have no existence,.. for how could this exist without that?.. The soul as it is has no independent, individual reality whatsoever."

Vajradaka: Presumably that's the relative he's talking about, rather than the illusory.

S: Presumably. It does have a dependent existence, not an independent existence. It's not autonomous.

Nagabodhi: "Therefore the hypothesis .. is to be abandoned as fruitless, for the ego-soul existeth not."

S: That is to say, the illusive, fictitious ego.

Devamitra: "*Non-atman-ness of Things*. The word atman is used by Buddhists, also ontologically in the sense of substance or .. thinginess, and its existence in this capacity is also strongly denied by them."

S: They use the term in this sense, of course, only to deny it.

Devamitra: "For the same reason,.. they reject the hypothesis of the permanent existence of an individual object as such."

S: In other words, the same reasoning that is applied to the pudgala, as we saw some days ago, is also applied to dharmas or things.

Devamitra: "As there is no transcendent agent in our soul life, so there is no real, eternal existence of individuals as individuals, but a system of different attributes, which when the force of karma is exhausted comes to subsist. Individual existences cannot be real by their inherent nature, but they are illusory..."

S: No! That doesn't follow does it? They are relatively real.

Devamitra: "...and will never remain permanent as such, for they are constantly becoming, and have no selfhood... They are empty and devoid of atman."

S: It seems more and more important, as we go through this text, to remember [296] that when Buddhism uses the language of illusion and non-existence and so on, it is referring only to this fictitious ego-soul, and not to the empirical, relatively-existing soul. If this isn't borne in mind, there's tremendous confusion.

Devamitra: It seems that he's laying a tremendous emphasis all the way through, on the anatta doctrine, in fact.

S: It does seem so.

Devamitra: I mean it's almost entirely anatta.

S: Right. It is. Yes. [pause] Well in a way, quite rightly, provided you get it right! But he seems to have got it most right in that very short and quite clear chapter on the three levels of knowledge of the Yogacara school: the parikalpita, the paratantra, and the parinishpanna. It seems to be quite clearly spelled out there, and that should have been

enough, in a way [sounds of agreement]. In fact I suggest that, in future, people could read over and over again that short chapter, or even take it as a basis for study in a group. You could get through it quite easily in an hour or so. It is quite useful, that three-fold classification, and even his explanation of it. And it gives you, in a nutshell, very much of what we've been going through in all these longer chapters. It's the shortest and certainly the clearest chapter so far. [pause] Let's go on to svabhava then.

Mangala: "The term svabhava .. is sometimes used .. in place of atman... It is only due to our ignorance that we believe in the thinginess of things..."

S: That is, in their absoluteness, not recognizing that they are only relatively existent, i.e. that they're depending on causes and conditions.

Mangala: "...whereas there is no such thing as svabhava .. which resides in them. Svabhava and atman are thus habitually used by Buddhists as quite synonymous."

S: This, of course, is correct, and therefore things are said to have no svabhava and have no atman, i.e. illusive ego-soul, in the same sense.

Lokamitra: "What do they exactly understand by svabhava?.. It stands in opposition to .. emptiness .. and conditionality. Inasmuch as all beings are transient and empty,.. they cannot logically be said to be in possession of self-essence which defies the laws of causation."

S: Here, empty is used in the sense of 'dependent on causes and conditions'.

Lokamitra: "All things are mutually conditioning and limiting, and apart from their [297] relativity they are non-existent and cannot be known by us. Therefore, says Nagarjuna, 'If substance be different from attribute, it is then beyond comprehension.'"

S: Hmm. This is very important, hmm?

Lokamitra: "For a jag..."

S: "Jar" it should be, or "jug"; one of the two.

Lokamitra: "A jug is not to be known independent of matter etc. And matter in turn is not to be known independent of ether etc."

S: In other words, you can't know a thing apart from the attributes of which it consists, which is pretty obvious, so if there is a substance apart from the attributes, you can never know it, hmm? So you might as well forget about it anyway!

Lokamitra: "As there is no subject without object, so there is no substance without attribute, for one is the condition of the other."

S: Hmm, this is misleading. There is no such thing as subject without attributes. The substance is the sum total of the attributes, huh? The one is the condition of the other logically, not ontologically. Do you see this? All right, straight on then.

Lokamitra: "Does self-essence then exist in causation? No... Whatever owes its existence to .. conditions is without self-essence, and therefore it is tranquil, it is empty, it is unreal."

S: i.e. relatively real, not absolutely real. You really have to watch the language, even of Buddhist philosophers like Nagarjuna.

Lokamitra: "And the ultimate nature of this universal emptiness is not within the sphere of intellectual demonstrability..."

S: That is, of perfect knowledge.

Lokamitra: "...for the human understanding is not capable of transcending its inherent limitations.

Devaraja: "Says Pingalaka, a commentator of Nagarjuna, 'The cloth exists on account of the thread,.. and the thread from flax... The thread as well as the cloth had no fixed self-essence... It is so with all things in this world. They are all empty, without self, without absolute existence. They are like the will- o'-the-wisp."

S: That seems clear enough. [298] Let's go on to "*The Real Significance of Emptiness*".

Sona: "From these statements it will be apparent that the emptiness of things does not mean nothingness, but simply means conditionality or transitoriness of all phenomenal existences. It is a synonym for aniyata or pratitya."

S: Aniyata means being undetermined, not fixed. Pratitya means conditioned, dependent on conditions.

Sona: "Therefore emptiness .. signifies .. the absence of particularity."

S: That is, the absence of concrete things existing in their own right, not depending on causes and conditions.

Sona: "The non-existence of individuals as such..."

S: i.e. the autonomous individuals existing in their own right.

Sona: "...and positively, the ever-changing state of the phenomenal world, a constant flux of becoming, an eternal series of causes and effects. It must never be understood as .. nihilism,.. as much condemned by Buddhists as naive realism... Someone may ob-

ject to .. emptiness, declaring, Emptiness .. not only destroys the law of causation and .. the principle of retribution, but utterly annihilates the possibility of a phenomenal world."

S: These are the objections.

Vajradaka: "Only he is annoyed over such scepticism who understands not the true significance and interpretation of emptiness.

Sudatta: "The Buddha's teaching rests on the discrimination of two kinds of truth: absolute and relative .. [to end of paragraph].. Suchness .. is free from conditionality;.. it discriminates not, nor is it particularized.

Sulocana: "But if not for relative truth, absolute truth is unattainable, and when absolute truth is not attained, nirvana is not to be gained."

S: I was referring to this, too, the other day: that if you negate the relative, the relative truth, the relatively existent, as relative - if you regard that, too, as illusory - then you've no basis for the realization of the absolute truth. You cut the ground from under your own feet. Therefore it's most important to distinguish between what is, in fact, illusory, and that which is simply only relatively real. If you confound the two and regard the relatively real as illusory, then you've no basis to stand. The whole of your religious life, your spiritual life, not to speak of anything else, just falls to the ground!

Ratnapani: "The dull-headed who do not perceive the truth rightfully go to self- destruction, [299] for they are like an awkward magician whose tricks entangle himself, or like an unskilled snake-catcher who gets himself hurt."

S: This is what we find very often with people who just read books on Zen and so on, and then just get themselves confused, and confuse others too. We see so much of this! Another source of confusion - if anything even worse than popular Zen literature - is Krishnamurti's writings, hmm? [moans of agreement] which are, you know, sometimes in part very good in themselves, if you really know what's what, but which can be very misleading and confusing if you just come to them, you know, rather innocently and unprepared and take them rather literally.

Vajradaka: But that doesn't, you know, from one of the people in Glasgow, who was very, quite experienced, and had sort of been, was a brahmin and led the wandering life, and Vedanta, and then was six years studying with Krishnamurti every year, still completely misunderstands.

S: Mmm, yes. I mean there are so many of these books and they are so popular, people sort of really lap them up, and the confusion just gets worse and worse! And even some of our own Friends, even, you know, one or two people in the Order, have in the past been affected by this way of thinking - or of not thinking - and have suffered because of it. I mean the literature is really disastrous in its effects sometimes, in its overall effect on most people who read it. I mean no doubt sometimes there is great truth in it which

can be recognized by those who are able to recognize it, but they tend to be in the minority.

Ratnapani: And don't need to read it anyway.

S: And don't need to read it anyway, not in Krishnamurti's writings anyway. And he seems to be turning out more and more. Almost every year there's one or two new books by Krishnamurti. There's a whole shelf of them now! Anyway, carry on.

Ratnapani: "The world-honoured one knew well the abstruseness of the Doctrine which is beyond the mental capacity of the multitude, and was inclined not to disclose it before them.

Mamaki: "The objection that Buddhism one-sidedly adheres to emptiness and thereby exposes itself to grave errors, entirely misses the mark, for there are no errors in emptiness... It is on account of emptiness that all things are possible... Those who deny emptiness .. are like a horseman who forgets he is on horseback."

S: You could also say, 'Those who find fault with relative existence and say [300] it's illusory are themselves relatively existing, and if they didn't relatively exist, they couldn't even say that relative existence was illusory! [pause]

Devaraja: There does seem to be quite a tradition, though, in sort of anecdotal Zen, of people saying, 'Ah well, it's all empty, it's all one,' and then the master giving them a thump in the face and saying, 'Well if it's all empty, how come you, you know,..'

S: Yes, right, yes.

Devaraja: 'Do you feel this?'

S: But how did that sort of tradition start anyway? Disciples who were glibly saying that everything was empty, hmm? But nowadays, in modern Zen anecdotal circles, you go around saying everything is empty, and there's no master to give you a thump any more! If he did, you probably wouldn't go to his sesshin again! [sounds of amusement]: 'I don't like him, he doesn't understand really the western mind!' [amusement]

Vajradaka: 'He's just a sadist..'

S: Yes, 'He's unsympathetic, no compassion.' Anyway, on we go.

Nagabodhi: "If they think that things exist because of their self-essence, and not because of their emptiness.."

S: i.e. because of their being dependent on causes and conditions..

Nagabodhi: They therefore make things come out of causelessness, they destroy those relations that exist between the acting and the act and the acted, and they also destroy the conditions that make up the law of birth and death.

Devamitra: "All is declared empty because there is nothing that is not a product of universal causation."

S: i.e. everything is empty in the sense of being only relatively existent, not existent in its own right, or autonomous.

Devamitra: "This law of causation, however, is merely provisional, though herein lies the middle path."

S: It's provisional in the sense that it isn't ultimate; there is something beyond, and the relative holds sway only until such time as the absolute comes into its own.

Nagabodhi: You could say 'Herein lies ANY path.'

S: Right, indeed. [301]

Mangala: "As thus there is not an object which is not conditioned, so there is nothing that is not empty."

S: Conditionality and emptiness are synonymous.

Lokamitra: "If all is not empty, then there is no death nor birth, and withal disappears the fourfold noble truth."

S: It's emptiness, i.e. relativity, that makes relative existence (i.e. death or birth) possible at all - and the fact that there are four noble truths. Everything exists on account of emptiness. You must understand emptiness as conditionality. If you encounter a Buddhist text which says 'everything exists on account of emptiness,' you think of emptiness as a sort of principle, a sort of 'thing' that is somehow responsible, but it's just an abstract conceptual expression for the fact that everything we know, everything we experience, arises in dependence on causes and conditions etc, and is just conditional therefore. Emptiness is conditionality. So if you are not careful, you reify that concept of conditionality, make it into emptiness, and then say, 'Everything exists on account of emptiness,' as though emptiness is a sort of cosmic principle. Nagarjuna certainly does not do that, but it's only one or two steps further to doing it.

Devaraja: "How could there be suffering, if not for the law of causation? Impermanence is suffering. But with self-essence there will be no permanence."

S: In other words, if you understand emptiness as being non-existent, then everything is negated, and everything ends up being completely nonsensical, but if you understand

emptiness as relativity, as conditionality, everything becomes possible, including the spiritual life.

Devaraja: "So long as impermanence is the condition of life, self-essence .. is out of the question [to end of paragraph]. The hypothesis of self-essence is to be abandoned."

Sona: "If there is neither suffering nor cessation, it must be said that the path leading to the cessation of suffering is also non-existent."

Vajradaka: "If there is really self-essence, suffering could not be recognized now, as it had not been recognized."

S: In other words, if there really was a self-essence, if things were independent and autonomous, suffering could not be recognized now because it hadn't been recognized in the past. And if things are self-existent, if they have a self-essence, they don't change. So non-recognition then becomes recognition. [302] In other words, the possibility of your whole spiritual life depends upon relativity, it depends upon conditionality. [pause]

Vajradaka: "That is to say, enlightened minds..."

S: Intelligent minds he means, of course. Enlightened minds don't need the teaching of the Buddha.

Vajradaka: "...through the teaching of the Buddha, now recognize the existence of suffering... Recognition of the fourfold truth is only possible when this phenomenal world is in a state of constant becoming, that is, when it is empty as it really is."

Sudatta: "As it is with the recognition of suffering, so it is with .. the realization of the path as well as with the four states of saintliness."

Sulocana: "If, on account of self as essence ..[down to].. how could a person desire to ascend .. higher and higher on the scale of existence?"

Ratnapani: "If there were no four states of saintliness, then there would be no aspirants for it."

S: These have been mentioned several times. I take it everyone knows what is meant?

Devaraja: Is that the sort of stream entrant?

S: Right. Stream-enterer, once-returner, non-returner, arhant.

Ratnapani: "And if there were no eight wise men, there could exist no sangha."

Mamaki: "Again, when there could not be the fourfold noble truths,.. if a man did not have Buddha essence, he could not hope to attain Buddhahood, however strenuously he might exert himself in the ways of the Bodhisattva.

S: It's as though there are two extreme views here, huh? You've got, as it were, relative existence dependent upon causes and conditions. One extreme view is that you regard this as illusory, as non-existent. In other words, you transfer the attributes of the illusory to the relatively real. In other words, you cut the ground from under your own feet. The other extreme is that you transfer the attributes of the absolute to the relatively real, by way of the svabhava teaching. The result of that is, of course, that you stultify yourself, hmm? Do you see this? [pause] One extreme wrong view is to regard the relatively real as illusory, the other is to regard the relatively real as absolutely real. And I mean, [303] this second extreme is contained in, or represented by, the early Buddhist teaching of the viparyayas, the perversities: thinking of the impermanent as permanent. You might say that we don't do this, but we do! Suppose you become very attached to somebody, and you become absolutely prostrate with grief when you lose them, either by death or some other way. What does that mean? You have (?briefly) been regarding the transitory as not transitory, as though it was going to last for ever. This is a viparyasa, a perversity, huh?

So this is what has sometimes been called the error of misplaced absoluteness. There *is* an absolute, there *is* an eternal, there *is* an infinite, and so on, but it is *not* this empirical reality, hmm? So in the same way that you mustn't regard this empirically real, the relatively real, as being merely illusive, also you mustn't regard it as being absolute or absolutely real. In both cases you stultify yourself and negate all possibility of spiritual development. If you do the first you're an annihilationist and if you do the second you're an eternalist! So in that way, the recognition, in a common-sense way of the relatively real being relatively real is the middle way!

Nagabodhi: When it says "But if a man did not have Buddha essence he could.." He seems to be right in the middle of suddenly positing a fixed point.

S: Right!

Nagabodhi: What he's actually saying is: without people who aren't Enlightened, it's impossible for somebody to gain Enlightenment. That's all that means.

S: Mmm, yes. "But if a man did not have Buddha essence." It really means if a man was not able to realize Buddhahood, he wouldn't realize Buddhahood. It's all very artificial. I mean a sort of ... just a confusion of language, yes?

Nagabodhi: It seems a *really bad* place to put in something like Buddha *essence*...

S: Right, hmm, right.

Nagabodhi: ...when he's talking about...

S: The Buddha svabhava, in other words.

Nagabodhi et al: Yes, mmm, right. [304]

S: So very often in this *loose* Mahayana talk, which, you know, you get a lot of in Zen, there's a lot of this sort of, you know, making Buddhahood a sort of svabhava. All right, sometimes, poetically, you need to use such expressions, but you mustn't take them literally, otherwise you stultify yourself, as in fact we *find* these people stultifying themselves! We actually *see* this! [pause] All right. Right on to the end.

Nagabodhi: "Further, if all is not empty but has self-essence,.. it means that retribution is independent of our deed, good or evil. (But is this justified by our experience?)

Devamitra: "If it must be admitted that our deed .. becomes the cause,.. then how could we say there is no emptiness?"

S: i.e. no relativity, no conditionality.

Mangala: "When you negate the doctrine of emptiness,.. there remains nothing that ought to be done, and a thing is called done which is not yet accomplished..."

S: "And a thing is called done which is not yet accomplished." 'You are Buddha,' huh? Hmm? So what happens? You never become Buddha!

Mangala: "...and he is said to be a doer who has not done anything... If there were .. self-essence,.. things must be .. eternally existing, which is tantamount to eternal nothingness.

Lokamitra: "If there were no emptiness there would be no attainment,.. no annihilation of pain, nor the extinction of all the passions."

S: Again, emptiness in the sense of relativity, conditionality.

Devaraja: "Therefore it is taught by the Buddha that those who recognize the law of universal causation, recognize the Buddha as well as suffering, accumulation, cessation, and the path."

S: And don't forget where we started from: that someone, some objector, had said that the doctrine of emptiness negated the whole possibility of the spiritual life, as well as all worldly existence. But obviously that was a misunderstanding: he was taking emptiness in the sense of complete non- existence. So then Nagarjuna retorts upon him that far from emptiness negating the whole of worldly existence and even spiritual life, emptiness rightly understood (i.e. as the teaching of relativity and conditionality) is the foundation and basis not only of worldly life but of the spiritual life itself. [305]

So he neatly turns the tables on the opponent, on the objector, by giving the correct interpretation of sunyata, not as saying that everything is illusory or that everything is nothing, or that sunyata itself is nothingness, but that sunyata is relativity, the law of conditionality, pratitya-samutpada.

Devaraja: It's really a great sort of freeing, that teaching, in that it sort of opens up infinite potential.

S: Right. Yes, indeed. Yes. And if you are told you are a Buddha already, well, what a pity, because you can't become one now!

Sona: "The Mahayanistic doctrines thus formulated .. are: there is no such thing as the ego..."

S: Of course, ego is the illusive ego-sense.

Sona: "...mentation is produced by the coordination of various vij/anas or senses.

Vajradaka: "Individual existences have no selfhood... The world of particulars in the work of ignorance as declared by Buddha in his formula of .. twelve nidanas."

S: Twelve nidanas. Though ignorance there doesn't occur as a sort of cosmic first principle, as Suzuki intended intended to make it in his discussion of tathata or bhuta-tathata.

Vajradaka: "When this wall of Maya is uplifted ..[to end of paragraph].. When we reach this state of ideal Enlightenment, we are said to have realized the Buddhist life.

End of Chapter VII

End of day 5

DAY 6

Chapter VIII

[306]

S: Chapter 8, which is on karma.

Nagabodhi: "*Definition.* Karma, or sanskara which is sometimes used as its synonym,.. in its most abstract sense .. becomes .. equivalent to 'beginningless ignorance',.. for ignorance .. is a negative manifestation of suchness and marks the beginning or unfolding of a phenomenal world..."

S: This is only a very specialized interpretation of Yogacara. Buddhism on the whole, especially Hinayana, just doesn't say that.

Nagabodhi: "...whose existence is characterized by incessant activities actuated by the principle of karma."

S: Here is a good example of reification: "incessant activities actuated by the principle of karma". In other words, activities actuated by the principle of action! [laughter] Why not just speak of activities, yes?

Nagabodhi: When Goethe says in Faust, 'Im anfang war die Tat,' he uses the term 'Tat' in the sense of karma as it is here understood.

S: 'In the beginning was the act.'

Mamaki: "When karma is used in its concrete sense, it is the principle of activity in the world of particulars or namarupas."

S: Names and forms.

Mamaki: "It becomes the principle of conservation of energy in the biological world of evolution and heredity..."

S: I wouldn't say so much that it *is* evolution and heredity, but it is the general principle which makes them possible.

Mamaki: "...and in the moral world that of immortality of deeds. Sanskara, when used as an equivalent of karma, corresponds to this .. signification,.. as in the twelve chains of dependence."

S: Twelve links rather than twelve chains.

Mamaki: "Here it follows ignorance and precedes consciousness... Ignorance and blind activity are one... The former emphasizes the epistemological phase and the latter the ethical, or, we might say, one is statical and the other dynamical."

S: The standard comparison is that ignorance is represented by a man in the state of drunkenness, and sanskara are his various actions performed while in that state of drunkenness. This is the sort of classical analogy.

Mamaki: "If we are to draw a comparison between the first four of the twelve nidanas ..[to end of paragraph].. the principle of karma works in its concrete form. [307] [reading straight on to p.184]"

Mangala: "...the law of karma is irrefragible."

S: This is not strictly speaking correct. In fact, Suzuki contradicts himself. "The law of karma is irrefragible." No it isn't. One karma can counteract another karma. And also, according to the Abhidharma, very weak karmas, if they don't have the opportunity of

fructifying within a certain period, simply die out, and one does not reap the results of those karmas. So the law of karma is not, strictly speaking, a sort of mechanical principle which inevitably works, as it were. There is a certain amount of slack in it, as it were.

Devamitra: It's coming very close again to a kind of cosmic principle, isn't it?

S: You mean as interpreted by Suzuki?

Devamitra: Yes.

S: Yes.

Mangala: He does say "It must work out its own destiny, if not overcome by some counteracting force."

S: Yes, he does say that. Of course, some counteracting force means another karma, hmm? For instance, if you commit an unskilful action, which under the normal operation of the law of karma will bring you pain and suffering, you can proceed to counteract that by performing corresponding skilful actions. and performing them to such an extent that the karma produced by the unskilful action is counteracted. You can't do that with all karmas, not with very very bad or very very good ones: those which are called karma-karana(?) [garuka-kamma in Pali, tr.] or heavy karmas. The retribution of those heavy karmas is inevitably due within a certain short period. For instance, the karma of meditation, this cannot be indefinitely obstructed; it's weighty and must manifest sooner or later, and usually sooner.

Lokamitra: "The irrefragibility of karma means that the law of causation is supreme in our moral sphere as well as in the physical. Nothing in the life of an individual or a nation or a race happens without due cause and sufficient reason, that is, without previous karma."

S: He's bringing in national and racial karma. This is not done in the Hinayana or, usually, in the Mahayana. There are *suggestions* of collective karma in some Mahayana sutras, but quite faint. It's the Theosophists in modern times who have developed this conception of collective karma, [308] national karma, racial karma, and sometimes almost personify the race and the individual, the race and the nation, and speak of their sort of karmic retributions as though they were individuals. There is nothing really like this in classical Buddhism.

Devamitra: Can you justify that development in any way?

S: I think it can *be* justified. I think, if it's carefully stated, it can be justified as a quite legitimate extension of Buddhist thought, even though it hasn't been extended in that way actually in the East. But even so, there is no collective karma, no national karma, or racial karma, apart from the sum total of the individuals composing that race. And the so-called collective karma is simply the fact that a number of individuals belonging to a par-

ticular race or nation have the same kind of karma, hmm? And it therefore produces a sort of cumulative effect, hmm? Not that there is a sort of national entity or racial entity which has its own collective karma apart from the karmas of the individuals making up the nation or the race. That again would be a reification of a concept. But it is quite a useful way of speaking, inasmuch as there is, as it were, collective action, national action, racial action. To that extent and in that sense there is also national karma, racial karma, national retribution, racial retribution.

Devamitra: And insofar as the individual participates in that, he will reap the fruits of collective karma.

S: Right. Yes. And to the extent that you are an Englishman, you are bound up with whatever happens to England, so you can say, therefore, that you are affected by the national karma. And also there is the point, well, why should you have been born and Englishman rather than a Frenchman or a German? Perhaps there was something in your original karma. My own personal belief is - this can be traced to Buddhist thought - is that you tend to be born in the same group, even the same family group. There are many instances of this, you know, within my knowledge, and I have, you know, come across many accounts and reports in the East. It seems as though people, unless they make a special effort, tend to be reborn not only within the same ethnic group but even within the same broad family group, and this happens very often. This is almost just the force of inertia; you just repeat the same pattern over again, you go where [309] your attachment is. So the chances are, it seems, that an Englishman will be reborn as an Englishman, as though he wants to be an Englishman and to go on being an Englishman. So it isn't surprising therefore that one should be able to think and speak in terms of national karma. You are not just born an Englishman by sheer accident, according to Buddhism; you have a certain predisposition to be an Englishman or to be born in England. You are attracted by English institutions, usually because you were an Englishman before and wanted to go on being that way. Maybe, of course, sometimes quite often, sort of cross- reincarnations take place, when someone maybe goes beyond what he has been born and brought up in, or when he has a definite attraction for some other country or some other culture.

Sudatta: Bhante, when you picked out certain types of karma, like national karma, as an example of reification, surely the whole of language is reification, isn't it? You pick out any single item - a grain of wheat - it is itself a mass of complex...

S: Why sure, yes.

Sudatta: Where do you differentiate between language which is inherently reification and specific examples which are more extreme reification?

S: Well it depends on the effect. If you say that there is a grain of wheat, or of you say there is a loaf of bread, well your purpose in making that statement is simply to be able to handle the loaf of bread, say to produce it and to eat it. So the fact that you as it were reify it doesn't get in the way of that particular function. But if you reify in the moral and

spiritual sphere, then it results in all sorts of conceptions which start getting in the way of your spiritual life and development, hmm? The Buddha says, 'The Tathagata uses the words of conventional speech but is not misled by them.' So there's no harm if you say bread, apple, class, person, etc, because the reification here has a definite practical function which is being fulfilled, and even when you reify things like nation and national karma, it's all right as a way of speaking. I mean if you just want to describe certain national characteristics or interpret history. But if you start thinking and feeling that there is such a thing as 'France with her karma' and you develop a definite emotional attitude towards 'France and her karma' - France being really just a sort of fiction - then all sorts of dangers may occur, and develop quite a wrong sort of emotional state and so on.

But it is true, in fact the whole of language depends to some extent on this, but the fact that you refer to one particular thing, and not to that [310] one thing made up of a multitude of other things, really doesn't matter in the affairs of ordinary everyday life. Let's go on then.

Lokamitra: "The Buddhists, therefore, do not believe in any special act of grace or revelation in our religious realm... Whatever is suffered or enjoyed .. is due to the karma accumulated since the beginning of life on earth. Nothing sown, nothing reaped."

S: There's a bit of ambiguity here. What do you think he means by "suffered or enjoyed *morally*"? [pause] What meaning do you get out of that? [pause] Well, leave aside the epithet "moral": Whatever is suffered or enjoyed in our present life is due to the karma accumulated since the beginning of life on earth." Do you think that this is correct, hmm?

Devamitra: It makes it a kind of principle of retribution, but...

Lokamitra: 'Morally' doesn't need to be there, does it?

S: Well maybe. We'll leave that aside for the moment.

Devaraja: "Beginning of life on earth" seems a bit sort of ... it's almost biological.

S: Right. It limits it, from the Buddhist point of view.

Devamitra: Well it's not taking the other three niyamas into consideration.

S: It's not. That's the main point. He's not taking the other niyamas into consideration.

Vajradaka: Niyamas, what are they?

S: That karma is only one kind of conditionality, yes? So all that you suffer during life is not due to the karmic results of actions committed in the past. It can be due to other factors, other causes, not karmic causes, hmm? It MAY be that he is, in a confused sort of way, indicating this by the word 'morally', but it isn't all that clear, yes? The teaching

about the niyamas is more an Abhidharma teaching, but based on teaching in the sutras. It's quite important, because it completely overturns the popular view that in Buddhism everything is due to karma, whatever happens to you is due to your past karma, it's a recompense for actions committed in the past. Which is not true. This is not the Buddhist view, hmm? So this five niyama teaching is very important. I take it most of you know what the five niyamas are? No!?! I'm sure that it is in one of my lectures, in The Three Jewels and also in lectures. [311]

There are [the] utu-niyana (these are Pali terms), bija-nyama, bitta-niyama, kamma-niyana, and dhamma-niyama. So these are rendered - some of these, by Mrs Rhys Davids - utu-niyama is 'physical inorganic order of existence', possibly you could say the chemical order. Bija is physical organic; bija is literally seed. And then citta is of course mind. Dhamma is a bit obscure; you could call it, say for the time being, spiritual, and I'll explain that in a minute. And kamma is of course karma: actions performed with deliberate volition. So this means that when something befalls you in this present life, it may be due to any one - or due to the operation or the action of any one - of these five orders of conditionality, hmm?

Mangala: Or more than one presumably?

S: Or a combination. To give the usual example, suppose you fall sick, hmm? This may be due to utu-niyama, that is to say, the operation of physical inorganic conditionality. The example I sometimes give - I don't know whether this is quite correct or not - is of a draught. You are sitting in a draught and the draught is a movement of cold air, it is a physical inorganic thing, and this brings about sickness in you. This is not due to karma - nothing to do with karma - you simply happen to sit in a draught, hmm? yes? Then supposing bija- niyama: you may pick up a germ, and the illness may be due to that. Again, nothing to do with karma. It's a physical organic order acting here. Again, citta-niyama: it may be a psychosomatic illness. It may be due to some sort of mental disturbance on your part; this may not be due to karma. Again, you may fall sick due to previous karma: because of something you've done in the past to somebody else, you are now suffering in your physical body, hmm? And lastly, dhamma-niyama, the explanations I've found of this in Buddhist literature are not very satisfactory. I've come to the conclusion that this refers to physical disturbance brought about in the course of physical experience, which sometimes seem like illnesses. It's not just psychosomatic in the ordinary sense but changes in the physical body even amounting to what looks like illness on account of purely spiritual changes taking place. This is my personal interpretation; I can't make sense of it otherwise. So you can see: Suppose someone falls ill, you must never say, oh that's proof of karma. Now in India, yes! In India almost always Hindus say everything is due to bad karma. If they fall sick, it's their past karma; if they are poor, it's their past karma, etc etc.[312]

Mangala: Is karma, therefore, only voluntary, intentional action? Say now, if I dropped a brick on my foot, that wouldn't be karma?

S: No.

Nagabodhi: Or if you dropped a brick on a fly?

S: If you happened to drop it ... ah, this question has been discussed. To be unmindful *is* karmic. You would not suffer the karmic consequences of a *desire* to kill or hurt, but you *would* suffer the karmic consequences of unmindfulness, yes? Now there is a further refinement, and that is that, for instance, suppose you sit in a draught. The fact that you catch cold is not due to karma directly, it is due to the fact that there is this physical inorganic order of existence affecting you, but you have come into the physical body due to karma, in the sense of your whole volitional attitude, in accordance with traditional teaching, prior to your present birth, and it is that craving, and that ignorance, which are karmic, which have brought you into your present embodiment. So karma does come in in that way. Indirectly, you can say, the karmic factor is involved, but only up to that point. The fact that you fall sick is not directly due to karma. Then again, Buddhism would say that you can never be sure, really, whether something is due to karma or not. Only if you have succeeded in eliminating all the other factors, hmm? Supposing you fall sick and you get all possible treatment, hmm? first of all on the assumption, say, that it is due to physical organic causation, or else due to physical inorganic causation, or that maybe it is psychosomatic. All the treatments fail. You may conclude, in the end that there is a karmic factor at work, hmm? You know, we sometimes find in the affairs of our life that certain things are happening, certain things are going wrong, and we can't counteract them! It's really very strange, and everything that we do, all the steps that we take just don't seem to succeed. It's as though there is some x-factor at work frustrating us all the time, and it seems really odd and strange. And Buddhism will say, well when that happens it is very likely, though you can't 100% sure, that a karmic factor is at work, hmm? And this can only be dealt with, as it were, religiously and, you know, in Buddhist countries they would perform pujas, make offerings, to as to accumulate extra merit to counteract whatever karmic x-factor may be at work.

Anyway, is this all clear? I'm leaving aside for the time being the consideration of the teaching on its merits, you know, whether it's possible [313] for a modern mind to regard it as true. I'm trying to get clear what the traditional thinking about karma actually says. I think we've got to get this clear in our minds first before we start considering, well, it is true, do I accept it? But this is the traditional teaching.

Mangala: What does niyama actually mean?

S: Literally it means a sort of course or rule, even an order, in the sense of which we speak of a physical organic order, or inorganic order, hmm?

Devamitra: I have the impression that of the five niyamas, karma is the most powerful one. Is that in fact so?

S: Well it depends what you mean by powerful.

Devamitra: Well it seems, in the way you've just explained it, to be very much bound up with the others as well, whereas the others can be very, almost, independent of the other three I think, if not independent...

S: Well it's because, to begin with, on account of our karma of previous lives that we come bound up with a psychophysical organism, and therefore exposed to the actions of the other kinds of conditionality.

Devamitra: So that it's karma one has to transcend, not necessarily the other niyamas?

S: Yes.

Devamitra: The other thing that has puzzled me was [that] I think you referred to dhamma-niyama in The Three Jewels as the irruption of the transcendental; it can be an effect of the irruption of the transcendental. Just now you talked in terms of a spiritual...

S: Yes, I sometimes distinguish spiritual and transcendental, sometimes not. I was thinking of the spiritual more in terms of the transcendental, because you could include the term 'spiritual' under 'mental' in the wider sense. But when there is any sort of real transformation, up to the transcendental, and a very radical change takes place in you, I am quite sure that there are physical changes too. One of my friends in India who is also a medical man as well as a yogi assured me that according to his investigations, meditation and higher spiritual experiences changed even the chemical constitution of the cells of the body of the person meditating and so on. I'm not in a position to verify that, but this is what he did tell me and it sounds quite plausible.[314]

Devaraja: Apparently, in the Middle Ages certainly, they used to talk a lot about saints' disease in Europe. People who were really devoted to a spiritual practice used to go through a period, usually, when they used to be covered with boils and sores, as if all the poisons of the body were leaving.

Mangala: It was called saints' malady.

Lokamitra: When people have been doing a lot of meditation, or just some, their face, their skin, looks very clear afterwards.

S: Yes, right. Well this can be merely psychosomatic, hmm? That the blood is purified as it were. I don't know much about physiology but I assume that it makes a difference, and you do notice that people sometimes look brighter and healthier after a retreat. For instance, there's many an amusing incident in the Pali canon where you get sometimes a number of monks together and sort of talking, and as so often happens they are talking about other monks. And one says, 'What's wrong with monk so-and-so? His complexion has become very yellow, and he doesn't look very well.' So someone goes and sees monk s-and-so and they usually find that he's going through something and become a bit despondent or he'd lost faith in the teaching, or he'd broken some of the rules, or he wants to go back to the worldly life. But time and again this reference is to the yellow

complexion as indicative of a certain mental state, hmm? And, you know, after all, they are all brown-skinned people and, you know, when an Indian doesn't look very well, or isn't very well, he just goes around a nasty shade of yellow and looks quite unwholesome, and it was this that they were referring to. I suppose English people would go rather grey, or a rather sort of pallid hue, hmm?

Mamaki: It was generally accepted, when I was in Subud, at the beginning people, when they started, it would be good all right. Then after a period they would start having these physical things wrong with them, and then eventually those would clear up, so they came to the surface.

S: Well we've certainly found this ourselves, not only physical but mental and emotional as well, usually after two or three months a little bit, and then certainly after six months. But the crucial period, according to my observation with Friends, at least until the time I left London, was that a two-year period is quite crucial. [315] [several unintelligible comments at once]

S: Yes, after taking up the really sort of spiritual practice. I am generalizing about the Friends because that's where my experience lies, but this is what I've seen, or did see. Anyone noticed anything like this? At the end of two years seems to be quite sort of critical.

Devamitra: This has happened to me quite recently, and I've had a lot of difficulty over the last few months, and it's only just two years or so since I got involved.

S: It seems if you can get through that then it's fairly plain sailing, at least for a while. [sounds of 'whew!']

Sona: I'm just coming up to two years.

S: Ah. Well it does depend also to some extent on temperament. If one has an equable temperament, you know, it may not happen at all. It's just like the change of life. With some people they go through it quite smoothly, with others it's really dramatic and traumatic. All right, let's go on.

Devaraja: [p.185] "Whatever has been done leaves an ineffable mark on the individual's life..."

S: I think he means an ineffaceable mark.

Devaraja: "...and even in that of the universe. In case the karma of an act is not actualized during one's own lifetime, it will in that of one's successors who may be physical or spiritual."

S: Presumably he means successive, as it were, incarnations of that so-called personality either on the physical plane or on a higher plane.

Devaraja: "Not only 'the evil that men do lives after them' but also the good, for it will not be 'interred with their bones', as vulgar minds imagine.

S: The vulgar mind here is of course Shakespeare. [Julius Caesar 3.ii.]

Devaraja: "We read in the Samyutta Nikaya 3.1-4: '...For merit gained this life within,/ Will yield a blessing in the next.'" [KosalaSamyutta S.i.209]

S: Well just a word or two more about the five niyamas. It is very important to understand clearly, because you may very well be asked questions by people based on the assumption, which may be sometimes quite hidden, that according to Buddhism absolutely everything that happens is directly due [316] and, you know, there may be a criticism based on that assumption, so you should spot this at once, when that assumption is made, and directly controvert that: that according to Buddhism *not* everything is directly due to karma. This is only one factor at work, and the general principle is conditionality. And sometimes you find, in books about Buddhism, the very loose statement that, according to Buddhism, karma is the universal principle. It isn't; it's conditionality that is the universal principle. Karma is only one particular application of that.

Devaraja: What usually happens then, presumably, is people are using karma in far too loose a sense.

S: Far too loose a sense, yes.

Devaraja: First of all one has to specify really what karma means.

S: Right, yes.

Devamitra: It seems to be generally interpreted as a kind of fate.

S: Yes, I must say in India it very often is, I mean by Hindus. They often speak of it in this way.

Devamitra: Is this in fact the orthodox Hindu teaching on karma?

S: Well there doesn't seem to be an orthodox Hindu teaching. I mean the Buddhists have gone into what is karma, I mean in the Abhidharma literature, and they enumerate the different kinds of karma. To the best of my knowledge the Hindus have never done this. There just is this loose popular conception. It doesn't seem ever to have been philosophically investigated, or discriminated.

Mangala: It almost seems to me the more one has to take responsibility for whatever happens, you know... [general sounds of agreement] ...for one.

S: It's more, I mean, what you have *done*, *you* have done, hmm? And I mean if you want to interpret karma, you can say it is your own self-modification of your own being. I mean, every action that you do changes what you are, modifies what you are, and you remain modified. That is karma, hmm? If you want to interpret it in sort of almost common sense practical terms, that is what it is.

Mangala: But presumably you can also be changed or influenced by things outside you?
[317]

S: Oh sure.

Mangala: And in this sense I suppose you just have to accept the possibility for that as well, even though you may not consciously have changed yourself.

S: For instance, you may be affected by the work you do, but up to a point it is your decision to do that work or not do it, and therefore it is your decision to be affected by that particular kind of work or not, hmm? There is almost always some sort of choice.

Ratnapani: Bhante, karma is loosely called, sometimes, cause and effect, which I think is sort of right but mostly wrong...

S: Yes, well it's cause and effect within the moral sphere, as it were, the psycho-moral sphere.

Ratnapani: Causality, can that be called cause and effect.

S: Well it's not quite the same thing. For rough and ready purposes yes, the two are the same, conditionality and cause and effect, but Buddhism speaks quite deliberately of conditionality, not cause and effect. This is connected with various problems, or due to problems, perhaps, within Indian philosophy. I've gone into this somewhere before, I believe in a lecture. If you have cause and effect discriminated, sometimes a discussion arises as to whether the cause is the same as the effect or different. Do you see the point?

Now there's been a lot of discussion of this in Indian philosophy. Some philosophers hold that cause and effect are identical. For instance that, say, you take a lump of gold and make it into an ornament, but when you've made it into an ornament, it is still gold, hmm? So the effect, i.e. the ornament, is the same as the gold, i.e. the cause; cause and effect are identical. All that has changed is the form. They say that causation consists in change of form, substance remains the same. Others say, no, cause and effect are different, and they give various other examples. A favourite one is of milk and curds: milk is not the same as curds, and you produce curds from milk. One is sweet, the other is sour. And so on and so forth. You've got various examples. So those who say that cause and effect are identical are called *satkaryavadins*, and those who say that cause and effect are different are called *asatkaryavadins*. And all the schools of Hindu philoso-

phy are differentiated according to whether they are satkaryavadins or asatkaryavadins. [laughter]

The Buddhists are neither. The Buddhists point out that if cause and effect are identical, [318] causation is impossible [laughter]. If cause and effect are different, causation is also impossible. So they say 'conditionality'. And Buddhists regard conditionality as a middle way between these two extremes, and the Buddhist formula is: this being present, that arises. And Buddhism says it is not necessary to speculate whether they are identical or whether they are not identical. This being present, that arises; this not being present, that does not arise. This is all you need to know and all you need to say. And this is what is called conditionality. Therefore conditionality is not a theory of cause and effect, saying that cause is identical with effect or cause is not identical with effect. Conditionality is merely a statement of certain observed facts, i.e. that when you have this, well, you have that too; when you don't have this, well, you don't have that either. That's what the law of conditionality says, hmm?

So this is also connected with Hindu philosophy. For instance, Vedanta is asatkaryavadin. Vedanta says that the whole universe is a transformation of the Brahman, the absolute, the first principle, and inasmuch as cause and effect are identical, God and the world, Brahma and the cosmos, are one. So they arrive at their monism in this way. But Buddhism, of course, will have none of that. So you see the position. You could say that conditionality is, as it were, more scientific, it's just observation, it is not going into any theories. It is not a theory of causation. If you see conditionality described as the Buddhist theory of causation, the Buddhist doctrine of causation, that's quite wrong. It's simply the Buddhist observation that certain facts tend to accompany one another, hmm? That when you have craving and desire, you tend to have suffering too, along with it. In other words, it represents observable sequences, hmm? Simply that.

Devaraja: Bhante, might it not be possible to say that if one is affected by all the niyamas, that it is in actual fact a result of one's karma, because one has put oneself in that situation.

S: Well, I've said that there is no direct influence of karma as regards these niyamas, but the fact that you are in this life at all, that you are a psychophysical organism, is due to ignorance and craving in past existences, so there is a general link up with karma, so therefore, as Devamitra says, karma is the most powerful of the niyamas in this sense.

Sudatta: Is Jung's notion on synchronicity on the lines of the Buddhist viewpoint, neither causation nor non-causation? [319]

S: In away, because the Abhidhamma, especially the Pali Abhidhamma, goes into conditionality quite exhaustively, and it has a list of 24 paccayas or relations; that even conditionality is not just of one kind, it can be of many kinds, and they enumerate 24. And one is what we could translate as synchronicity, the fact that things tend to occur at the same time. But this is not to assert a *causal* connection between them in the strict sense.

Vajradaka: No apparent cause anyway.

S: Well there are occasions when things occur together. You cannot perceive a cause, but in fact they're causally connected, as it were, hmm? But according to Buddhism and according to Jung, there is also the possibility of things definitely occurring together or at the same time - synchronously - without there being any causal connection, and therefore, for Jung, synchronicity becomes an alternative principle to causality. [pause] It is not that there is a hidden causal connection: there is *no* causal connection. A different principle is involved, which he called the principle of synchronicity: that things can happen at the same time, so that if one is around you know that the other must be around somewhere, without there being an actual causal connection between the two. You know, this is quite new within the western context, but it is certainly well known in China and the East, and Jung has drawn attention to this, and Koestler too. Koestler has a book on it, hasn't he? Does anyone know that book? I've got it back at...

Mamaki: The Act of Creation, isn't it?

S: No, that's another one. I forget the title for the moment. I do have it. Anyway, let's leave it for the moment. [Probably "The Roots of Coincidence" (1972), tr.]

Devamitra: Could you say that the whole idea of the teaching of the niyamas ... it seems very very closely bound up somehow with.... At the minute I can't quite see it, but it feels this way: that the pratitya samutpada, is it taken from a different source?

S: You mean the pratitya samutpada as consisting of the twelve links, or just the general principle?

Devamitra: I was thinking that, I suppose, it must be the same general principle.

S: Well it is the same general principle operating on different levels.

Devamitra: I just wondered how or why there were two completely different [320] formulations of this general principle.

S: Well the twelve link formulation is just intended to explain, to make clear to a certain extent, just how we come to be reborn and die and reborn again. It's the application of the principle on this - what is usually called the moral - level. But, for instance, if you apply it say chemically, say in dependence on one atom of hydrogen and two of oxygen, water arises, yes? This would be the application on the level of the utu-niyama, the physical inorganic order, yes?

Devamitra: Yes.

S: In dependence upon craving and grasping, suffering arises. This is the application on the moral level, the karmic level. And the twelve nidanas are detailed explanations of

the workings of conditionality on this karmic level, on the level of which in dependence upon craving, suffering arises, as per the four noble truths. You probably could have a great chart, you know, actually working it all out in detail, showing where and how it all fitted in. And the Abhidharma is, in a way, a sort of chart of that kind. All right, on to 186.

Vajradaka: Would you be interested in working out a chart like that?

S: Not personally, but I'm quite happy to have people do it.

Vajradaka: I'm quite interested to do it, but with a bit of aid.

S: Yes, but I think the first thing is to study the subject and understand all these terms and applications, and when it's clearly in one's mind, then start working out a chart. Govinda has some helpful charts, though a bit abstruse and difficult, and there is a little book published some years ago - I did have a copy but someone borrowed it and never returned it - "Buddhist Doctrine in Charts", produced by a Japanese scholar, and I really wish I had that. [Possibly "The Original and Developed Doctrines of Indian Buddhism in Charts" by Ryukan Kimura, tr.] It gives you all the Buddhist schools, and the teachings, in charts. Perhaps we should produce something like that. And there are also charts in Yamakami Sogen's "Systems of Buddhist Thought", which is in the Order library at Sarum House. And I think Takakusu has some charts in his "Essence of Buddhist Philosophy". Right, let's carry on.

Sona: "In accordance with this karmic preservation.. [to end of paragraph] ..the sinner gets fully awakened from the evil karma of eons, and enters, free from all curses, into the eternity of nirvana." [321]

S: This is standard Buddhist teaching of course, based on the third and fourth noble truths. Right then. On to "*Karma and Social Injustice*".

Vajradaka: "The doctrine of karma is very frequently utilised by some Buddhists to explain a state of things which must be considered states of social injustice.

Sudatta: "There are some people who are born rich... These are declared by some pseudo-Buddhists to be merely harvesting crops of good karma prepared in previous lives... The law of moral retribution is never suspended, as they reason... An act, once performed, will not be lost... And it does not matter whether the actor has gone through .. birth and death. For the Buddhist conception of individual identity is not that of personal continuity, but of karmic conservation."

S: Is this clear? This is a very important point. Taking it out of context for the moment, "the Buddhist conception of individual identity is not that of personal continuity, but of karmic conservation." He hasn't expressed it very well, but do you realize what sort of distinction he is making or getting at? [various negative replies]

Nagabodhi: I do, but I'd really like to hear it clarified once and for all. [laughter]

S: What do you think?

Nagabodhi: Well that there can be no idea of personal continuity, because there is no person as such to be continued.

S: Right. That is, no person in the sense of this fictitious ego, huh? So what does continue?

Nagabodhi: The five skandhas.

S: The five skandhas. A process of the five skandhas, yes, you know, with the karma that has been created and conserved. So therefore it is sometimes said that in Buddhism there is continuity but no, as it were, continuation of an unchanging ego, hmm? And this is a very important point. The process of conditionality, the cross-section of which is represented by the five skandhas - in the case of the individual - goes on, but there is no unchanging ego-soul, as it were, which is continuing in the midst of that process, hmm?

Sometimes you get the question from non-Buddhists, well, if there's no soul or no self, well, how is rebirth possible? In other words, rebirth is conceived of as this unchanging [322] ego or soul skipping over from one life to another or one body to another, himself unchanging, hmm? But the Buddhist conception of rebirth is simply this process of conditionality, of this arising in dependence on that, continuing from what we call one life to what we call another life. So nothing unchanging passes over; it's simply the process continuing, hmm?

Nagabodhi: What happens to the empirical self? The empirical experience of the five skandhas?

S: Well what is the empirical self?

Lokamitra: Experiencing, isn't it? Not the experience.

Vajradaka: Yes but between life and life, say with the shock of death?

S: With the shock of death, memory disappears usually, yes? [pause] Well it is a traumatic experience. And also of course we find, as you get older, also memory goes, doesn't it? And very old people who have lived out their full term seem not to have any memory, hmm? And death seems to, as it were, intensify this and consolidate this. So you're left without memories and you are reborn without memories. In a sense you need to be, because, you know, you would have accumulated so many memories that your mental life would become congested. It's a good thing to forget.

Devamitra: This kind of touches on something Nagabodhi and I were discussing last night in reference to senility. Is it possible, do you think, that if one is spiritually devel-

oped and evolving to as it were become senile externally, and yet sort of remain... Because of the effects of old age and so on, one's memory and things like that might be fading and...

S: I think it is possible.

Devamitra: Senility does not, then, necessarily denote sort of a lapse from spiritual development?

S: Not necessarily, in my opinion, no. I mean suppose someone was physically weak, well that in itself would not signify any lapse, you know, from the spiritual state, would it? Or suppose they were no longer able to move their jaws and speak, or were not able to see properly. Or even if they lost their memory and were not able to recognize you, it wouldn't necessarily imply they had lost their spiritual state. It could be, of course, but not necessarily. Whether it is, in fact, so, you'd have to [323] judge, you judge, just by your general feel for that person, where they were at.

Devamitra: Have you observed senile people who've led quite a vigorous spiritual life and so on?

S: I can't recollect any such instance myself. Certainly I've known very old and weak and frail people who have led a spiritual life and seemed to be still in a spiritual state despite extreme physical incapacity, but I don't recollect any actual case of senility in the full sense, when I've felt there was, you know, [unclear] sort of spiritual individuality. I must say I haven't come into contact actually with any actual cases of senility, you know, not in close contact, so I'm quite out of touch. One might have to ask someone who had worked with the very old whether they had observed any differences.

Lokamitra: Senility doesn't just imply, though, loss of memory and poor functioning; it implies something more.

S: What else?

Lokamitra: It implies some sort of, well I don't know, just, people I've seen, it is their reasoning, it's very different, so it's not just that their senses aren't as good and so on.

S: Well what is reason? They become childish, but, you know, a child does not reason. A child has many sort of mental activities that we don't have, but a child is very bright and alive nonetheless. For instance - there may be a sort of analogy - in the case of very young babies, they don't look directly at anybody, they don't, as it were, recognize anybody. Do you know what I mean? Old people also go into this state, and it seems in a way quite analogous to the state of the child before it starts recognizing, hmm? At the very end of life you, as it were, no longer recognize, but I don't think you can necessarily regard that as something negative, hmm? It is very much as though you are withdrawing from the world and your sort of participation within it, and that is not necessarily a deterioration, even though - certainly from the external point of view and capacity to

cope - there really is a deterioration, but not in terms of the person's inner consciousness, I *think*, at least not necessarily.

Devamitra: It is one of the conditions of conditioned existence.

S: Right, yes. [324]

Sudatta: There is a very interesting of that I saw in one magazine: a geriatric ward in London, wonderful old senile doddering cathetered lady who they'd nursed for quite a long time in quite a helpless state, who'd died. They found in her possessions a not-so-long-before-written poem, which was a *lucid* description of herself and how other people saw her. I was so impressed with this. They published it, and they got [unclear]. She saw herself not as an old lady, she was the young girl, the wife, the mother, and so on and so forth. It just goes to show you can't entirely judge by the external shell, that there can be a spark even when there has been a major loss of function.

S: It's as though the spark withdraws to a distance, as it were, and is just sort of looking and watching and seeing, but is not actually inhabiting and functioning, hmm?

Devamitra: It's almost as like there's a flow where, you know, a childish period at the beginning and the end of life, like the childish period at the end of life is preparing for the next time as a child.

S: Yes, right. It's as though there is a definite analogy between the state of extreme old age and the state of childhood. In the helplessness of old age, even, it seems, to some extent, the mental state. Even in the difficulty of communication.

Devamitra: It's almost like it's conditioning the child's incapacity or the infant's...

S: So it would seem to be, you know, quite easy to be reborn as a child after, you know, dying as an extremely old person. It's not such a big change!

Sulocana: And a very new baby looks old.

S: Ah, that's true. Right! And that's very strange isn't it?

Sudatta: It's just been right through it, hasn't it? [laughter]

S: What! Again? Here we are again! [laughter]

Devaraja: What is the thing that ... I'm trying to sort of get to grips with the process of continuity. What of the five skandhas die away, and what causes them to come together again? And there is a link between the two lives. What is the sort of...

S: Well, if you put it that way, which is sort of non-critical, it is [325] craving, *trnsa*, which keeps the whole thing going. Otherwise, you know, Buddhism would, strictly speaking,

not even go into it in this way. Otherwise you might say, well, what is that power, what is that forces which produces the water when the hydrogen and the oxygen come together? The scientist is usually content just to describe that: that in dependence upon the atom of hydrogen and the two of oxygen you get a molecule - I think it is, is it? of water. But the scientist does not say, well, what is that power that transforms the hydrogen and the oxygen into water; he's just satisfied to describe what happens.

And the same with Buddhism: in dependence on this, that arises; in dependence upon the residue of ignorance and craving left at the end of life, there arises a new consciousness in the so-called next life, neither the same nor different. And, you know, classical Buddhism is quite satisfied with that rather bare statement and doesn't speculate. But to ask what passes over, this is really quite unnecessary, hmm? You might just as well say, well, what passes over from the hydrogen and oxygen into the water? What is the link? But even if there is something - and perhaps the whole question is only a certain way of looking at it, maybe even an example of reification - you don't really need to know, even if there is something.

Devaraja: Would craving be the volitional element?

S: Yes, it would be... [drowned by Devaraja]

Devaraja: That's what I was really trying to get at, I mean which of the five skandhas, as it were.

S: Well it would be the sanskaras.

Vajradaka: Which is?

Mangala: Volition is the fourth one.

Vajradaka: Ah, so it wasn't conception?

S: That's what we went into yesterday, the long subdivision of the sanskaras in the Abhidharma.

Vajradaka: So it's volition that causes karma?

S: Volition *is* karma. It's another way of looking at it.

Devamitra: Well he does, in fact, equate sanskaras, almost, with karma, at the beginning of the chapter.

S: Yes, I think he says there's a slightly different shade of meaning. Yes, that's true. Really you can say the two amount to the same thing looked at from slightly different standpoints. Karma is more in terms [326] of the actual act and its consequences,

sanskara is more in terms of the actual psychological states, i.e. volitional states, which are active in producing consequences.

Nagabodhi: Does that give sanskara a key position in the five skandhas or is it just one of the five heaps?

S: In way, it does, in a way, it does have a key position. In a way it is what keeps all the others going.

Devamitra: It's almost like karma in the niyamas.

S: Right, yes, indeed, yes.

Mangala: Would you say karma is what keeps consciousness going, or the other way around?

S: It's more that karma keeps consciousness going. Again, consciousness is an instrument, and in that way helps to keep karma going. They are all interrelated after all.

Devamitra: It only keeps conditioned consciousness going.

S: Yes, right, yes, or is bound up with it. [pause]

Sudatta: Getting back to the question of personal continuity, it's simply astonishing that so many people in the world cling to this idea - not only Christianity, but so many of the newer cults - in spite of all the evidence, that one ends there. Just looking at one's life one can see oneself as a vastly changing flux, and one can't imagine which part of it, or what stage of it, carries on, if one wants to believe in that sort of notion.

Lokamitra: It's easy enough intellectually, it seems very difficult...

S: Anyway we are in the middle of "Karma and Social Injustice", so as soon as everybody gets back we shall continue. [pause] All right, on we go.

Sudatta: "Whatever deeds we may commit, they inevitably bear their legitimate fruit.. [to end of paragraph] ..their future fortune the fruit of their present deeds."

S: This, of course, is the view of the pseudo-Buddhists, don't forget, so now he goes on to comment on this.

Sulocana: "This view as held by some pseudo-Buddhists gives a wrong impression,.. for it tries to explain by karma theory the phenomena which lie outside the sphere of its applicability." [327]

S: There are, of course, some Buddhist texts where it clearly says that according to karma, or as a result of karma, some people are born rich and others poor. But anyway let's see how Suzuki deals with that.

Sulocana: "As I understand, what the theory of karma proposes to explain is not the cause of social injustice and economic inequality but facts of moral causation."

S: The distinction isn't clear to me yet, but anyway, let's go on and see.

Nagabodhi: "The overbearing attitude of the rich .. and suchlike social phenomena arise from the imperfection of our present social organization, which is based on the doctrine of absolute private ownership." [a laugh]

S: As though he wants to say there's an economic niyama, huh? [amusement]

Nagabodhi: "People are allowed to amass wealth unlimitedly,.. and to bequeath it.. [to end of paragraph] ..they are privileged to live upon the sweat and blood of others,.. who are daily succumbing to the heavy burden .. forced on them by society."

S: This is what Dr Conze calls Suzuki's socialistic phase. And he points out that we don't hear anything about socialism in any of his succeeding work. But it is, after all, a question, hmm? I mean if you look at it in terms of niyama, which niyama does all this belong to? Well it seems that you can bring it [unclear] as a karma-niyama, but then you have to remember that one person's karma can affect another. But the fact that we come into the world and the human community at all is due to our own karma. So I wouldn't personally rule out the possibility that some people may be born poor and others rich as a direct result of their own karma, but others not so. Others may be born poor just because riches have been monopolized by others through active greed, i.e. bad karma in this life, and that others have therefore been deprived, huh? This is not due to their own karma, and therefore one person's greed may have a very deleterious effect upon another person in this life. And therefore another person may suffer in this life due not to his own past actions but to somebody else's present actions, without karma necessarily being involved at all. It seems to be part and parcel of the human situation, huh? that one person can affect another without the other person having deserved it, in that sense, hmm? In a way, that has a good side because it means, also, that even if you've got lots and lots of bad karma, you can be affected positively by somebody else and their [328] positive karma. It works that way too. We can suffer unjustly, but we can also enjoy without having deserved it too.

Vajradaka: That's amazing, because there are some people who really stand out as people who have a great kind of accumulation of positive merit...

S: Yes, right.

Vajradaka: ...which they kind of just bequeath by the fact that they pass among the people.

S: Yes, right. So you can suffer in your present life due to the selfishness, greed, and so on, of other people. This is not your own past bad karma. But you can also benefit in this present life, you know, from the kindness and helpfulness of other people, yourself having done nothing to deserve it, either in this life or in previous lives. So it works both ways, we mustn't see only one side.

Mangala: This may be an overemphasis on one's individuality, as if one was a separate little nucleus that has gathered, you know, influence outside or coming in, and that you just could be independent...

S: So when you are born, due to your own karma, you are automatically drawn into a whole web or network of relationships of various kinds, and you are no longer left with just your own little individual karma, so that you can suffer unjustly, and you can benefit undeservingly. And also, you can say, what possible desert can there be with regard, say, to the possibility of gaining nirvana, something transcendental, above conditionality altogether? hmm? And you get that, as it were, however good you may be, you still don't merit it, because it transcends the sphere of merit and demerit altogether.

Lokamitra: But in a way you have to work for the situation where you can...

S: To some extent. But even so, the transcendental is so disparate from the conditioned, though you may, in a sense, be nearer and more receptive, more able to benefit. You haven't, strictly speaking, deserved it, hmm? I mean no amount of accumulation of the conditioned, however meritorious, can, as it were, merit the unconditioned. It transcends it altogether, hmm?

Lokamitra: You can't really turn that around and say that that's suffering, can you? Because in a way nirvana isn't just good, it transcends good and bad, so you can't say there's something absolutely bad which you get sucked into [329] through no fault of your own.

S: No, not absolutely bad, only relatively bad, but it's also bound up with relative good, hmm? [pause] Well, what I'm trying to say is that you can't think too exclusively in terms of a sort of absolute merit or absolute demerit. These are very relative, and in any case not comparable with nirvana, which, as it were, you get for free!

Devamitra: Isn't it kind of like the distinction between red merit and white merit, what the teacher,.. as you were explaining in the Hui Neng seminar? [p.47, tr.]

S: Yes.

Devamitra: Like merit which is conducive to the gaining of Enlightenment, and merit which is just conducive to...

S: Happy worldly deserts.

Devamitra: Worldly, yes, punya, worldly success, happy states of being.

Nagabodhi: What kind of merit is taking one towards Enlightenment? I mean in that one can't condition the unconditioned.

S: We you can't condition the unconditioned, but you're creating a kind of conditionality on the basis of which the [un]conditioned is more easily able to manifest, as it were.

Nagabodhi: And you can certainly make the conditions to make the falling away of...

S: And you can make the unconditioned more accessible, as it were. Again, *as it were*, hmm? One can't really express [these] things very literally. But anyway, what we were really concerned about was with the question of karma, and why the poor suffer. Well the poor suffer, very often, not on account of their own past bad karma and present sloth and torpor, though that may sometimes be the case, but on account of the bad karma other people are, here and now, creating, without having done anything to deserve it. And that should also be borne very much in mind.

Mangala: So, in a sense, like, if everybody else was totally good, say, and one person was very bad, and they were born in some very bad situation, well then, in a way, it couldn't really be bad for them, because it couldn't really be suffering, because of all the other people.

S: You could give another example. Supposing the world became perfect and social arrangements were ideal, etc etc, and there was no poverty. But suppose there was someone about to be reborn who had very bad karma and deserved to be born in very poor circumstances. Then what would happen to him? [330] I mean since the whole world is perfect and his karma is directing him towards the human world at least, he'd have to be reborn in prosperous circumstances even though he didn't deserve it, yes?

Mangala: The whole idea, though, of the prosperous being good and the poor being bad comes from a society where these conditions exist anyway. If the poor weren't seen to suffer, in this ideal community, than that particular good and bad wouldn't apply at all.

S: Yes. For instance Marco Pallis said that - there's a question in one of his writings - this whole idea of riches being a retribution for good *necessarily*; it could be a punishment to be reborn a rich person in some cases [laughter and agreement]. So one can't generalize too much.

Sudatta: Especially if one was reborn as Getty. I think his is a miserable life, isn't it? [A reference to either John Paul Getty III or his father John Paul Getty II, son of billionaire Jean Paul Getty, famous for his miserliness, whose reluctance to pay a ransom to his grandson's kidnappers cost John Paul III an ear. Both men were virtually written out of Jean Paul's will, and went on to suffer from depression and drug addiction, tr.]

Lokamitra: I'm very uneasy about this being able to be affected adversely by other people, and that doesn't really seem to answer it that you can be born rich and as a...

S: Well I think we have to accept that we can be affected adversely by other people - this does seem to be the case - due to no fault of our own, and not in the way of karmic retribution, that is to say, retribution for anything we've done in the past, either in this life or in a previous life. I mean it seems one aspect of the whole human situation: that you can suffer undeservedly, and you can be benefited undeservedly.

Mangala: Sort of. I think, at the same time, that that doesn't sort of warn that if you just sit back and say poor me, you know, there's nothing I can do about it...

S: No, the fact that you suffer undeservedly doesn't mean that there is nothing you can do about it. And the fact, also, that you are benefiting undeservedly doesn't mean that you can't reject the benefit; you can.

Devamitra: But if one can be influenced by other people's actions, either not deserving it or deserving it, this seems to be like another factor over and above karma, and not in, as I can see it, in the niyamas, which is sort of affecting the process. [331]

S: Well perhaps - this I hazard as just a speculation - that x-factor is chance. Perhaps there is an element of fortuitousness in it all, hmm? The spaces between the network.

Devamitra: Has the Abhidharma ever gone into this at all?

S: Not that I recollect, no.

Mamaki: Is this one of the consequences of being not a separate thing that does make it easy for us all to be influenced by others?

S: There is an element of existential risk in the human situation.

Lokamitra: If, as Mangala was saying, as you were saying, that one can reject the positive healthy delight and one also doesn't have to let oneself get into the bad situation, then surely it comes back to oneself: that one should be more aware whatever. So it's not entirely...

S: No, it's never entirely, you can say. 'Look what's been done to me; I can't do anything about it!' No! Probably there is never any such situation, actually.

Nagabodhi: At the very least, you can do something about your attitude towards it.

S: Mm. Or at least *want* to do. Even if you *want* to do without being *able* to, even the wanting is positive. Or you just simply don't accept the situation, or you even rebel against it. Even though impotently, still, you are rebelling, you are doing something about it. And, you know, according to Buddhist teaching, you'll get another opportunity

later on; the process continues. And if you suffer unjustly now, well you may be benefiting undeservedly later on. Sooner or later, some change takes place.

Lokamitra: If you suffer but you can do something about it, in a way, you are not suffering unjustly.

S: In a way, no. If you simply fail to rectify it: 'Well why should this happen to me?' and then sort of go on allowing it to happen out of sort of resentment.

Mangala: Again, though, that could become a very individualistic trip too, if you get caught up in that, you know, thinking that 'well it's up to me to get myself out of this and, you know, I'm not doing it,' and be really hard on yourself when in fact, objectively, the situation might be very difficult.

S: Right, and sometimes you may just have to wait for the situation to change [332] and maybe there is not much you can do until then. But, samsara being what it is, it will change sooner or later! [pause] Anyway, let's go on.

Mamaki: (bottom of p.188) "Let us here closely see into the facts .. [to end of paragraph] .. the doctrine of karma .. must not be understood to explain the cause of our social and economical imperfection.

Ratnapani: "The region where the law of karma is made to work supreme is our moral world... Poverty is not necessarily the consequence of evil deeds, nor is plenitude that of good acts."

S: This, presumably, would be what Buddhism says anyway: "Poverty is not necessarily the consequence of evil deeds." But Suzuki *seems* to suggest that poverty cannot *possibly* be the result of evil deeds. Buddhism would not go so far as to say that. It *can* be the result, you *can* be poor as a result of karmic punishment, you *can* be rich as a sort of karmic reward, but not necessarily.

Ratnapani: "Whether a person is affluent or needy is mostly determined by the principle of economy as far as our present social system is concerned."

S: Hmm, he seems to suggest that any injustice in the present system or present arrangement of things economically is directly due to human greed, i.e. karma in another form. This is not necessarily so. For instance, I remember that Marx, in *Das Kapital*, makes quite definitely the point that it is, as it were, the capitalist system that is wrong or evil, in the sense of not functioning to the advantage of the majority, and that is *not* necessarily due to ill will or any desire for aggrandisement on the part of the individual capitalist. It is simply that the system which produces these effects in accordance with economic laws, of which the individual capitalist may be completely ignorant, hmm? And that therefore what is wanted is a more intelligent arrangement, not just a moral reform. I mean the capitalist can go on feeling lots of good will towards the poor, but the system still works in the same way. It's the system that requires to be rectified. But the system is

not directly attributable to anybody's ill will towards any other group of people. It's just lack of sufficient know how to get the whole thing working for everybody's benefit. So if there is any sort of karma here, it is the karma of ignorance rather than ill will, or anger, or greed, or anything like that. It's not [that] the individual capitalist is sort of in all cases deliberately taking away from the poor for the sake of personal greed. But Suzuki seems to suggest that, which Marx certainly doesn't; he always [333] goes out of his way not to blame individual capitalists. Let's go on.

Ratnapani: "Honesty and morality do not necessarily guarantee well-being."

S: i.e. economic well-being.

Ratnapani: "Dishonesty and the violation of the moral law .. are frequently .. handmaids of moral prosperity .. [to end of paragraph] .. Karma ought not to be made accountable for economic inequality."

S: That it, not for economic inequality in *general*, though it may well be the cause of economic inequality in certain individual instances. It is of course true that in the East, in India for instance, the rich assume as a matter of course that they are rich on account of good karma committed in previous lives, and that the poor are poor because of bad karma. And this is a very common outlook. And obviously here the law of karma is being used to justify the status quo in a very unpleasant way. Also it is used in India to reinforce the caste system. The caste Hindus say that people are born into low caste simply because of their previous evil karma, and that they have to expiate that evil karma by being humble and obedient and fulfilling their low caste duties and serving the higher castes. So here again it's used to justify the social status quo, and this can be very pernicious indeed.

Sudatta: Mind you, Bhante, once you've got something like the caste system going, even if it was founded originally on base exploitation, it then becomes quite genuine karmic [unclear] once it's established, doesn't it?

S: In what way?

Sudatta: That if somebody is born into a certain caste, they will have certain difficulties and disadvantages. Once a thing is going, it could then be regarded as then being an effective working of karma.

S: Well I think the same thing applies here as applies in the case of economic inequality. I mean there may be individual instances where someone is born into a low caste because of past evil karma, and into a high caste because of past good karma, but you can't use it as a kind of blanket justification: that everybody who is born into the higher caste is born because of good karma, and everybody that is born into a low caste is born because of bad karma. This is tantamount to saying all who are high caste are good and all who are low caste are bad, all who are rich are good and all who are poor are bad, [334] which is obviously much too sweeping, even though it may be true in an

individual instance, hmm? So here, clearly, it's more factors working in the present rather than karmic factors operating from the past. Right, let's go on.

Devamitra: "[p.190] A virtuous man is contented with his cleanliness of conscience. Why, then,.. such a poor theory of karma is maintained by some .. to give him a spiritual solace for his material misfortune?

Mangala: "Vulgar people are too eager to see everything... They perform,.. working for .. material welfare... They would desire .. the law of karma .. applied .. where an entirely different set of laws prevails."

S: Again, he is being too sweeping.

Mangala: "In point of fact, what proceed from meritorious deeds is spiritual bliss only,..."

S: Ah that's going to an extreme. I think Buddhism wouldn't agree with that.

Mangala: "...contentment... All the heavenly treasures which could not be corrupted by moth or rust."

S: It's rather interesting that there are echoes of the Bible here. [Matthew 6:20, tr.]

Mangala: "And what more can the karma of good deeds bring to us... Is not the life more than meat and the body more than raiment?"

S: Again, that's from the Bible. [Matthew 6:25, tr.]

Mangala: "Let us then do away with the worldly interpretation of karma, which is so contrary to the spirit of Buddhism."

S: Hmm, I'm afraid we can't. There is a worldly aspect of karma. Karma is a worldly thing after all!

Nagabodhi: Real world or [unclear]?

S: [laughs] No, I'm afraid he's reacting to the opposite extreme.

Devaraja: It seems really unfortunate. It almost has that kind of very bad feeling about it. It's almost sort of saying, well if you're going to perform good deeds, you know, it's almost like denying people's quite basic needs by saying that, well, if you're really doing good deeds, you'll get your just rewards which have absolutely no connection with the material, you know. [335]

S: Right, yes, but..

Devaraja: But people do have material needs.

S: It's almost as though he's almost saying, well what does it matter if some people exploit you and you are all poor, you know, just have good thoughts and, you know, that'll give you spiritual bliss; why do you bother about riches, hmm?

Devaraja: Yes.

Sulocana: And he's just said the opposite!

S: Yes, right.

Devaraja: So it's really unfortunate.

Vajradaka: Maybe this whole book is a verification or a sorting out of his own ideas where he is tripping himself up and contradicting himself and things like that so that later on he can sort of be a bit clearer in his later writing.

S: Well perhaps it did actually happen like that historically, but I don't think he's consciously intending to do that! [amusement] His conscious intention was to write about an outline of Mahayana Buddhism!

Devamitra: And if that was the case, he shouldn't have published it anyway!

S: Right. [pause]

Lokamitra: "As long as we live under the present state of things it is impossible to escape ... economic equality... But this state of affairs is .. doomed to die... The law of karma, on the contrary, is an external ordinance of the will of the Dharmakaya as manifested in this world... We must not confuse a transient accident of human society with an absolute decree issued from the world-authority. [sounds whew! oh! laughs and amazement]

S: It doesn't sound very Buddhist in language does it?

Devamitra: Actually he sounds very very defensive about the whole idea of karma, to me. It's almost as if he doesn't really accept it himself. He just doesn't understand it sufficiently well.

S: It is something very complex and difficult. [336]

Ratnapani: I think also he's quite neatly here kept his socialism right away from Buddhism. You know, there's the social order and the religious order, and then we can happily get on with both of them without finding any contradiction.

S: Perhaps some of these conflicts in Suzuki stem out of the situation in Japan at his time, with that very rapid industrialization and the rapid creation of a very worldly class.

And then he must have seen great inequalities of wealth in America, and been profoundly impressed by that. He was there in the 1880s and 1890s and around the turn of the century when, you know, there were hundreds of millionaires springing up all over the place, but where, at the same time, there was great poverty for many people. [pause] All right, let's go on to "*An Individualistic View of Karma*".

Devaraja: "There is another popular misconception .. of karma .. [to end of paragraph] .. All that is done by oneself is suffered by oneself only, and no other people have anything to do with it, nor do they suffer a whit thereby.

S: There are two things to be distinguished here. One is that whatever karma one has committed in the past, one's self suffers only in the present, now, but those actions which you are performing in the present, now, actions which will bear karmic consequences, can, of course, affect lots of people, can affect even the whole nation. So a strictly and purely individualistic interpretation of karma is not possible. I don't think, in fact, that any Buddhist thinker has ever attempted that. I don't know who he is referring to here. Perhaps some rather incautious presentation of Theravada Buddhism, but even that I'm not sure about. [pause]

Sona: "Buddhism, however, does not advocate this .. interpretation,.. for it is not in accord with the theory of non-atman, nor with that of Dharmakaya.

Vajradaka: "According to orthodox theory, karma .. means .. the immortality of the inner force of deeds regardless of their author's .. identity... It is not the actor,.. only, but everybody .. that suffers or enjoys the outcome of a moral deed.

S: This is true in principle. For instance you can say that every thought that you have, positive or negative, affects the whole of the surrounding atmosphere, hmm? You have a certain effect upon all the people that you meet, so you can't really regard people as sort of cut off from one another and separate and each enjoying or suffering his or her own individual karma all the time and nothing but that. We are influencing one another all the [337] time, huh? So this is something to bear in mind. It's an additional incentive to be more positive and be more creative. It's not only *you* that benefits; it's everybody else. And if you are negative and unskilful, well, so many others are being badly affected too, through no fault of their own, other than they happen to come into your proximity!

Lokamitra: Inasmuch as you hurt others by these evil thoughts, this will rebound, will it?

S: Well, if you do it deliberately.

Mangala: It sounds a bit like Indra's Net again, where all the jewels reflect each other.

S: Yes, right. There is a sort of psychic web, as it were, that everybody is a part of, everybody's interconnected.

Devamitra: But even just looked at on a kind of physical plane, you're sort of having an effect on that level as well.

S: Right.

Lokamitra: Then you can say that all these poisonous thoughts or deeds or whatever which go out into the atmosphere, bring about an atmosphere of suffering which, in a way, make up this world, so that one is born into this world of suffering as a result of one's past deeds.

S: Right, yes. So it isn't just that you are an innocent victim of your environment. You have, as it were, invited that environment, at least as a general thing, hmm? [pause] It's as though there is a middle way here too, but it's certainly not all environment. The two are interconnected and react upon one another. [pause] All right, on we go.

Sudatta: "Because the universe is not a theatre for one particular soul only, .. deeds committed .. are felt by others just .. as much as the doer... The universe that may seem merely a system of crass physical forces..."

S: I don't see why the physical forces should be crass. This is rhetorical, isn't it? Why not just physical forces? Nothing crass about them.

Sudatta: "...is in reality a great spiritual community (p.194) It is after all no more than an evolution of one pervading essence..." [338]

S: Here we find cosmological thinking coming in again.

Sudatta: "...in which the multitudinousness of things finds its unity... Those whose spiritual insight penetrates deep into the inner unity and interaction of all human souls are called bodhisattvas."

S: He quite correctly draws attention to this very important aspect of the whole spiritual life - that one should be aware of the effects of all one's thoughts and words and deeds upon everything that lives, hmm? And you can have an actual sort of living awareness of all these other lives in the universe and the fact that you are all interconnected. There is this subtle network linking you all, and in the case of the bodhisattva, he's so vividly aware of it that he wants, as it were, to develop himself just so that he can be a positive influence on the whole of humanity and the whole of life. This is what being a bodhisattva really means. It's not only sort of going out and helping others, but helping others *by* helping yourself, and seeing that the two are interconnected, that if you help yourself you help others, that if you help others you help yourself. You can't really separate the two.

Sulocana: "It is with this spirit .. that Buddhists .. wish to turn their merit over to the deliverance of all sentient beings from .. ignorance .. [to end of paragraph] .. and soon attain to an Enlightenment supreme, perfect, and far-reaching."

S: We have this sort of transference of merit at the end of the sevenfold puja, which has, of course, the same general effect.

Devamitra: I must say, actually, I was quite surprised when we were at the summer school that Douglas [unclear] Burt, who had been a monk in Thailand, and was taking the morning meditation along sort of Theravada lines, finished the whole thing off with a distribution of merit.

S: Well this is quite common in Theravada countries. They do have this, even though technically Hinayanists, they do have some Mahayana attitudes of this sort. In fact it isn't a Mahayana attitude, it's a Buddhist one! Mahayanists have, admittedly, elaborated and glorified it much more, but it's there in the Theravada too.

Nagabodhi: (p.195) "The reason why a moral deed performed by one person would contribute to the attainment by others .. is that souls .. are closely intermingled,.. hence those invocations .. by Buddhists who desire to dedicate all the merit they can attain to the general welfare of the masses."

S: Well, you know, "all living beings". Buddhists wouldn't even exclude animals. [339]

Mamaki: "The ever increasing tendency of humanity to facilitate communication is illustrative of the .. oneness of .. souls. Isolation kills, for it is another name for death .. [to end of paragraph] .. his merits can be utilized for the promotion of general enlightenment."

S: Do you think this is true? That "every soul that lives and grows desires to embrace others, to be in communion with them, to be supplemented by them". Do you think this is true?

Mamaki: I think he's gone a bit far!

Lokamitra: He's got a bit carried away. [other sounds of agreement]

S: Because sometimes, as you grow, you feel, in a sense, like being away from others. Not that you've anything against them, but you don't think in these terms or feel in this particular way.

[a number of jumbled comments]

Mamaki: ...the heart again isn't it?

S: It seems to be, yes.

Nagabodhi: It's very reactive, and clinging to...

S: I mean certainly you would be in touch with others, as you get more spiritually sensitive, almost sort of telepathically, but I don't think you'd have this sort of *urge* to be in *communion* with them, and all that sort of thing.

Mamaki: It wouldn't be an urge.

S: No.

Ratnapani: "To be supplemented by them"!

S: That's really very suspect, isn't it?

Devamitra:: It sounds very lonely.

S: Maybe he was, in America, yes? This poor little Japanese professor!

Vajradaka: Also, maybe, you know, it has hints of Mormonism there. This is part, I think, of the central teaching that, you know, people's sort of souls merge together after death and go flying through the universe in union. And people sort of continue from one family life to family life.

S: In a way. The Mormons had this doctrine that marriage was for ever, at least there was a kind of marriage that was for ever, and that were married after death, and the family persisted after death, and so on. I don't [340] know whether this did affect Dr Suzuki. It might have done, we never know, he might have had a Mormon landlady. [laughter]

Ratnapani: Very unlikely!

S: I think that the point that he's trying to make is fair enough and clear enough. All right. "*Karma and Determinism*".

Ratnapani: "If the irrefragability of karma means the predetermination of our moral life .. a blade of grass does not quiver .. without the force of karma." [sounds of no!]

S: It seems to be: No! I remember in this connection once I was in Calcutta with a group of bhikkhus who were all sort of staying there together in the Maha Bodhi Society. And there was one bhikkhu, a Ceylon bhikkhu, who was a friend of mine, and he was a science student in Calcutta at the university, and he one evening raised the question whether an amoeba had karma [laughter]. And the bhikkhus were very puzzled by this. Some thought it might have, others thought it might not, and nobody was really very sure. So I happened to sort of enter at that time and so they asked me, has an amoeba karma or not? So I responded with a counter-question, has an amoeba cetana? Cetana means conscious volition, hmm? and where there is no conscious volition, there is no karma. So they agreed that the amoeba did not have cetana and therefore it couldn't have karma. [laughter] So in the same way, "the single blade of grass does not quiver

before the evening breeze without the force of karma"? Well, is the force of karma in the breeze? That's not karma, that's utu-niyama! You see? And is it in the blade of grass? Well in that case a blade of grass must have cetana; if it has cetana it has karma. But perhaps it doesn't have cetana! There may be some sort of not exactly consciousness, but some sort of sensitivity analogous to consciousness, but I think we should be very careful about these poetic statements in what ought to be a strict philosophical context, hmm?

Mamaki: I think he's getting mixed up with conditionality there, isn't he?

S: Right, yes, yes. It almost does seem like that. All right, carry on.

Ratnapani: "It is also true that if our intellect were not near-sighted... If we could record all our previous karma .. there would be no difficulty in determining our future life with utmost certainty." [341]

S: This is fallacious, because you can only determine it on the passive side: what happens to us. It wouldn't determine our *response* to what was happening to us.

Ratnapani: "The human intellect .. is incapable of undertaking a work of such .. magnitude,.. but from the divine point of view determinism seems .. justified, for there cannot be any short-sightedness on the part of a world-soul as to the destiny of the universe, which is nothing but its own expression."

S: He seems to be getting into cosmology again, and paralleling, you know, the Christian difficulties about how to reconcile God's foreknowledge of events with human free will, which is a sort of classical conundrum of Christian theology. All right, carry on then.

Ratnapani: "It is only from the human point of view that we feel uncertain,.. and yet .. there is something mysterious .. which makes us cry, either in despair or trustful resignation, 'Let them will be done!'" [laughter and exclamations]

S: There seems to be quite a touch, or more than a touch, of Christianity! And not just, you know, for the sake of the Christian audience. It seems to go a bit beyond that.

Mamaki: But to pick up the problems of it too.

S: Yes, right.

Ratnapani: "While this very confidence .. proves that we have .. a belief in the supreme order, which is absolutely preordained, yet the doctrine of karma must not be understood in the strictest sense of fatalism."

S: Well, we've got back on firm... [drowned out by laughter] All right. Well he gets off it pretty quickly, but anyway, down to the next paragraph.

Devamitra: "As far as the general theory of determinism ... Buddhism has no objection to it. Grant .. a law of causation .. how could we escape the conclusion that 'each of us is inevitable', as Whitman sings?"

S: I don't think he meant quite that, but anyway.

Devamitra: "Religious confidence in a divine will .. to give us the best .. is .. no more than determinism. But if .. we forget to endeavour to unfold, the mind will be nothing but a reflex nervous system and life a sheer machinery."

S: That's clear enough. Let's go on. [342]

Mangala: "In fact karma is not a machine... It grows, it expands, and even gives birth to new karma."

S: This is quite a good point, that karma is to be thought of in organic terms rather than in mechanical terms, hmm? The analogy for karma is life and growth, not a piece of mechanism, not an iron law, as you sometimes see it referred to. So "karma is a wonderful organic power". This is quite a good way of putting it.

Mangala: "It is like unto a grain of mustard seed ... becometh a tree so that the birds of the air come and lodge in the branches thereof."

S: Again, all gospel phraseology you notice! [Matthew 13:32, tr.]

Mangala: "Its mystery is like that of sympathetic waves, and the most wonderful thing .. is that karma bring repentance and .. awakens .. a similar karma slumbering in other hearts and leads them to the final abode of enlightenment."

S: Hmm, this is quite well put apart from the slightly unfortunate expression to the effect that karma brings us nirvana; it's not quite right, that. But anyway, let's not be too finicky.

Lokamitra: "Insofar as we confine ourself to a general and superficial view of karma,.. it leads to determinism,.. but in .. practical life,.. the doctrine of karma allows in us all kinds of possibilities and chances of development."

S: This, in fact, needs to be very much stressed. Karma is not just something coming from the past and affecting us and influencing us and limiting us now. It's something which we are creating here and now and through which we can create the future.

Lokamitra: "We thus escape the mechanical conception of life .. [to end of paragraph] .. Let us bear bravely and perform all the acts of goodness to destroy the last remnant of evil and mature the stock of good karma."

S: Well that's what we come on to now: the "*Maturing of Good Stock and the Accumulation of Merit*".

Devaraja: "One of the most significant facts .. is the Buddhist belief that Sakyamuni reached .. Buddhahood only after a long practice of the six perfections through many a rebirth,.. and has all important bearings on .. karma.

Sona: The doctrine of karma ethically considered is this: sentient beings attain .. perfection .. through long steady unflinching personal effort... The Buddha represents the crystallization in the historical person of Sakyamuni of all the good karma that was accumulated in the innumerable kalpas previous to his birth." [343]

S: This is quite a good way of putting it. That is traditional Buddhist teaching.

Sona: "And if Devadatta .. was really the enemy of the Buddha, he symbolizes .. the evil karma that was being stored up with the good deeds of all Buddhas."

S: Though not by the Buddhas, but sort of running parallel: one person accumulating more and more good, and in his final birth being the crystalized expression of all that good. And another person, as it were, life after life accumulating evil, and in his latest birth being a sort of condensed expression of all that evil.

Nagabodhi: When he saying "the crystalization in the historical person of Sakyamuni of all the good karma that was accumulated in the innumerable kalpas" does that mean all the good karma accumulated by all people everywhere?

S: No. No.

Nagabodhi: Because it could be taken that way.

S: No, it doesn't mean that.

Devaraja: A point about Devadatta. I'm maybe misunderstanding this but he sort of infers that Devadatta was the sort of retribution from any bad karma that had been stored up by the Buddha.

S: His language is very vague here, but he couldn't possibly mean that, no, because there are many Jataka stories - that is, stories of the previous lives of the Buddha - where Devadatta also appears and does something nasty to the Buddha. For instance, when the Buddha was the monkey-king, and he formed a bridge over a river with his own body so that his followers could cross, Devadatta was one of the followers in a previous birth. He was also a monkey, and as he walked across the body of the monkey-king he rather mischievously gave a little jump and broke his back. So in his previous lives Devadatta was always doing things like that. So therefore you could say that if you trace back the previous lives of the Buddha, you see a constant accumulation of good, so that the Buddha Sakyamuni is as it were the crystalized expression of all that good accumulated in that way. In the same way, if you look back through the previous lives of Devadatta, you see a constant accumulation of evil, so that Devadatta is, in his birth as

Devadatta, a sort of condensation, a sort of black mass, as it were, of all that accumulated evil.

Mamaki: So you can only start accumulating the good if you've already wiped out or counteracted the bad? [344]

S: Yes, so through many Jataka stories, there is this sort of conflict and rivalry between the Buddha - as he became - and Devadatta, Devadatta always getting in the Buddha's way or being jealous, just as he did in the final birth, when he created a schism in the order and tried to assassinate the Buddha and so on.

Lokamitra: If you [unclear] on a relative plane, goodness, brought out by Sakyamuni, then you are going to have to have the other side, surely.

S: Not necessarily. People don't have to be bad just because you are good.

Devaraja: It's quite interesting that you said that because it's sort of like, I think that's a false understanding of goodness, and I think that's what happens to a lot of people in the West and particularly in Christianity: their goodness is a product of their sort of suppression of negative energies which frighten them.

S: Ah, yes.

Lokamitra: Yes, but Sakyamuni's often given such attributes as compassion and so on, and if you have compassion on the relative level, you've got to have the opposite, in a way.

S: Have you?

Lokamitra: Haven't you? Just by saying compassion?

S: Well you've got the possibility of it. It doesn't mean that some particular person has to be uncompassionate. Where there is the possibility of compassion there is the possibility of the opposite of compassion, but the fact that there is a person who is compassionate only means that there is the possibility of someone being uncompassionate. It doesn't mean that any other particular [person] has got to be uncompassionate so as to sort of even the balance, as it were. Otherwise you would end up with having just as many evil people as good people and you'd have a sort of impasse!

Mamaki: Well it's a kind of (?word/worth) distinction, that in order to have a (?word/worth) for one you have to have something that's different from it.

S: Right, yes, and the Buddha wasn't just trying to be more and more good - I mean, this is Suzuki's words - he was gaining Enlightenment, he was practising the paramitas, which are transcendental virtues, he wasn't just being good in the ordinary moral sense. Possibly tradition is a bit hard on Devadatta. In the Udana, interestingly enough, which

seems to represent quite an early phase in even the Buddha's career, Devadatta just [345] appears along with the other monks and just seems like anybody else.

Devaraja: Where did the story of his trying to kill the Buddha grow up?

S: Well it is quite ancient, it seems. It's found in the Vinaya Pitaka, [Culavagga 7, tr.] and it seems to have occurred towards the end of the Buddha's life anyway.

Devamitra: I remember him being referred to in the Udana as an arahat, I think, isn't it? The Buddha refers to a group of arahats...

S: Yes, but don't forget that arahat in very early Buddhism just means worthy one. It isn't a technical term for those who gain nirvana. I mean, that's a further complication. But I wonder about Devadatta. It's almost as though he's made a bit of a scapegoat during the period after the Buddha's death. I mean Ananda also was, but in a different kind of way. [pause] Anyway, that's speculation, let's carry on.

Sona: "Later Buddhism has thus elaborated to represent in these two historical figures the concrete results of good and evil karma..."

S: Not quite, because it's not good karma, in that sort of narrow sense.

Sona: "...and tries to show in what direction its followers should exercise their spiritual energy."

S: Also it rather creates the suggestion that on the stage of historical Buddhism, as it were, you've got two great central figures. You've got the Buddha, representing good, and you've got Devadatta as evil [laughter]. It's not like that at all; he's a comparatively insignificant figure compared with that of the Buddha, and appears, you know, in his darker role, only towards the end of the Buddha's life anyway. It's almost as if Suzuki's trying to set up a sort of dualism, and he certainly makes it more prominent than it is in the actual scriptures.

Vajradaka: "The doctrine of karma is, therefore, really the theory of evolution, which is being matured from the very beginning of consciousness upon the earth."

S: And, of course, even before, Buddhism really says.

Vajradaka: "Each generation either retards or furthers the maturing of karma ..[to end of paragraph].. Buddhism calls them the children of Mara engaged in the work of destruction."

S: All right, straight on. [346]

Sudatta: "Dr G.R. Wilson of Scotland states a very pretty story about a royal robe in his article on 'The Sense of Danger'..."

S: You notice it appears in *The Monist* for 1903. That was edited in Chicago by Paul Carus, and Suzuki was connected with him, and he also used to write for *The Monist*, and Paul Carus published Suzuki's translation of the Tao Te Ching. And it's rather interesting that Suzuki should have been associated with *The Monist*, and he might well have been influenced by that line of thought.

Devamitra: There's one of Paul Carus's books up there, the Gospel of... [Buddha]

S: Yes, right, he edited that. That is on the whole quite good, though to be used with caution, because little bits himself, and inserted them, and if you're not careful you think they are the words of the Buddha! There is a note at the back saying that these are E.A., i.e. explanatory additions, but often they are reproduced in anthologies without the note that they are explanatory additions, and people take them for the Buddha's own teachings. For instance, there's one in which the Buddha [apparently] defends righteous war: this is a composition by Paul Carus, not an extract from a sutra, but it is often quoted as an extract from a sutra!

Sudatta: "...which graphically illustrates... The story runs as follows:

Sulocana: "An oriental robe it was .. [to end of paragraph] .. and in such a subtle manner they are born.

Nagabodhi: "The doctrine of karma thus declares .. mature good stock and .. cultivate love for all beings, and the heavenly gate of nirvana will be opened not only to you but to the entire world. [sounds of amazement]

Mamaki: "We can sing with Walt Whitman .. [to end of paragraph] .. without the farthest conceivable one coming a bit nearer the beginning than any."

S: A bit (?gnomic) isn't it? Anyway, I think we can pass straight on and come to "*Immortality*".

Nagabodhi: Is there *any* value in that story? [laughter]

S: Well it seems rather curious [loud laughter]! I thought at first it was an illustration of karma, but apparently not. It represents a sort of heritage of the human race I suppose, that you can sort of add to and make better and more glorious as it sort of comes down to you, and build up a [347] treasury of good thoughts, inspiring reflections, for all concerned. This seems to be more what he is saying. It isn't a story, it's an extended simile.

Ratnapani: "Immortality. We read in the Milinda Panha.." [down to p.204]

Lokamitra: "The above is the Buddhist notion of individuality, which denies the immortality of the ego-soul and upholds that of karma."

S: We've really gone into this before, and so has he. But he seems to be coming back to it and having another go at it! Let's see what he has to say.

Devaraja: "Another good way, perhaps, of illustrating this is to follow the growth and perpetuation of the seed .. [to end of paragraph] .. which is preserved in the universe as the energy of vegetation."

S: A little tendency to reification here. All right, carry on.

Sona: "This energy of vegetation is that which is manifested in a mature plant.. This mysterious force .. is .. the vegetative expression of karma, which in the biological world constitutes the law of heredity .. or other laws which might be discovered by the biologist."

S: This all seems rather vague, scientifically as well as Buddhistically.

Sona: "And it is when this force manifests .. that karma obtains its proper significance as the law of moral causation."

Vajradaka: "Now there are several forms of transmission.. A few of them are described below."

S: This seems to be Suzuki's own contribution. It doesn't seem to be directly Buddhist.

Sudatta: "One may be called genealogical, or perhaps biological. Suppose here are descendants of an illustrious family.. The respect they are enjoying .. are all the work of the karma generated by the ancestors."

S: Karma here is used terribly loosely. This isn't, I think, really satisfactory at all. I wouldn't call this karma at all. You can't inherit karma from other people. You might, you know, inherit an influence, but it's hardly karma. But anyway, carry on.

Sudatta: "The author or authors of the noble karma are all gone now .. but their karma is still here .. and will so remain till the end of time." [348]

Mamaki: Is that in fact so?

S: It's not present as karma.

Vajradaka: Is it in fact as fresh as the day it was..

S: No! Well, it depends! In itself, it isn't anything. You could say, well, what about the karma of Julius Cesar? How fresh is that? I mean it's neither fresh nor not fresh! But if you read the life of Julius Cesar and get really inspired by that, well, it's fresh for *you*, but surely it isn't a sort of thing in itself sort of hovering about somewhere which can be

either fresh or not fresh! There's the record, you have access to the record and it affects you, and probably we can just leave it there and not talk about karma at all!

Devaraja: It's sort of giving it almost an atma.

S: Hmm, yes.

Vajradaka: "Noble karma"

Devaraja: Sort of exists from..

Sulocana: "Generated by the ancestors"

S: Even bringing in the ancestral spirits. Maybe this is a bit Shintoistic. Anyway, there's a lot of terrible confusion here.

Sudatta: "If some of them, on the other hand, left a black record behind them .. the descendants will have to suffer the curse .. no matter how innocent they themselves are."

S: This doesn't seem Buddhistic. This seems to be more Japanese history with these long vendettas extending over generations, hmm? It seems to be a bit that sort of thing.

Devaraja: He seems to bring in quite a lot of popular sort of almost very low level misunderstandings. When he was talking about Devadatta and the Buddha, it almost smacked of Manicheism.

S: Right, yes, yes. Not that there's anything wrong with Manicheism of course!

Devaraja: No, but in relation to Buddhism..

S: Right, yes.

Sulocana: "Here one important thing I wish to note is the mysterious way in which evil karma works .. it .. frequently .. will induce a moral being to overcome it with his utmost spiritual efforts." [349]

S: This again is ambiguity of thought. For instance, you can overcome something evil within yourself, but that's a very different thing from saying the evil induces you to overcome it, because if it wasn't there you wouldn't be exerting that effort! But this, in fact, is what Suzuki is saying! "It very frequently turns out to be a condition, if not a cause, which will induce a moral being to overcome it with his utmost spiritual efforts." But how does something bad within you induce you to overcome it with something good? I mean, usually, whatever is bad within you endeavours to remain there!

Nagabodhi: He seems to be talking more about a sort of neurotic guilt, maybe, an inherited guilt complex in a sort of very reactive, neurotic cleansing.

S: Yes.

Mamaki: Well, not even in a personal..

S: But here it just seems a complete confusion of thought!

Sulocana: "His being conscious of the very fact that his family history is .. besmirched with dark spots [laughs] would rekindle in his heart a .. light of goodness."

S: Well not necessarily. In other words [unclear] said wouldn't be the work of the dark spots, as the previous sentence suggests. He'd be doing it in spite of the dark spots. Carry on then.

Sulocana: "His stock of good karma .. [to end of paragraph] .. or Amitabha Buddha."

S: Carry on.

Nagabodhi: "To return to the subject [laughs] .. [to end of paragraph] .. one act provokes another .. without ever losing the chain of karmic causation."

S: Hmm, a bit carried away here. Anyway, let's go on.

Mamaki: "Next, we come to a form of karma .. historical .. almost any object .. which is associated with the memory of a great man, bears his karma and transmits it to posterity."

S: His influence, yes, but I don't think the word karma is really appropriate here. Much too vague an extension of the term. Let's go on.

Ratnapani: "Everybody is familiar with the facts that all literary work embodies in itself the author's soul .. and the reader .. must be said spiritually to feel the pulsation of one and the same heart."

S: Hmm, well that may well be true of course.

Ratnapani: "And the same thing is true of productions of art... It seems to awaken within us the same impressions that were received by them." [350]

S: That's true, too, obviously.

Ratnapani: "We forget, as they did .. [to end of paragraph] .. the vibration .. is transmitted to the sympathetic souls down to the present day."

S: Well this is all true, but then it's hardly karma. Otherwise, how would you be responsible for it? If this was, in fact, karma, it would mean that you could never reap the results of any karma, because the karma is infinitely extending throughout time, hmm?

Sulocana: And beyond time.

Devaraja: He's sort of talking ..

Sulocana: Yes, not karma at all, which is the ever-living ... ?aspect.

Devamitra: But if something that you do influences a great number of people in some way or other, either good or bad, wouldn't that come back to you in some way?

S: Well, intention, yes, but when you committed the action, you had a certain intention, well, you reap the karmic consequences of that intention, but you don't reap your karma according to the influence which your original karma produced on all those infinite people. Otherwise you'd have to wait until the end of time!

Devaraja: There's two things. One is that there's the action which, as it were, produces something which is - for want of a better word - a spiritual thing, maybe an unconditioned thing, that, say, it's the energy within the work of art. But then there's something entirely separate, which is the karmic result of that action, which is not related to the energy, the communication of energy to those of other people. They are two separate things.

S: And even communication of energy is a metaphorical way of speaking, anyhow. I mean, you create a work of art, which continues to exist in the objective world and to have an effect there, but that effect is quite distinct from the karma which you created [in] creating the work of art and the result of which you will reap in the future, hmm?

Devamitra: So that, perhaps, the sort of effect that a work of art has on somebody that sees it, obviously is a part of the causative process.

S: Yes.

Devamitra: So it would come under one of the other niyamas, eh?

S: Yes, right.

Devamitra: Would that be the utu-niyama?

S: I'm not sure about that. Could be the citta-niyama.

Devamitra: Ah, yes. [351]

Devaraja: Could even be dhamma-niyama.

S: Could even be dhamma-niyama. The fact that something which you have produced is an occasion for karma in other people, does not mean that that is a karma to be put down to your account, because you happen to have created that objective work of art. So, just to put it simply, he's confusing karma with influence.

Devaraja: In fact one could say that, I mean, it's incorrect to say this but if the work of art was a living thing, then that effect would be its own karma.

S: Yes, right. Also you could say, well, what about the children you produce?

Devaraja: Yes.

S: You might have to reap the consequences of your motive in producing the children, but you don't have to go on reaping, by way of consequence, whatever the children do once you've produced them, hmm? You are sort of responsible in terms of cause and effect, but you are not responsible morally, hmm? Yes? It's much the same there, isn't it? Otherwise you become morally responsible for everything your children ever do!

Mamaki: They pursue you for years!

S: Yes, right. [laughs] And you are the moral responsibility of your parents, which means that in fact nobody has moral responsibility, so karma is cancelled completely, if you follow Suzuki's doctrine to its logical conclusion. No one is morally responsible. You've got a chain. [pause]

[It] shows how careful you have to be, writing about Buddhism, doesn't it? Also how careful you have to be to think clearly first. Right-ho then, let's carry on.

Devamitra: "Architectural creations bear out the doctrine of karma .. every bit of rock .. we may find .. is fraught with the same spirit .. that actuated ancient peoples to construct those gigantic architectural wonders."

S: It may be, of course, that there is a certain atmosphere that lingers. That is quite possible. But this is, again, influence and not karma.

Ratnapani: I think both these bits of physics are, as it happens, wrong just now.

S: Is it so?

Ratnapani: I think so, yes. [352]

?: I'm sure it is.

Devamitra: "The spirit is here .. When we pick these .. pieces, our souls become responsive .. and our mental eyes .. perceive the splendour .. glory .. of the peoples, etc"

S: If it really was so, what he says, I mean, you would feel the spirit of Shakespeare just by holding his works in front of your eyes, even though you couldn't read and understand the language, if it was actually sort of literally there.

Devaraja: Maybe that's not entirely culpable, because maybe he's talking in quite a material sense, about the actual objects, say, sculpted.

Sulocana: Sort of psychometry.

Devaraja: Yes, on the psychometry.

S: Yes, well, there may be, as I said, that sort of atmosphere, but this is not karma. There may even be a little atmosphere around the works of Shakespeare, I'm not sure. Probably get rather diluted. But I'm quite sure, if you have the actual thing produced or created by a person, however long ago, there is something there of that person, but also the other people who've handled it in the meantime, hmm? I remember I had an experience of this myself when I was in Kalimpong. Someone was staying with me at the vihara, and one day the morning post came, there were quite a few letters, and there was one letter for this man, and as soon as I felt it, I knew, 'there's something evil here, there's some harm to him in this,' and I thought I perhaps shouldn't give it. I even wondered whether I ought to open it and have a look at it. But being English I thought, you know, shouldn't do that sort of thing, so with some reluctance, at the end of the day I gave it to him, and it turned out to be an anonymous letter of a very unpleasant nature which disturbed him very badly. But I definitely felt an evil influence from this letter. So this sort of thing is possible, I'm quite convinced, and there is an atmosphere in churches and temples that can linger over the centuries, and I'm quite sure, you know, that around a piece of sculpture there is a sort of atmosphere lingering and probably overlaid by the influence left by other people, who've looked at it, even. But this, again, is not karma. The word karma is quite wrongly used in this sort of sense, this sort of connection. On we go.

Devamitra: "Because our souls and theirs are linked with the chain of karmic causation,.. O grave where is they victory!" [353]

S: Hmm, and of course the same sort of feeling which is behind the preservation of relics and worship of relics, especially body relics, and the things that holy people have touched - there's some influence of them there and you can get in contact with that just by touching it and so on. Obviously there's an element of truth here, but it can be greatly exaggerated and abused.

Devaraja: Because you were tied up with the taking over in India of the relics of Maudgalyayana and Sariputra, how did you find, personally, coming into contact with them?

S: I didn't find anything at all, particularly. If anything, I was slightly put off, you know, by the sort of commercial atmosphere that surrounded it all, frankly, especially when you

had the monk sort of counting out the takings every evening, you know. They were all friends of mine. There was monk A saying, hmm, not much today, only a couple of hundred rupees, but it will be better than that tomorrow! They were all quite devout, you know, they'd got a genuine respect for the relics, but there is this commercial atmosphere as well, and crowds of people and, you know, it's very fetishistic. You didn't even have a very sort of spiritual atmosphere around it all. But I do remember that one of the monks - it was Sangharatana in fact - he was involved with this sometimes. And he told me himself that when they were in Burma they had the relics of Sariputra and Maudgalyayana in a glass cylinder, capsule, round - it was just like a watch case - and the relics were inside. There was a certain amount of space and it was hermetically sealed, mounted on a little stand. He told me himself that when he was in Burma he and many other bhikkhus say the relics circulating inside the hermetically sealed capsule and a rainbow surrounding them, hmm? And these are quite ordinary, rather worldly sort of monks, in a way, though quite devout, and there was a large congregation present, and he said he saw this and the other monks did. And I certainly believed him. And I said, 'What do you think it's due to?' And he said - being a Theravadin - 'Well it's obvious! I mean all those people concentrating on the relics with that sort of intensity, you know, was obviously having some sort of effect on them and they were moving!' And he took it in this way, in a quite matter-of-fact sort of spirit, and that was probably the correct explanation. But it happened. And he saw them sort of revolving inside the capsule. [cf. Facing Mount Kanchenjunga, p.214]

I must say, though, I took part in this on a few occasions, helped organize a few receptions, and that it [354] certainly created quite a bit of good and useful publicity for Buddhism on a very popular level, and had quite a good sort of mass effect. I was not myself particularly enamoured of it all. I was quite ready to help organize receptions and so on and so forth; it was all part of my sort of Buddhist duties you could say. And I was quite glad to see the effect that the whole thing produced. But I wouldn't have liked to have been involved with it, you know, too much or for too long.

Mangala: (p.210) "It is hardly necessary to give further illustrations .. All scientific apparatus .. are an eye witness to the genius of the inventors."

S: Let's hope this isn't karma too!

Mangala: "All agricultural implements .. testify the immortality of karma created by the constructors .. the ideas .. of former inventors are still surviving through those of their successors .. as in genealogical karma- transmission."

S: Hmm, it seems to be a bit of reification of concepts again. All right, on you go.

Mangala: "Whatever garb the karma of a person may wear .. even in a piece of rag .. would be an opportunity for our inspiration .. according to how our own karma at that moment is made up."

S: Here we get a bit nearer to the truth: "according to how our *own* karma at that moment is made up." That's where it really depends. That karma isn't in that particular thing or hovering around it.

Lokamitra: "We now come to see more closely .. [to end of paragraph] .. and to pass an impartial judgement on its merits.

Devaraja: "Here, if not anywhere else, looms up .. the .. difference between Buddhism and Christianity as to their conception of soul-activity .. [to end of paragraph] .. This is the necessary conclusion from their premises of a .. concrete ego-soul.

Sona: "Buddhism, however, does not teach .. the existence of the soul .. [to end of paragraph] .. the Buddhist conception of the transmigration of the soul."

S: "Karma-reproduction" is quite a good expression.

Vajradaka: "A Japanese national hero .. said .. 'I will be reborn..' He will be reborn as long as the Japanese nation exists .. To live in karma .. is the Buddhist conception of immortality."

S: The Buddha in fact didn't say that. He didn't say 'I live in them. There is this passage in the Pali canon where he says, 'Do not think that after [355] my death you will have no teacher. The doctrines which I have taught, they will be your teacher when I am dead.[Parinibbana Sutta??] He didn't say in so many words, 'I will live in them.'

Vajradaka: "Therefore the Buddhists will perfectly agree .. 'We live in deeds, not years .. He lives most who thinks most, feels to noblest, acts the best.'

Sudatta: "Some may like to call this kind of immortality unsatisfactory. Even the Buddha could not make children find pleasure in .. metaphysical problems."

S: He didn't try to make anyone find pleasure in abstract metaphysical problems! If anything, he discouraged them! [laughs]

Sudatta: "Whatever truth there might be in them .. Unless a child becomes a man, we must not expect of him to put away childish things." [cf. 1 Corinthians, 13:11, tr.]

S: Of course there is the assumption that a parable is somehow more childish and inferior to abstract metaphysical speculation or explanation. This is not necessarily true at all.

Ratnapani: He seems to have forgotten too that the sort of Buddhist's ideal is to get off this birth and death process.

S: Yes, he seems to have rather lost sight of that.

Sulocana: "The conclusion that could be drawn .. is obvious .. Good karma is infinite bliss and evil one is the eternal curse .. The Buddha .. was the culmination of all the good karma .. stored up by his spiritual ancestors."

S: Presumably by spiritual ancestors he means the Buddha himself, as it were, in his previous existences. That's what he *should* mean, anyway.

Lokamitra: He seems to be not sure though. He seems to go back to using karma as influence, instead of...

S: Hmm. Or even sort of heredity. [murmurings from several] The beginnings of life, things like that.

Ratnapani: Not to mention having completely abandoned anything transcendental.

S: Seemingly, yes.

Sulocana: Maybe he's wanting immortality. "And he was at the same time the starting point for the fermentation of good karma .. Therefore good karma is not only statically immortal, but it is dynamically so." [356]

S: I'm not sure how one can be statically immortal!

Sulocana: "That is to say, its immortality is .. a constant .. increase in its moral efficiency.

Nagabodhi: "Pious Buddhists believe .. that which constitutes Buddha hood is not the personal ego of the Buddha, but his karma."

S: This seems to be really confusing, because what constitutes Buddhahood is something transcendental and above and beyond karma. I mean according to *all* Buddhist teachings.

Nagabodhi: "Every chemical element .. never fails to generate heat .. [to end of paragraph] .. for it is the law which conditions the immortality of karma."

S: It seems to me that Suzuki has been more confused in this chapter on karma than in any other chapter, even in that on the Buthatathata! But it is very instructive, because there is really no need for him to be confused and .. I mean, the miserable Hinayanists, who are intellectually immature, they seem to get it quite straight, you know, in their simple little works on Buddhism, so it seems rather strange that Suzuki does get confused in this way.

Anyway, with this chapter, we come perhaps a bit thankfully to the end of the part on "Speculative Mahayana" and from tomorrow we'll be dealing with "Practical Buddhism", so let's hope that he now comes into his own and that we shall find something of real, direct, spiritual relevance. [357]

Chapter 9: The Dharmakaya

S: To "Practical Buddhism". That's where we shall be for the remainder of the retreat: Practical Buddhism. So one could be able to see certain aspects of the practical side of the Mahayana, and also see, perhaps, how practical Dr Suzuki is in dealing with it. Right, let's start off then with chapter 9: *The Dharmakaya*.

Nagabodhi: "We have considered the doctrine of suchness .. the theory .. did not seem to have .. immediate bearing on our religious consciousness .. it must pass through some practical modification before it fully satisfies our spiritual needs .. because our religious cravings will not be satisfied with empty concepts lacking vitality.

Mamaki: "We may sometimes ignore the claims of reason and rest satisfied .. The truth is that the religious consciousness .. demands fact, and, when it attains that, it is not of much consequence .. whether .. its intellectual interpretation is logically tenable."

S: It seem to me that, as we have in fact noticed in the past, Suzuki doesn't always distinguish carefully enough between a sort of religious emotion in the narrower sense, which is making claims that go counter to those of reason, and the sort of inspiration (if you can use that word) of something higher which goes beyond both reason and feeling, and in fact even begins to emerge only when these two have been unified. He doesn't seem to be quite clear about all this.

Vajradaka: So that's the definition of the word spiritual, that the unification of those two...

S: Yes, I think one could regard this as a very important aspect of the meaning of the word spiritual: that when we get onto the spiritual path, any conflict which exists between the rational and the emotional has been virtually resolved, and you have a sort of unified energy and a unified being, still mundane, but unified, and oriented in the direction of the transcendental.

Sudatta: Isn't he a bit misled when he starts talking about "pure reason, however perfect in itself"? As if reason can never be pure let alone perfect!

S: What he's trying to say is - though he doesn't say it very well, I think - that a Buddhist doctrine may be absolutely clear, crystal clear, and logically completely defensible and self-consistent, but just in that as it were unadulterated form it doesn't satisfy the demands of the religious consciousness. Unfortunately he puts that in a rather subjective, [358] emotional way, huh? That the emotions and the cravings of the heart are not being satisfied, which rather twists the whole thing.

Sudatta: Wouldn't the mathematician agree?

S: Yes, the mathematical reference is a bit unfortunate. All right, let's carry on.

Mamaki: "If on the other hand, logic be all-important .. what remains would be nothing else but devastation, barrenness, and universal misery."

S: Just a minute. That's rather strong, isn't it? Hmm? I mean that's *true*, but it doesn't seem, you know, very applicable to what he really is talking about, hmm? He says, "If, on the other hand, logic be all-important and demand the first consideration and the sentiment has to follow its trail without a murmuring, our life would surely lose its savoury aspect." Well, that's true, but it isn't what happens in the case of Buddhism when you have, say the doctrine of Bhutatathata and so on and so forth, or the doctrine of nirvana. These are not doctrines propounded by the Buddha on a purely intellectual basis for purely intellectual consideration! Even though the language may be conceptual, the Buddha is trying to express, through that medium, something which altogether transcends the intellectual, even transcends the spiritual, and is trying to give direct expression to his transcendental experience, his sense of Enlightenment, or his experience of Enlightenment, and is trying to communicate *that*, even if he does use conceptual language, or intellectual, directly to the *whole being* of man, not just to his intellect. But Suzuki doesn't seem to see things quite in this way. It's as though he regards the Bhutatathata doctrine, for instance, as a purely intellectual doctrine, which is beautifully consistent, logically, even sort of mathematical in its perfection; and which is true but which satisfies the intellect without satisfying the heart, and that the heart therefore has these counter-cravings and counter-commands, and therefore this intellectual doctrine of Bhutatathata has to be somehow transformed into something which will satisfy the cravings of the heart, hmm? This seems to be just a confusion!

Mamaki: It doesn't even seem to be true of what is experience either, does it?

S: In what way?

Mamaki: Well, that when people are pursuing thought, in that way, pure and whatever, it's not cold and without sentiment. [359]

S: No, right. The academic may be cold, but the truly intellectual is not. So it's almost as though, you know, there is this dichotomy is Suzuki's own experience; it's almost as though he's immersed himself in texts and philology and all that sort of thing, and the rather drier side of - well, not Buddhism itself but the dry approach to Buddhism - and there was something in him that was rebelling against this, but, perhaps, there was one part of rebelling against the wrong approach of another part. So you get these two extremes: he's very academic on the one hand, and on the other hand intensely emotional, and sometimes his emotionality puts askew even his intellectuality, and even his undoubted academic knowledge becomes somewhat distorted. It's all very curious. I wonder what we would find if we went through one of Dr Conze's works in detail. I think we'd find something a bit odd there too, though perhaps in this obvious sort of way. I think he's much subtler, but there is something in Conze, too, that I'm not quite happy about: a sort of sardonic cynical element [that] smacks of...

Mamaki: He tends to have a dry, ironic...

S: ...the ironic element and...

Devaraja: Almost bitchy at times!

S: Right, yes. Transcendental bitchiness! [laughter]

Devamitra: Do you feel, though, that generally the more established Buddhist scholars, for want of a better word, are more accurate than, say, Suzuki is proving to be here? People like Guenther and Conze and so forth.

S: Guenther is *wildly* emotional, huh, at times. And especially in his earlier works he is terrible! He had this too. I am going to make this point when I review that little booklet on Tantra.[unable to trace this, tr.] He has this too. He's got extreme intellectuality, and he's always sort of rummaging, you know, amongst the latest developments in Western thought, all sorts of obscure corners, and trying to compare them with medieval Buddhist thought, and say, well, what the Buddhist medieval thinkers were really saying is this. And he brings out Susan Stebbing's latest pronouncement, or Wittgenstein, and so on and so forth. And then there's tremendous emotionality, which sometimes comes out when he's speaking about other scholars. For instance, he says things like 'Dr so-and-so talks absolute rubbish!' and 'Professor so-and-so does [360] not understand a thing about Buddhism!' and he uses very violent expressions when referring to God: 'the Christian dictatorial deistic system' and expressions of this kind [laughs] And I remember when I met him for the first time - which was in 1950 - I met him at Lucknow University and he'd only published one book at that time in English. So we met and we had a bit of a chat, and I asked him, you know, what do you think of this scholar and that scholar and the other, and he dismissed absolutely every one! I asked him, for instance, what do you think of Dr so-and-so? 'Oh, he knows *absolutely nothing!*' Well what about Professor (?) Spiegelberg? Professor Glasenapp? 'Why, he doesn't know a *word* of Sanskrit!' Well he's a Sanskrit scholar! [unclear] other languages! Well what about Dr Roerich? 'He's *totally* failed to understand the subject!' And every single thing was like this! So contemptuous and so sweeping! And this comes out a little bit even now.

So there are these two extremes. There's the unharmonized, unfused, intellectuality and emotionality, the intellectuality remaining very technical and dry and abstract and academic, and the emotionality very raw and primitive and childish.

Devaraja: Yeah!

S: He's very childish.

Devaraja: He's almost like a very simple bhakti at times, I feel, his comments on Tibetan lamas and...

S: Well he's got this formidable intellectual equipment, and at his best he's really brilliant and almost unsurpassed - very good indeed. You know, [Guenther] is, in his later writings, better and clearer than Suzuki. He has, I think, a better mind than Suzuki, but the same sort of overall distortion, due to unintegrated emotionalism! It's really extraordinary. [pause] Glasenapp seems quite sound on the whole. Govinda [too] on the whole, though there are a few things I'm not quite happy about, but he doesn't seem to have this, you know, type of war going on. It may be because Govinda is also an artist, you see, that may have a lot to do with it. Glasenapp isn't, but so I haven't found this in Glasenapp's writings.

Ratnapani: Govinda, surely, is a practising Buddhist, isn't he, which most of...

S: Well, Guenther is a practising Buddhist, too, to some extent at least, yes. He has received various tantric initiations, and he has done [361] some practice. He's even had retreats on his own. But it doesn't seem to have, you know, resolved this completely by any means.

Devamitra: What about Professor Tucci?

S: Tucci, I think, is very good. I don't know [but] I get the feeling it is because he is an Italian. He has got great intellectuality but he's .. with such emotional verve, you know? He's quite, you know, delightful to read, hmm?

Vajradaka: He's a really nice person too.

S: Is he? I've never met him.

Vajradaka: I met him in the Customs and Immigration Office in Osaka, in Japan. [laughs]

S: He talks the whole time, and is very charming and hospitable and so on and so forth. Very Italian. Guenther is Austrian, and it *may* have something to do with [loud coughing] national karma(!)

Mamaki: What is Govinda?

S: Govinda? He's German mainly, but I think there's some South American in him, some Spanish element. [Govinda's mother was Bolivian, tr.] But it's really sort of surprising to see this, and I did come to discover, when I was in India and meeting various scholars, especially Western scholars, that they're wildly emotional creatures, and the passion that goes into their battles with one another and the violent jealousies and recriminations and scholarly feuds is absolutely amazing! Even in the case of people who are in philosophy departments: if anything, they're worse! It's absolutely amazing! I was really sort of staggered when I first became aware of this: that they really will do each other down if they get the chance, you know, there will be snide remarks to publishers, you know, to try and get their books stopped and not published, and the scathing reviews that they would insti-

gate, and trying to ensure that they don't get pupils, and things like that, you know, at universities: all sorts of manoeuvres and politicking going on, to say nothing of their open warfare in their books and pamphlets and reviews and offprints and whatnot. It really is an amazing world of this, you know, of this sort of Indological scholarship. I mean [as for] other worlds' scholarship - I'm not acquainted with those, but I think the sciences are not as bad as this, but, you know, maybe they are. But certainly this Indological, Tibetological, world is terrible!

Devaraja: I think, in fact, in the sciences, if anything it might be even worse, because I once travelled with a Canadian researcher biologist and there [362] was another research zoologist who was studying the same particular species of mountain goat which is on the verge of extinction, and he was getting very up-tight about the fact that the one I was travelling with was going to go into the Hindu Kush also to study this same beast in a different part of the world, and he said, you know, 'If I let any of my research out, you know, it will be claimed and published, you know, sort of...'

S: Oh yes! This is the sort of thing I used to hear, and they used to be terribly secretive about their research and not let on what they were doing, but of course Nemesis sometimes came along. I remember one friend of mine who was doing some research into some obscure Tibetan text, and he didn't let anybody know he was publishing an edition with critical notes. And at last, when in triumph it came out, in the same year another scholar in Germany did exactly the same thing. And neither knew that the other was doing it, so two people had done the same work, which, I mean, only needed to be done by one. I mean they are always trying to steal a march on one another. And it really is extraordinary, this highly developed, academic, abstract, intellect on the one hand and these childish emotions on the other. And they can be writing about Buddhism, the bodhisattva ideal, and so on and so forth, at the same time!

Devamitra: Would you say, then, from all this, that in order to be able to really stretch one's intellect and mind, and presumably one's emotional life as well, they've got to come together, it can't take place sort of until there...

S: It must be the total being, hmm.

Devamitra: So you've got to..

S: I mean actually you *are* together, you know, you've just got to operate together. But it's also as though there's some fault in the whole sort of educational system, you know, that you can have a sort of department of Indology, or you can have Buddhist Studies, at all at a university. This seems to be entirely wrong, hmm? The fault is there, you know, to begin with, you can say.

Mamaki: The system, I think, feeds into this problem, because academic advancement comes to those who publish a lot and...

S: Right! Well it's especially so in America. Academic advancement is almost automatic in accordance with the number of your publications, so [363] there's a tremendous pressure on young scholars, young lecturers, to publish before they're ready, before they're really ripe, just for the sake of advancement, you know, professionally. Not so much in this country, but it is really tremendous in America, and by the time you are thirty, you ought to have a list of seven or eight publications at least, you know, which is disgraceful, you know. I mean what has a young man of thirty got to say, you know, about these things?

Mangala: You wrote the Survey when you were about twenty-nine?

S: Well I just scraped in! [laughter] I split the (?)question! [laughs] Anyway, carry on. I must say I had a naive wonder, when I first encountered these people, having had no sort of contact with a university myself, you know, in earlier life, and I imagined that people who had done research into Buddhism and were professors of Indology, you know, would be very mature and balanced people, but not a bit of it! I must say I was grievously disappointed.

Mamaki: "The truth is, in this life the will predominates and the intellectual subserves .. When it is a question of life and death, we must have something more substantial than theorization." (bottom of p.218)

S: This, of course, is true, but the solution is not just to rush to one-sided emotionalism.

Mamaki: "It may not be a mathematically exact .. proposition, but .. it must be a faith born of the inmost consciousness of our being.

Ratnapani: "What practical transformations then has the doctrine of suchness, in order to meet the religious demands, to suffer?"

S: Yes, this word 'suffer', you know, is quite interesting, isn't it?

Ratnapani: The number of times he says 'The truth is...' Twice in that last page.

S: Yes, right. Anyway, on to "God"!

Devamitra: "Buddhism does not use the word God .. but .. Buddhism must not be judged as an atheism .. Buddhism outspokenly acknowledges the presence in the world of a reality which transcends the limits of phenomenality."

S: It would be more correct to say "Buddhism outspokenly acknowledges a reality which transcends the limits of phenomenality". If you say "acknowledges the presence in the world", this is a bit vague and a bit confusing. You don't really need to say that. You acknowledge the [364] existence, or you simply acknowledge, a reality which transcends the limits of phenomenality, a reality represented by the word nirvana, or sunyata, or tathata, or whatever. I mean if you say the presence in the world, what you really mean,

or should mean, is a reality which you, here in the world, can reach and can realize if you make the necessary effort; it's not that that reality is sort of here as a sort of cosmological principle or something of that kind.

Mamaki: When he talks about atheism and agnosticism, to me he's saying much the same thing. But atheism denies the existence of God, whereas agnosticism...

S: ...is agnostic, and says that I don't know, there may be a God, there may not be, I don't know, whereas atheism definitely asserts that there isn't a personal God. Right. Read the whole sentence again so that we get the hang of it properly.

Devamitra: "Buddhism outspokenly acknowledges the presence in the world of a reality which transcends the limits of phenomenality, but which is nevertheless immanent everywhere and manifests itself in its full glory, and in which we live and move and have our being."

S: All that is totally unnecessary. All that he needs to say is, 'Far from it. Buddhism acknowledges...' (you don't even need to say outspokenly. Nothing to be ashamed of here!). 'Buddhism acknowledges a reality which transcends the limits of phenomenality,' full stop! But he goes on to say "but which is nevertheless immanent everywhere and manifests itself in its full glory, and in which we live and move and have our being." Well we don't. That's all theoretical construction. We don't know anything about that. All that we know - and even then we know it as much by faith as, you know, in any other way - is that there is a higher transcendental dimension which we can experience, or which we can at least touch, if we make the effort. That's all we need to know. All right. On we go.

Mangala: "God or the religious object of Buddhism is generally called Dharmakaya-Buddha and occasionally Vairocana-Buddha or Vairocana-Dharmakaya- Buddha."

S: This is too wide. He says, "the religious object of Buddhism". It's really Mahayana Buddhism, and especially Far-Eastern Mahayana Buddhism. The religious object of Buddhism, in the broadest sense, is the Triple Gem: Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha.

Devamitra: Presumably this thing about Vairocana, almost as a God figure, is peculiarly Japanese, because I remember I read von Glasenapp's book and [365] he commented in that on how close, you know, that Vairocana does come to a godhead in certain Buddhist...

S: Right. Mainly Japan, because the Tibetans would never do this. There is the figure of Vairocana, one of the five Buddhas of the mandala, very often the central figure, but there are no cosmological speculations. Vairocana is meditated upon as the central figure of the mandala, but he's not speculated about in this sort of way. It's a different sort of world, a different sort of context. The Japanese seem to have, you know, given the Mahayana - perhaps it's more in recent times - a decidedly almost Christian twist. Anyway, we can see it quite clearly, so let's go on.

Mamaki: "Still another name for it is Amitayur-Buddha, the latter being mostly used by the followers of the Sukhavati sect of Japan and China."

S: You notice there's a sort of antithesis. I mean, his divided intellect and emotion. So intellectually you've got your doctrine, your abstract intellectual doctrine, the Bhutatathata, that doesn't really satisfy your emotions. So this abstract Bhutatathata has to transform itself into a concrete, warm, loving, personal figure, which is his interpretation of the Dharmakaya, i.e. Vairocana, Amitabha, and so on. So there's another extension of that split: Bhutatathata for the intellect, and Dharmakaya - in Vairocana or Amitabha form - for the heart. He's perpetuating the split.

Mangala: "Again, very frequently we find Sakyamuni .. stripped of his historical personality and identified with the highest truth and reality. These .. by no means exhaust a legion of names invented by the fertile imagination of Buddhists for their object of reverence as called forth by their various spiritual needs."

S: We need not go into that. Straight on to "*Dharmakaya*".

Lokamitra: "Western scholars usually translate Dharmakaya by 'Body of the Law'.. It is said that .. Buddha .. commanded his disciples to revere the Dharma .. because a man continues to live in the work .. and words left behind himself."

S: As I commented yesterday, Suzuki gives a slight twist to that passage. The Buddha merely said, 'When I am gone, the Dharma that I have taught you will be your teacher,' which seems quite straightforward and just having a common-sense meaning. He's not making a metaphysical assertion that he, the Buddha, continues to live, in some mythical sense, in the teaching. [366]

Lokamitra: "So Dharmakaya came to be understood by Western scholars as meaning the person of Buddha incarnated in his religion... Historically, the Body of Law as the Buddha incarnate might have been the sense of Dharmakaya."

S: What he means is, historically, the Body of the Law, as the Buddha incarnate, might have been the sense of Dharmakaya, yes?

Lokamitra: "..as we can infer from some Hinayana texts. But .. it has acquired a .. new significance, having nothing to do with the body of religious teaching established by the Buddha."

S: Hmm, nothing to do with? That's rather strong isn't it? Also Eastern Buddhists, well mainly Far-Eastern Buddhists, especially in Japan.

Devaraja: "This transformation in the conception .. has been affected by the different interpretation the term Dharma came to receive .. 'that which exists', 'reality', 'being', etc., etc."

S: All this is quite correct and standard.

Devaraja: "The English equivalent .. is law or doctrine .. but when we wish to apply this .. to Dharmakaya, Dharmaloka, .. we are at a loss .. There are passages in Mahayana literature in which the whole significance of the text depends upon how we understand the word 'Dharma'."

S: This is very true.

Devaraja: "And it may be said .. 'If we were always to translate 'Dharma' by 'law', .. the whole drift of our treatise would become unintelligible."

S: Yes. Generally in the Vajracchedika, 'dharma' means 'thing', it doesn't mean law. And Max Muller, I think, was the first in the west to point that out.

Sona: "In Mahayanism 'dharma' means in many cases 'thing'... Kaya may be rendered as 'body'... Dharmakaya .. thus means the organized totality of things or the principle of cosmic unity, though not as a purely philosophical concept, but as an object of the religious consciousness."

S: Again you get that antithesis, which doesn't seem to be really necessary: something as a philosophical concept and something as the object of the religious consciousness.

Sona: "Throughout this work .. the original Sanskrit form will be maintained .. when [367] translated by God or All or some abstract philosophical terms, suffers considerably."

S: As far as I recollect, Suzuki has been criticized by some scholars for interpreting the Dharmakaya as personal, as it were. This is not the general view, even of Japanese Buddhist scholars. [pause] Anyway, on the "Dharmakaya as religious object".

Vajradaka: "As aforesaid, the Dharmakaya has a religious significance as the object of the religious consciousness."

S: What is this religious consciousness? We keep getting this expression. What do you understand by this? He seems to speak of it almost as a distinct kind of faculty. Now what do you understand by it?

Devaraja: Presumably he means to spiritual aspirations on individuals.

Sulocana: Does he mean the bodhicitta?

S: I don't think he means that, even, because he refers to it, you know, in a very general sense, not peculiar to Buddhism.

Lokamitra: He refers to it in terms of the heart, doesn't he?

S: To *some* extent. But it seems to me that if you use the words "religious consciousness" it's a total consciousness, that when all of your being, you know, your head and your heart and your will is sort of directed, totally, and integrally of possible, onto those things or that thing which you regard as of the highest significance and importance. Then you can speak in terms of the "religious consciousness". It's not a sort of separate faculty which needs a separate satisfaction. I mean it's your own sort of total commitment, or total preoccupation with, what is, as far as you can see, of absolute importance, if you like. It's not a separate kind of consciousness is it?

Mamaki: It's as though he sees that the fact that some people do have an interest in or some kind of attraction towards things religious, and others don't, as though those who do have got a separate 'bit'.

S: Hmm, right, yes.

Devaraja: A sort of general impression I've got from different times that he's used it is sort of that it's almost as if the religious consciousness is that part of you which responds to the laws and the rules, almost literally like that, you know, like... [368]

S: Specifically religious things, hmm?

Devaraja: Yeah.

Nagabodhi: Jung in his two .. in two of his in *Analytical Psychology* - you might back me up on this, I think you've read it - he talks about something, I don't think he calls it religious consciousness, but he certainly refers to it as a particular kind of faculty which is almost isolated in type, which is there; it's that part of the mind that responds to the numinous content of a situation, and he talks about how twentieth-century life has repressed this faculty at the cost of fantastic...

S: Hmm, well, now you mention it, there's something like this in Cardinal Newman. He coined a term which became very popular and which was subsequently used by some theologians, called the *elated sense*, which is a special kind of sense which had reference to the numinous, as it were. And even Otto speaks of the 'idea of the Holy', though of course he uses the word 'idea' rather than faculty or sense. But it seems to be the same kind of thing in a way. So I think here, this is, in a way, very suspect: that there is a separate religious sense, or a separate religious consciousness, and that some people have it and others don't sort of thing. It seems to me much more .. I mean if you use the word 'religious' it seems to indicate a sort of coordination of all one's faculties and one's whole being in a certain direction which you recognize to be ultimate.

Sulocana: Could it be equivalent to 'magnetic centre'?

S: It could be, but I think that 'magnetic centre' is, in a way, a bit more realistic.

Sulocana: Being drawn to those particular..

Vajradaka: Do you think that it could be a sense of rightness, or a sense of harmoniousness?

S: Well Suzuki doesn't seem to mean that at all. It seems to be a product of a dichotomy. It seems to reinforce the dichotomy.

Vajradaka: What? This religious..

S: His 'religious consciousness' or 'religious sense'. He definitely seems to think of it as a separate thing, a separate kind of consciousness, and therefore requiring its own particular kind of satisfaction, a separate satisfaction distinct from the philosophical or logical satisfaction which the intellect gets. In other words, he sees the religious consciousness almost [369] as excluding the intellect!

Mamaki: Well what's .. sometimes this kind of religious thing, and art too, appeals too .. is the ability to be moved by symbols, and there are people - I think this is where the intellect and the feeling is divorced;.. then symbols don't mean anything; they mean something intellectually but not as a thing that combines both.

S: Well it seems to me - this is quite interesting - that Suzuki is rather insensitive to symbols, there are no symbols; he's got abstract thought, and he's got emotion, but there are no symbols, and so no images, hmm? There's rhetoric but there's no poetry! So you could say that Vairocana Buddha, in a way, is a symbol, you could say, in the real sense, but Suzuki regards Vairocana Buddha merely as an object of emotion, which he calls religious consciousness.

Mamaki: Or as a sign *for* something.

S: A sign for something, yes. So I think this is quite interesting and quite important. It raises up a vast perspective. It seems to me that the strength of the tantric tradition and Vajrayana tradition, Tibetan Buddhism generally, is the presence in it of symbols. But it seems that in Japanese Buddhism, at least as represented by Suzuki and others, you've got philosophy on the one hand and emotion on the other, and what should be symbols, traditionally, have become converted simply into objects of emotion, or, as he would say, objects of the religious consciousness. So there's no unification taking place.

Devaraja: Or signs for something.

S: Signs for something. I think this is a correct diagnosis.

Mangala: I'm not quite clear on that.

S: Hmm?

Mangala: I mean I can feel it (?to a sign), but I'm not quite sure where the symbol bit comes in.

S: Well the symbol bit comes in in two ways. First it comes in, say, from Buddhist tradition. That is to say Vairocana, Avalokitesvara. These are symbols, you know, for want of a better term. Archetypal forms, huh? And, as symbols, they unify intellectual and emotional, yes? But even in Japanese Buddhism, in Suzuki especially, it seems that while retaining the name of the symbol, the symbol is not functioning as a symbol. They've got the name of what is in fact a symbol, but that name now becomes - [370] and the name is the same - the name of an object of the emotion. So, in other words, not the name of the symbol unifying intellect and emotion, or which can function in that way, but simply a sort of name for the object of the un-unified emotion. And this seems to tie up with the relative absence, in Japanese Buddhism, of symbols. For instance, Zen is very symbol-free isn't it?

This is very suspect, I think, whereas, as I pointed out, Tibetan Buddhism, Vajrayana tradition, going back to India, is very rich in symbols, and this seems to work. In other words, where you've got a great intellectual development, as in the Mahayana, it's very dangerous not to have a rich development of symbolism at the same time, which is, of course, what happened, historically, in India. The Mahayana *did* become intellectual, it *did* become scholastic, and what happened? The Vajrayana arose, and all these symbols were brought forth - you could say, if you wanted to speak poetically - from the depths of the Indian collective unconsciousness. Yes? There's some truth in that. And they brought out all sorts of weird and wonderful forms and archetypes and symbols on so on, yes? They needed all that richness to counterbalance and help integrate, you know, all this intellectual abstract Mahayana philosophy.

And the Tibetans continue this tradition. They've got the intellectual side of Buddhism in full force: the logic (I mean even in Japan they don't have Buddhist logic, but the Tibetans have got it!), epistemology, metaphysics, the Yogacara, the Madhyamika, the Tibetans have got it all! But they've also got the Vajrayana, they've also got hundreds of buddhas and bodhisattvas and guardian deities and dakinis, etc, etc. In Japanese Buddhism you do not find this, on the whole. [pause] Apart from Shingo [more usually called Shingon, tr.], about which we hear very little. Which is quite significant. No Shingo follower has written lots and lots of books about Shingo, hmm? So it's as though, in Japanese Buddhism, there is this split of intellect and emotion, to some extent. You even get it school-wise, don't you? This is very interesting! You get Zen versus Shin, you know, what are the two great schools of Japanese Buddhism, the best known and the biggest? Zen and Shin! One, as it were, more rational and intellectual, actually, in approach, with only the historical Buddha, Sakyamuni; and the other the highly devotional Shin. And Suzuki himself, when he delivered this lecture on the essence of Buddhism before the Emperor just before the war, you may remember that he says at the beginning that he resisted the temptation to divide his lecture into two parts, one [371] dealing with Zen and one with Shin. That's quite interesting, isn't it? He very nearly did that, but not quite.

Sudatta: Certainly our dear friend Jack Austin was always of the view that unless Zen and Shin were reintegrated there was not a viable Buddhist tradition there.

S: Mm, yes. In the Theravada the split seems to be between the laity and the monks. The monks are usually highly intellectual and go in for Abhidhamma studies and so on. The laity are rather simple and devotional in their approach, and don't have much understanding of Buddhism theoretically. There the split seems to be more that way, as between sangha and laity, or monastic order and laity.

Mangala: Then they sort of developed these symbols in the Vajrayana. Would you say that that was more than just a balancing up of the emotional side, if you like, from the previous Mahayana intellectualism?

S: Oh I wouldn't say it was an emotional reaction at all. No. It was a *spiritual* development, utilizing symbols for the integration of both intellect and emotion, and very powerful symbols were needed because the intellectual development had been extreme.

Mamaki: It's the function of the symbol, isn't it, to unify those?

S: And this is why, you know, you get scholars at Nalanda who were well up in Buddhist epistemology and so on and so forth. They were meditating on all sorts of fearsome and weird figures, huh? as they appear. The dharmapala figures and rather odd forms of Tara and so on and so forth. In other words, something completely different, but which had a *meaning*, and which were directly connected with the spiritual path, not just a relapse or reaction into emotionalism, and that is very important.

Devaraja: Some of the bodhisattva forms I've seen from Japan seem very very beautiful and very very good, and I think there's, for me, a classic example, in fact, of the wedding of the emotion and the intellect is in a particular form of Avalokitesvara that's very popular called the White-Robed Avalokitesvara, and as far as I understand, that's a reference to the fourth dhyana. But, I mean, that seems to be quite highly developed in Japan.

S: Well, after all, Japanese Buddhism is Buddhism! But it does seem that there is something in the Japanese national character and perhaps increasing in modern times, that tended to create a sort of split that found its expression [372] in various ways. It may be parallel, you know, to the case of what happened to the case of Christianity in the West, where you had, you know, emotion split off from intellect and therefore a great scientific and technological development.

Mamaki: The production of images, beautiful images, would come from someone who's creative, and any good artist, no matter whether it's poetry, sculpture, or whatever, does work symbolically, otherwise their work is cold, so that the person who was making that, so to speak, might have been personally - probably was - in touch with the symbolic level and could use that. That wouldn't mean that the..

Devaraja: The culture was..

Mamaki: .. that represented the consciousness of the people who used it, necessarily.

S: Because, I mean, even if someone had created, say, an image in that sort of way, other people can still use it just as [drowned out by aircraft noise]. So there seems to be, in Suzuki, putting it simply, an incapacity to create a symbol, yes? In other words, no individuation. That is quite interesting.

Devaraja: No individuation process you mean?

S: [unclear] .. sense. I mean, don't take me too seriously, but it is as though, you know, this is what was happening, or not happening.

Lokamitra: Does he get better as time goes on? I mean does he seem more integrated in his Zen works?

S: I think sometimes he does, but I wouldn't like to swear to it. I think that the fact that in this quite late *Essence of Buddhism* he does sort of initially hesitate and wonder whether to, you know, to divide the lecture into two parts, one dealing with Zen and one dealing with Shin, is quite significant, and he did become a bit preoccupied with Shin in his later life and produced, you know, a book of essays about it; not a very big book. But it's as though that part remains unintegrated. It may be that since he was dealing with the materials of Japanese Buddhism mainly, you know, he was unable to effect a sort of synthesis, even an intellectual synthesis, and he certainly didn't seem able to produce, you know, a unifying symbol.

Lokamitra: It seems that this sort of thing happens quite often, mainly with people involved in the spiritual life. They go to one extreme, say he goes to the intellectual extreme, and the other extreme comes out by itself, as it were. [373]

S: Right, yes.

Lokamitra: Manifests itself unconsciously, almost.

S: Right, yes, disturbing the intellectual side.

Lokamitra: Yes.

Mangala: But you have said that like, for example, in initiation, that say you give somebody an Avalokitesvara practice, that just in doing that, even though it's compassion, that the wisdom side will also sort of develop.

S: Yes, right, well in the sense that Avalokitesvara - though you might take it in this way initially - doesn't represent emotion as opposed to intellect. He's a bodhisattva! If he's anything, he exists on a level - or at the very least *symbolizes* a level - where this an-

tithesis has long been transcended! Yes? So it may be that the form is, perhaps, in a way, more sort of appealing to the emotion, but that is just at the beginning, just at the start. If you get really into it, then your intellect also becomes involved, not only your emotions, and Avalokitesvara becomes a symbol in that sense.

Mamaki: There can be an individuation process that goes on unconsciously as well as one which goes on unconsciously [sic].

S: Right. You are only *thinking* that you are preoccupying yourself with the predominantly emotional aspect, and Avalokitesvara represents that, but, you know, after all it is a symbol, and it can be, you know, working in another way unconsciously.

Lokamitra: Another thing. Say you are concentrating on compassion or purity, surely this will bring to the surface all the non-compassionate side, the very non-pure side or whatever, so...

S: Well the whole of you will gradually get involved including your intellect. But it does seem as though, you know, Suzuki struggles and struggles but no symbol emerges. Perhaps he isn't creative enough. Or perhaps it isn't good to be a scholar from the spiritual point of view; perhaps it's as simple as this. Perhaps no one should be a scholar, not just a scholar.

Devamitra: Do you find that, with reference to, say, scholars within the sangha - that is, the monastic setup - that this kind of thing happens at all? Or very much? Do they become, you know, sort of split as persons?

S: I don't think so, I don't think so. Not quite like this. This is a bit extreme. I must say that, I mean, I remember in the course of my own [374] writings in the past, sometimes it would happen that I'd be writing, and I'd be thinking, for instance, dealing with a certain doctrine. When I came to a certain figure of speech or an image I at once felt a quite different sort of energy coming into operation, and it was a much more joyful and creative part of the writing. I noticed this a long long time ago. More than twenty-five years ago. Anybody else noticed this?

Vajradaka: Yes.

S: So what does that mean? That you're, you know, that it's a more.. When you're writing something more intellectual as it were, there is only part of you functioning, but when the image or symbol comes up, or even you tell the story, then the whole of you is involved, and therefore you notice in the lectures, that when I tell a story, or describe a symbol, there's a different atmosphere in the room, and it is because of this.

Sulocana: It seems to concentrate a lot of energy in a small..

S: In a small space.

Sulocana: Yes.

S: Yes, but we don't seem to get this in Suzuki. We get rhetoric, and poetry of a sort, but we don't get any images, even emerging, not even just by way of description.

Devaraja: It's a sort of personal poetry, kind of,.. as connected with the emotions.

S: Subjective and emotional, yes. I think it's Keats - I can't quote the exact passage, but there is a passage in which he refers to images rising from what we would call the unconscious (he didn't use that expression) like 'Venus rising from the sea'. [This would be Wordsworth, 'Summer Vacation', line 114, although Keats does make reference to Botticelli's painting in 'Endymion', tr.] And it's very much like that. With Suzuki, you know, the sea is sort of tossing, you know, hither and thither, but no Venus rises from the sea, no image, no archetype, emerging. Perhaps it's because the very nature of the writing and the subject matter precludes that, at least in terms of his particular approach. So maybe he should have done some more creative writing!

Mamaki: Does one get a very different flavour from Govinda? Because..

S: One does.

Mamaki: ..because he is in touch with that part of himself and he knows what he's talking about. [375]

S: Right. And he describes certain images, for instance his description of the Dhyani Buddhas [the five Buddhas of the mandala, tr.]. These are very beautiful and evocative, and not just intellectual.

Mamaki: And in the other one, on the consciousness - is it *Psychology of..* - it's not dry and intellectual. It's as though he's in touch with that symbolic level while he's writing.

S: Right, yes, because your writing can either represent the individuation process, or, as it were, be a product of it, hmm? I mean in the course of your writing, images come up, or you may be normally preoccupied with the image anyway, and that shows itself in the more unified character of your whole writing. But perhaps it is simply Suzuki, you know, didn't have any particular spiritual practice at this time. And also he was in a foreign country, *and* he was an academic, *and* he came from Japan where, you know, the modernization, industrialization, was by that time in full swing, and these probably all added up to very powerful influences.

Mamaki: Academics do have great difficulty with symbols. I've found this in some of the Depth Groups. They look at a symbol and then want to extract its meaning.

S: Right, and then deal with the meaning!

Mamaki: Yes, and they've lost the symbol. And, you know, it happens over and over again, and it's so hard to say, look, you're going about it the wrong way.

S: Well now, what does it mean, and then, you know, just grasp the meaning and forget about the symbol!

Mamaki: Yes! [both laugh]

Vajradaka: I was interested by what you said about the story uses the whole being, whereas sort of abstract ideas, ways of talking, only uses that particular.. It reminded me of something that happened last year at one of the festivals, where about six of us had each given a small talk. I think it was at Dharmacakra Day, I'm not sure, and Suvrata gave a talk equating science with the Dharma..

Devaraja: Well in actual fact he used a formula - he used a sort of equation - to explain a doctrinal point.

S: Ah! Didn't that come in Shabda? [not found in Shabda archives, tr.]

Vajradaka: 'If any cause as..' Yes, that one. Yes he did. And he sort of elaborated it a bit. And I didn't understand a word of that! And a couple of [376] turns after him, I told a story.

Devaraja: And *he* didn't understand a word of *that*! [uproar of laughter]

Vajradaka: And he came up to me afterwards and he said, 'Quite frankly I didn't understand a word of that story!' [laughs] And I had to tell him I didn't understand a word of what he had said!

S: I thought you were going to say you didn't understand a word of it either! [amusement] It's interesting - talking of stories - when Chanda gave his lecture, and a number of images that came up in that, and which gave a definite character to that whole talk, a definite feeling. Now then, perhaps, we've gone on about that long enough.

Sudatta: Bhante, could you give a definition of individuation?

S: I don't know about this. That's sort of treading on Jungian terrain, and I'm not quite an expert in that particular field.

Sudatta: I looked it up in my religious dictionary [laughs] and lo and behold you read a sentence like this: a term indicating the philosophical problem about the grounds of numerical polarity within a class.

S: Well that's different. This is different from the Jungian context.

Mamaki: In the Jungian sense it's the integration of conscious and unconscious aspects, and the unconscious aspects may be things repressed, in the Freudian sense, or they may be potentialities that haven't yet come into being. And it's also the integration of the functions that one uses most consciously with those that one uses - or that use one - unconsciously. So it's a kind of different things come together.

S: Or you could say it's a horizontal integration and a vertical integration at the same time.

Mamaki: And it does mean that thinking and feeling, those functions, do come together.

S: There is integration, I take it, and therefore also growth?

Mamaki: Yes.

S: There's integration on the horizontal level and growth, as it were, on the vertical.
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Mamaki: Well until feeling and thought can come together, then they can't go any further, and they can't operate together in a kind of everyday consciousness because one precludes the other.

S: So Suzuki seems to be in a situation of when he's satisfying his intellect, his heart is unsatisfied, and when his heart is being satisfied, his intellect is unsatisfied, and he's constantly rushing backwards and forwards between the two trying to satisfy their contradictory demands. And therefore he brings in this sort of distinction of *bhutatathata*, the abstract logical doctrine, which satisfies the intellect, and the *Dharmakaya*, the concrete religious belief, which satisfies the heart, whereas *Dharmakaya* is nothing of the sort. If it is anything, it is of the middle order and is something unifying, and can be expressed as a symbol, or is a symbol, you know, i.e. *Vairocana*, *Amitabha*, and so on. So he seems really in a mess.

Anyway, let's carry on. [pause while the next reader finds their place] I think we'd gone onto the next section on "*Dharmakaya* as religious object".

Vajradaka: "The *Dharmakaya* is a soul, a willing and knowing being,.. not an abstract metaphysical principle like *suchness*, but it is a living spirit that manifests itself in nature as well as in thought."

S: Well really, of course, in Mahayana Buddhism, *suchness* is not an abstract metaphysical principle at all. That is exactly what it isn't! It also occurs to me that if you have your abstract metaphysical principle on the one hand, which satisfies only the intellect, your heart remains unsatisfied on the other hand, your emotion, and what can satisfy the emotions, just crudely considered? It's a person! And then you get your personification coming, and a desire for the personal God and so on and so forth! So if you split off, you know, intellect and emotion in this way, you are almost *bound* to demand the exis-

tence of a personal God. So Suzuki therefore personalizes the Dharmakaya, hmm? Besides, of course, making it a cosmological principle too. This seems to have its significance for Christianity, because in Christianity you've got that split, usually, between the head and the heart, and you've got the heart demanding the supreme being and also that supreme being regarded as, you know, creator of the universe.

Mamaki: And then you get the people who are into the symbolic thing talking about the 'God above God'. [378]

S: Yes.

Vajradaka: "The Universe as an expression of this spirit is not a meaningless display of blind forces, nor is it an arena for the struggle of diverse mechanical powers.

S: Reminds me a bit of Koestler, *The Ghost in the Machine*, yes? If you make your universe quite wrongly, as he says here "an arena for the struggle of diverse mechanical powers", then you have to bring, as it were, your spiritual principle forcibly in from the outside, a sort of ghostly fashion. And this is what Suzuki is doing with his "spirit". Because he is one-sidedly intellectual, he sees the universe in mechanistic sort of fashion, but then his heart is unsatisfied, so into this mechanistic universe he has to introduce "spirit", hmm?

Vajradaka: "Further, Buddhists ascribe to the Dharmakaya innumerable virtues .. and it is in this that the Dharmakaya finally assumes a totally different aspect from a mere metaphysical principle, cold and lifeless."

S: There's a lot of feeling behind this! It also occurs to me to wonder, you know, what part our puja plays in all this, hmm? Maybe puja sort of, to some extent, simplifies this, you know, head and heart. It's not just an emotional indulgence is it? You don't wallow in feeling when you engage in the puja. But something is definitely happening.

Ratnapani: Some people do feel that that is what it is about.

S: Yes, some people try very hard, I know. Perhaps sometimes they'll succeed! [laughs]

Lokamitra: But meditation itself should do this, shouldn't it?

S: Er, yes, but puja seems to make it objective and therefore concrete, doesn't it?

Mamaki: But if it's too emotional, it then kills its purpose.

S: It defeats its .. yes, yes. I think that some people have found this, that they've attended the puja and perhaps the person conducting it has been over-emotional, [and] they've been quite sort of turned off. It is better done in a matter-of-fact way, because, after all, the symbol, if symbol there is, is *there*. You know, you just reckon the fact that

you are engaging in the puja means that the symbol is there. You don't have to sort of will it into existence by being over-emotional. All right, let's go on. [379]

Sudatta: "The Avatamsaka Sutra gives some comprehensive statements concerning the nature of the Dharmakaya as follows: '.. [to end of paragraph] .. it is working in all things to lead them to nirvana."

S: This is translated from the Chinese translation. Some of the Chinese translations are very poetic. I wouldn't like to comment on this unless I either had the Sanskrit text - and I don't think there is a Sanskrit text of much of the Avatamsaka Sutra - or a very literal English translation. But it does seem, even in this particular text, a bit of cosmological tendency is creeping in.

Sulocana: "*More Detailed Characterization*. The above gives us a general view .. but .. let me quote .. in order that we may .. see into the characteristically Buddhist conception of the highest being."

S: Hmm, this is a bit suspect, isn't it? The highest being almost suggests a God, hmm?

Nagabodhi: "Oh ye sons of Buddha!.. [to end of paragraph] ..

Mamaki: "Oh ye sons of Buddha!.. [to end of paragraph] ..

Ratnapani: "Oh ye sons of Buddha!.. [to end of paragraph] ..

Devamitra: "Oh ye sons of Buddha!.. [to end of paragraph] ..

Mangala: "Oh ye sons of Buddha!.. [to end of paragraph] ..

Lokamitra: "Oh ye sons of Buddha!.. [to end of paragraph] .. on the surface of the earth."

S: In other words, one is more developed than another. Here we get a bit of imagery emerging from, of course, the sutra. This is typical: not from Suzuki himself. We *almost* get a symbol, you know, the sun, the sun Buddha, So we mustn't let that be an object of intellectual analysis, as it were but just be affected by it.

Devaraja: "Oh ye sons of Buddha!.. the light of intelligence .. will fall .. on the Nidanabuddhas."

S: Hmm, that's an interesting expression. Who are the Nidanabuddhas?

Devaraja: I suppose those who are ascending the chain of the positive nidanas.

S: Not quite. They are Pratyekabuddhas. And they especially contemplate on the twelve nidanas. Yes.

Devaraja: "Then on the Sravakas .. and finally on all common mortals .. providing them with those conditions which will prove beneficial in future births. [380]

S: You notice here the ontological mode of expression. Psychologically you could just say that some beings are more developed than others, and approach as it were nearer to the realization of the Absolute. But if [you] want to do it poetically you can speak of the Absolute as a sun, and sending forth its rays, and those rays touch some earlier than others because, you know, they are like higher mountains, more developed, but you are not really saying anything more than when you were speaking in the psychological mode, as it were.

Devaraja: "By the light of intelligence .. [to end of paragraph] .. is diversely perceived by them.

Sona: "Oh ye sons of Buddha!.. [to end of paragraph] ..

Vajradaka: "Oh ye sons of Buddha!.. [to end of paragraph] ..

Sudatta: "Oh ye sons of Buddha!.. [to end of paragraph] ..

S: I take it everybody knows what Jambudvipa is?

Sulocana: The world.

S: In a sense, the world. According to traditional Buddhist cosmology, or Indian cosmology, there are four great island continents. Jambudvipa is one, and this is sometimes identified with the whole present world, sometimes just with India. It means the island of jumbus. Jumbus are sort of plum trees. Plum trees are supposed to grow in that particular continent. Even now, in India, there is a tree called the jumbu. It's like a sort of small plum.

Sulocana: "Oh ye sons of Buddha!.. [to end of paragraph] ..

Nagabodhi: "Oh ye sons of Buddha!.. [to end of paragraph] ..

Mamaki: "Oh ye sons of Buddha!.. [to end of paragraph] ..

Ratnapani: "Oh ye sons of Buddha! The Dharmakaya is like the maniratna in the waters..."

S: The pearl jewel.

Ratnapani: "Whose wondrous light transforms everything .. [to end of paragraph] ..

Devamitra: "Oh ye sons of Buddha!.. [to end of paragraph and section]"

S: One could summarize, or even paraphrase here, and say that this latter passage illustrates the transforming power of the symbol. The symbol here is, of course, the sun, the sun Buddha, and if you get in touch with that then everything is transformed, and presumably that is the individuation process, or at least an aspect of it. [381] All right. Let's go on to "*Dharmakaya and Individual Beings*".

Mangala: "From these statements it is evident that that Dharmakaya .. is not a mere philosophical abstraction, standing aloof .. calmly contemplates.. "

S: He should have written "contemplating".

Mangala: ..contemplating "on the folly of mankind .. [to end of paragraph and section]"

S: Well fair enough if this is taken as a poetic statement, but what about that word 'destined'? Are we *destined* to Enlightenment? What should he be saying, do you think?

Sudatta: Does he mean destined by our karma? That our karmic accumulation is such that it's now ripe?

S: Well no accumulation of karma can get you to nirvana!

Ratnapani: 'Able' instead of 'destined'?

S: Yes, able. We have the potentiality: if we make the effort we can get there. But not that we are destined in the sense that we must gain Enlightenment sooner or later, whether we like it or not, as it were! No. The samsara can go on and on indefinitely. You can remain in it indefinitely. You can remain indefinitely unenlightened and go on, you know, to eternity, as it were. You are not destined for Enlightenment! You don't have to have Enlightenment if you don't want it!

Devaraja: I think maybe he's saying, though .. I think if the rest of the sentence is taken into account - if what he's saying is that we develop our bodhi so that it is identical with the Dharmakaya and our earthly life becomes a realization of the will of the Dharmakaya, then we are ultimately destined for Buddhahood.

S: No, he doesn't say that. The 'ultimately destined' comes first. "We are ultimately destined to attain Buddhahood when the human intelligence, bodhi, is perfectly identified and absorbed in.." That's the state when that destiny has been fulfilled. I think that in connection with Buddhism we should never use this word 'destined'. You sometimes get it said that 'so-and-so was destined for Buddhahood' or 'the Buddha had declared that such-and-such a person was destined for Enlightenment. No. It's altogether a wrong sort of word.

Devaraja: But he does speak of people .. he says, 'You will become Enlightened in such-and-such a time under such-and-such a ...' doesn't he, the Buddha? [382]

S: He does, yes, but even this you have to be very careful not to understand it as meaning that that person can't help gaining Enlightenment. I mean, the Buddha recognizes the fact that person has an aspiration already, but when it is said that all beings are destined for Enlightenment, it means all those in the samsara, even those who haven't thought about Enlightenment, they are destined for it. Well they are not! The possibility is open all the time, but that is a different thing from being destined to it. You could perhaps use the word 'destined' of a stream-entrant. I mean, having once entered the stream, you know, he's passed that point of no return, but it is not an outside force 'destinating' him, it's the irreversible momentum of his own aspiration. But before that point is reached, the language of destination, of being destined, is completely inappropriate. It's simply that the possibility is always there, the possibility is always open. Not that you're destined. And certainly not that the blade of grass is destined to gain Buddhahood some day, as sometimes is said. I mean poetic, yes, but it is open to so much misunderstanding. OK, on we go to "*The Dharmakaya of Love*".

Lokamitra: "Here, an important consideration forces itself upon us .. that the Dharmakaya is not only .. a god or rigorism .. but also an incarnation of mercy constantly labouring to develop the most significant merit into a field yielding rich harvests."

S: It's as though he's still unable to synthesize and integrate these two, the intellect and the emotion. And he has to have them sort of side by side in the Dharmakaya, intellect and emotion. This reminds me a little bit recently of a similar problem or difficulty in Christian theology, and in Islamic theology too: how to reconcile the justice with the mercy of God. And recently I was reading *Paradise Lost*, and there the justice seems to be concentrated in the figure of God the Father, and the mercy in the figure of God the Son, i.e. Christ, but they remain side by side and - this was only in the poem of course - separate persons, separate figures. But you need a third reconciling term, and this is bodhi, this is what Enlightenment is! It's the reconciliation of reason and emotion, reason and compassion, at the highest possible level. But here, I mean, Suzuki's presenting intellect and emotion as sort of lying side by side in the Dharmakaya, just like two people side by side in a bed, as it were, but no real connection between them, certainly not any unification. Right then, go on and see what he says. [383]

Lokamitra: "The Dharmakaya relentlessly punishes the wrong and does not permit the exhaustion without sufficient reason, and yet its hands are always.."

S: [laughing] Personification with a vengeance!

Mamaki: Punishing! Terrible!

S: Carry on! Don't be shocked!

Lokamitra: "directing our life towards the actualization of goodness .. [to end of paragraph] .. and as such worthy of its all-embracing love."

Devaraja: For further corroboration of this view let us cite .. a Mahayana sutra .. [to end of paragraph] .. He'll not rest till all Buddha hood truly attains."

S: Right. Let's carry straight on. I think at the end of this chapter we can have a quite useful general discussion, so let's just press straight on.

Sona: "*Later Mahayanists view of the Dharmakaya*": 1st paragraph.

Vajradaka: "We read in the General Treatise on Mahayanism: (1) Think of the free, unrivalled activity of the Dharmakaya, which is manifested in all beings."

S: In other words, the Dharmakaya is freedom. This is standard Buddhist teaching. Vimutti or freedom or emancipation is synonymous with Nirvana, but of course you mustn't personify the Dharmakaya and think of it as sort of freely engaging in activities like an individual being, as it were. Dharmakaya is the state of freedom. Perhaps it is best to say simply that.

Vajradaka: "(2) Think of the eternality of all perfect virtues in the Dharmakaya"

S: 'Eternality': transcending time.

Vajradaka: "(3) Think of its absolute freedom from all prejudice, intellectual and effective."

S: It is completely non-conditioned.

Vajradaka: "(4) Think of those spontaneous activities that uninterruptedly emanate from the will of the Dharmakaya."

S: Yes. It's not a sort of dead state; it isn't static. We mustn't think of it in that way.

Vajradaka: "(5) Think of the inexhaustible wealth, physical and spiritual, stored in the body of the Dharma."

S: Nirvana, you can say, or the Dharmakaya, completely transcends all efforts to describe it. There's always something left over, it's never exhausted, so therefore you can speak of it metaphorically as infinitely rich. [384]

Vajradaka: "(6) Think of its intellectual purity which has no stain of one-sidedness."

S: It's the sort of culmination of the principle of the Middle Way.

Vajradaka: "(7) Think of the earthly works achieved for the salvation of all beings by the Tathagatas who are reflexes of the Dharmakaya."

S. Individual enlightened beings manifest the nature of Enlightenment itself. So we see here with Vasubandhu and Asanga that there's a much more as it were orthodox presentation of the Dharmakaya. Do you see what I mean? The language is a bit Mahayanistic, but it really boils down to a straight-forward traditional Buddhist statement.

Ratnapani: It's called 'the will of the Dharmakaya here?'

S: That's true. But I'd like to see what the Sanskrit of that was. I suspect Suzuki's translations sometimes seem a bit sort of paraphrases. For instance, what could it be in Sanskrit? I can't imagine Dharmakaya-cetana, Dharmakaya-chanda; I just can't imagine a Sanskrit word like that. I wonder what it can be. It might be pranidhana, but I don't know, I'm rather doubtful about that; and that is 'vow' anyway, and not 'will'. But you could say that, speaking analogically, there is, in the Dharmakaya, a principle or an aspect which corresponds, though only analogically, to what in a human being would be called the 'will'. In other words, it's not something static; it is 'alive', as it were, spiritually alive, transcendently alive. We can only speak of that as a will, if we speak at all. But not that the Dharmakaya is an individual or a person and has a will in a personal sense, willing this or that. We have to be very careful about this language, even so. All right. On we go.

Sudatta: "As regards the activity of the Dharmakaya (1), (2), (3)"

S: Theism. Theism. Isvera-ism. Ishvara is God, theos.

Sudatta: "(4), (5) .. [to end of paragraph and section]"

S: This is quite interesting. "As regards the activity of the Dharmakaya, which is shown in every Buddha's work of salvation, Asanga enumerates five forms of operation.' There is no cosmological manifestation, hmm? according to this. You notice there's no reference to the Dharmakaya being active in the cosmos, and helping the trees to grow, and the flowers to bloom, as in Suzuki's style. The Dharmakaya is operating through the Buddha and his - Suzuki says 'work of salvation', the word 'salvation' isn't a very happy one - but through the Buddha's compassionate activity. Hmm? That is the [385] expression of the Dharmakaya, manifestation of the Dharmakaya. Because the Buddha is at one with reality, and the reality is functioning, as it were, directly through the Buddha, in his work of, as it were, salvation. So it's shown, as it were, ethically; it's shown by his power of removal of evils which may befall us in the course of life. I'm not quite sure what that means. I take it that it means psychological evils - that we can get rid of defilements by following the Buddha's teaching, though the Buddha is unable to cure any physical defects we may have, etc., whereas Suzuki, you know, would probably attribute even that to the Dharmakaya. So there is the moral influence, by way of removing evil. And then "it is shown in his irresistible spiritual domination over all evildoers, who, base as they are, cannot help doing some good if ever they come into the presence of the Buddha."

There is some influence for good. It may not be decisive, because even the Buddha can't force anybody to be good. That's why I think the 'irresistible' has to be understood carefully, otherwise, why didn't Devadatta gain Enlightenment? why did he go on the wrong path? The Buddha can influence to some extent even an evil-doer, but he cannot decisively and directly affect the will itself. You can resist the influence of the Buddha if you want to.

And then (3): "his power of destroying various unnatural and irrational methods of salvation," in other words, of destroying any (teaching? feeling?) micchaditthis, both theoretical and practical.

Devaraja: It seems to me .. I just wonder why Suzuki didn't translate Ishvarism.

S: Yes, I also thought of that.

Devaraja: It seems a bit sort of intellectually dishonest really.

S: It does, in a way. Because if you translate it as 'theism', which is quite fair, then it suggests that a Buddha destroys the theistic outlook, including, presumably, theistic interpretations of the Dharmakaya. Yes? And 'Ishvaraism' isn't a very sort of intelligible expression to someone not knowing Sanskrit.

(4) "It is shown in his power of curing those diseased minds that believe in the reality, permanency, and indivisibility of the ego-soul." Hm? A very important work, that.

And then "in his inspiring influence over those Bodhisattvas who have not yet attained to the stage of immovability, as well as over those Sravakas whose faith and character are still in a state of vacillation." In other words, according to Asanga, the Dharmakaya operates only through the [386] Buddha, not through the cosmos. It's not a cosmological principle, therefore. Do you see the difference? Suzuki, being himself, perhaps, on the unguarded language of some Mahayana sutras, talks of the Dharma being universally active, active in the cosmos, you know, like a sort of cosmological principle, or even pantheistic principle. Asanga speaks of the Dharmakaya's activity as taking place through [the] Enlightened Buddha, and only through the Enlightened Buddha.

Mangala: What about the equation that's sometimes made of the Buddha being this cosmological principle?

S: Well, that would be theism pure and simple, wouldn't it? You've made the Buddha into God, then.

Devamitra: If the Dharmakaya can only operate through a Buddha, didn't you say earlier in the .. I can't quite recollect .. I think you said that you could describe the Bodhichitta - the relative Bodhichitta - as the activity of the Dharmakaya within the temporal process. Um..

S: Not the sort of historical cosmic temporal process, but within the individual mind. Not that it's at work in history, as it were, except to the extent that it works through individuals and individuals affect history.

Devamitra: I didn't quite mean, actually... It seems, if you can equate the relative Bodhicitta in some way with the Dharmakaya, then it doesn't necessarily have to operate through a Buddha, but it can operate through a Bodhisattva in the form of the relative Bodhicitta.

S: Ah, yes! I see what you mean. Fine. Yes. Well, put it this way, then, in that case: that the Dharmakaya finds its most unimpeded manifestation in the person of a fully Enlightened Buddha, but to the extent that any individual is Buddha-like, the Dharmakaya is manifesting, and that partial manifestation is technically called the Bodhicitta. You could say that the Bodhicitta progressively fills up the gap between unenlightenment and Enlightenment, and to the extent that the Bodhicitta manifests, and therefore to the extent that Buddhahood is attained, the Dharmakaya is manifesting and the Dharmakaya is active. Yes? I mean, not that only through the Buddha is *any* manifestation of the Dharmakaya at all possible. The Dharmakaya manifests through individuals, and in the case of an Enlightened being, a Buddha, it manifests as fully and as perfectly as it can manifest within the temporal order, but it manifests partially through the Bodhicitta, too, to the extent that that is awake in the individual mind or [387] individual being. But there is, as it were, no cosmic manifestation to trees and stones and plants and chemical processes and so on. [pause] So Asanga's exposition, Vasubandhu's exposition, seems - no, sorry, it is only Asanga here - Asanga's exposition seems much more in accordance with the central Buddhist tradition than does Suzuki's own. All right. On to "*The Freedom of the Dharmakaya*".

Sulocana: Those spiritual influences .. are fraught with religious significance .. they are a spontaneous overflow from its immanent necessity, or, as I take it, from its freewill."

S: One can take this if it [is] *very metaphorically* understood.

Sulocana: "The Dharmakaya does not make any conscious struggling efforts .. that would mean a struggle within itself of divers tendencies, one trying to gain ascendancy over another."

S: It's interesting that Suzuki even *thinks* of this in connection with the Dharmakaya's "struggle within itself of divers tendencies, one trying to gain ascendancy over another". I would have thought it would have been quite unthinkable, unimaginable, not even needing to be refuted.

Sulocana: "And it is apparent that any struggle .. are incompatible with our conception. Its every act .. emanates from its own free will, unhampered by any struggling exertion which characterizes the doings of mankind.

S: This is paralleled by Christian difficulties that Suzuki might even have been affected by: whether God *had* to create the world, or whether he did it completely freely, just because he wanted to. Of course, Suzuki's criticized him for that before, speaking of 'God's whim', and he was being rather unkind to Christianity, but it is the same kind of problem, and it means you are just taking your own language too literally. It's an artificial problem.

Sulocana: ".. [to end of paragraph] .. purvapanidhanabala."

S: It means power of the original vow. I'm not sure on what grounds Suzuki ascribes this to the Dharmakaya itself. One usually speaks of a Bodhisattva's original vow, the Bodhisattva's vow to gain Enlightenment for the sake of all sentient beings. Perhaps you could transfer that to the Dharmakaya, and therefore regard the bodhisattva's pranidhana or vow as a manifestation of the vow of the Dharmakaya, and presumably in that case one would be thinking of the Dharmakaya's vow, as it were, or purvapanidhana - original vow - simply to indicate that it is a state of life and activity, transcendental [388] life and activity, not just a static state.

Devamitra: Couldn't you say that it was the Dharmakaya which stimulated the Bodhisattva to make the vow in the first place?

S: Oh, sure! Yes. That's what I mean by saying that the Bodhisattva as it were participates in, or manifests, the Dharmakaya's vow or its activity; its compassionate activity. It's a quite legitimate way of speaking, and even thinking, provided one doesn't take it too literally.

Nagabodhi: "As the Dharmakaya works of its own accord it does not seek any recompense for its deeds... We do not have to ask for our 'daily bread' .. Consider the lilies of the field .. are they not arrayed even better than Solomon in all his glory?"

S: Hmm, what about the weeds?

Nagabodhi: "The Dharmakaya .. [to end of paragraph] .. who does all excellent works and seeks no recompense whatever."

S: We can regard this as simply, you know, an affirmation in, you know, Suzuki's apparently characteristically confused way, of the living nature of the Dharmakaya, not an abstract principle, but something spiritual and transcendental, and in *sense*, using the word analogically, alive.

Mamaki: "*The Will of the Dharmakaya*. Summarily speaking .. the Dharmakaya directs the course of the universe not blindly but rationally."

S: This is, of course, completely unBuddhistic.

Mamaki: "we know again that it is love .. good shall be the final goal of all the evil in the universe."

S: This doesn't sound very Buddhistic either, it's much too dualistic.

Mamaki: "Without the will, love and intelligence will not be realized; without love, the will and intelligence will lose their impulse, without intelligence, love and the will will be irrational."

S: This is very true. But, I mean, these all have to be unified at a level, long before one gets even a distant glimpse of the Dharmakaya.

Mamaki: "In fact, the three are coordinates .. for intelligence and love and will are only differentiated as such in our human, finite, consciousness."

S: They shouldn't be differentiated even there!

Ratnapani: "Some Buddhists may not agree .. the Dharmakaya actually made solemn vows and made possible the universal salvation of all creatures." [389]

S: This seems to be a discussion within Japanese Buddhism.

Devamitra: "It is quite true .. [to end of paragraph] .. that might affect it from outside.

Mangala: But I can presume the reason .. [to end of paragraph and chapter] .. Are not these self-addressed prayers of the Dharmakaya .. which sprang out of its inmost nature exactly what constitutes its will?"

S: Hmm, well, very likely! What Suzuki says about prayers and emotional outbursts and so on, refers exactly to will in his own emotional life. But he seems not to be seeing this. Anyway, that's the end of that chapter. So what do people feel about it in general - both about the Dharmakaya itself, perhaps, and also Suzuki's approach to the whole subject. What lessons has that got for us?

Ratnapani: I think there's a very basic mistake here, he says "without which the nature of the Dharmakaya would become unintelligible", but it's just *that*, literally: unintelligible to us. I mean, there's no .. there's very little mention of that - its human unintelligibility. Going through this, I've lost sight of the fact that I can't understand, in fact, what the Dharmakaya is, or ... you know, which is a mistake in language in itself. He's completely gone .. brought down .. way down (?in certain levels).

Vajradaka: That's the impression that I get, too: that it's sort of 'contaminated' really, with intellect and sort of emotional confusion. And that Vasubandhu and Asanga's description was by far the most helpful.

Devaraja: It just seemed to me that - aside from Asanga's thing - it just seemed that it didn't live up to its heading: 'Practical Buddhism'!

S: Right. It all seems very speculative.

Sulocana: It's as though he was trying to sort out what he really felt about it.

S: Actually, I don't think we shall find that any very specific practices are mentioned in this part, even. I mean, the paramitas will be described, and the bhumis, but I think not at length or from a very practical point of view, and that is interesting.

Vajradaka: It's interesting that the book is so thick, that if .. you know, when I consider what we've actually been reading, a lot of it is kind of just verbiage.

S: Right. It would be quite interesting to try and write out what the main points that he's actually made, you know, which were clear. And this is why I said, I think yesterday, the best chapter, in a way, is that shortest one on the three forms of knowledge, which is quite useful and well-put. [390] But the rest of the book certainly isn't on that level.

Ratnapani: Not a very large pamphlet here, I feel.

S: No, not really, no. It might be a useful exercise to boil it all down, to go through it and underline all those passages where he really says something, and then extract and summarize them in one's own words. But certainly that is only a small proportion of the total text.

Nagabodhi: I get the feeling that this can be what happens, this is obviously what happens when you work, when you study the Dharma, outside the context of practice and especially outside the context of the sangha.

Devamitra: And also of teachers too.

S: Well, so far as we know .. I mean, Suzuki must have had professors and perhaps he, you know, belonged to a temple traditionally, and had sort of contact with the abbot, but he seems not to have had any real teachers, and he seems not to have had any Sangha contact. He seems to have always been very much on his own, not working with others - well, I was going to say 'other scholars'. Yes he did work with one or two other scholars in editing texts, but not anything more than that, and he seems, you know, to have been a bit of a loner, in a way, and no disciples, even. But Christmas Humphreys sometimes regards himself as a disciple of Suzuki, and as sort of in that lineage, as it were, but that seems quite sort of bogus, frankly.

Mangala: Maybe also, in his day, this was quite a progressive, if you like, or intelligent, even, way of seeing Buddhism, you know, from other current views that perhaps were around at the time.

S: There was a lot of very dry scholasticism around, very dry expositions of Buddhism, and Suzuki at least is alive. You get the impression that there is an alive human being here, even though he is rather unbalanced.

Ratnapani: Would this be the time when people were saying Buddhism is a philosophy, Buddhism is an ethical code?

S: Yes. I think this is perhaps one of the reasons why he stressed the 'religious consciousness' and the emotional side and so on and so forth.

Mamaki: And yet .. a small point that I've been .. I don't like at all, and that is when he talks, in the section on the Dharmakaya as Love, he says the 'Dharmakaya relentlessly punished the wrong'. Well, this is sometimes the sort of feeling people do have about karma: that it is a punishment rather [391] than a consequence.

S: Yes, right, and there's a punishment only if there is a person.

Mamaki: Yes.

S: Yes. It's a consequence, not a punishment. And in the same way, there are no rewards, there are only consequences. In this case, fortunate ones or enjoyable ones, pleasant ones, positive ones. This word 'punishment' is quite out of place here. I mean, in a Christian context perhaps you can say quite correctly that God punishes the wicked. God is conceived personally, the wicked have offended him, disobeyed his laws, and therefore he does punish them, or he is said to punish them, but one can't really (hold?) this sort of language for the Dharmakaya, without *grossly* anthropomorphizing, to such an extent that it really ceases to be Buddhism.

Vajradaka: Could you say, though, that the has consequences?

S: Well, if the Dharmakaya stands for something transcendental, and if it is above space and time, if it is above conditionality, there is no question of consequence, there is no question of a cause. Consequences presuppose time, presuppose conditionality. The transcendental, by very definition, is above that. [pause] It's as though Suzuki is struggling hard. You get that impression. [pause] But right through the book there seems to be a split between intellect and emotion, doesn't there? It seems to be the basic split, and that seems to have all sorts of consequences and lead to all sorts of confusions, and that is very instructive.

Vajradaka: The thing that stands out most for me is his continuous reification.

S: Well, that is part of this intellectual one-sidedness.

Mamaki: He says, in fact, himself, what's going on in the last paragraph.

S: Hmm, yes, right.

Mamaki: He describes it beautifully. [laughs]

S: Well people often do.

Ratnapani: It's called projection! [amusement]

Sulocana: It suggests he knows, because he uses that word, Sanskrit word, instead of what he's actually..[392]

Devamitra: It seems he's not just reified the Dharmakaya, he's *deified* it.

S: Right. [general agreement sounds]

Devamitra: Even further than that.

S: Yes.

Ratnapani: In the Avatamsaka Sutra, the bit that's here, there's "*he* .. doth save and deliver all creatures innumerable .." etc. "He" does this. Who would the "He" be referring to?

S: Presumably the Dharmakaya.

Ratnapani: It would be talking about the Dharmakaya?

S: I'm not sure how this translates. I believe in Chinese - from which it is translated - there is no distinction of gender.

Ratnapani: Really?

S: Is this correct?

Vajradaka: Yes.

Ratnapani: Aah!

Vajradaka: It's more like "It".

S: You have to understand from context, or root association.

Mangala: The whole book seems very symptomatic of a complete lack of practice, to me, anyway ..

S: Yes. [general agreement]

Nagabodhi: You just can't hold on to ideas like this, because if you do, you just find in meditation that they just dissolve under your feet, sometimes, and they strike me as a flux. You just *can't*. Unless he's just building up a dam against something that's about to burst. It's just got that desperate feel to it.

S: Going back for a minute, just while we are interested in this question of gender, when I was in Helsinki I discovered that in Finnish there is no distinction of gender, no he or she, or him or her, there's just a common gender for both sexes. I found this quite interesting.

Devaraja: That's very interesting!

Mamaki: Yes, in view of what Vajrabodhi said about how he thought about .. felt that the Finnish women didn't have the same kind of difficulties about status and what-not and expectations and he seemed to find the women had got here. [393]

S: Because it could be, you know, language affecting attitude or attitude creating language, and, you know, each reciprocating and reinforcing the other. I don't know whether there are any other European languages like this. Probably not. French is rather gender-ridden isn't it? More so than English. Also German. [several murmurs]

Vajradaka: Spanish has a couple of phrases which describes younger people as being equal.

S: Well, we have that slightly in England when we speak of 'children'. It could be two boys, two girls, or a boy and a girl.

Devaraja: Well French too, and German, have that.

Mamaki: But French has gender for everything.

Ratnapani: Every noun. [General argument, which Mamaki wins]

Mamaki: I mean, everything's either he or she, whereas in German you've at least got the neuter.

Devaraja: Yes, but in German it's sort of .. in a way, more extreme, because it's not at all a rational ..

Mamaki: It's not rational, no, but you've *three*, so it..

S: Well, in Indian languages, for instance in Hindi, the verb changes according to the sex of the speaker.

Mamaki: Does it?

S: Yes. For instance, a man says 'Mai jata hoo', but a woman says 'Mai jati hoo'. [This means 'I am going', tr.] So even the verbs indicate the sexes of the speaker, so, linguistically, you are constantly reminded of your own sex and other people's sex.

Devaraja: What about Tibetan?

S: I don't remember definitely. Certainly not verbs, but, I mean, nouns change gender by adding 'pa' or 'ba' in the case of the male, and 'ma' in the case of the female.

Devaraja: But, but..

S: Mind you, it does give the impression of being sort of stuck on from the outside, as it were, and it comes invariably at the end.

Devaraja: I don't know if that's true, but does that have connotations of the sort of 'honorific' sort of feel about it? [394]

S: No. With the honorific it's different. The honorifics are yab and yum. For instance, for a respectable lady, you use the word 'yum', not 'ma'.

Devaraja: Does it mean mother and father, pa and ma?

S: Yes.

Devaraja: It doesn't fall .. the normal sort of ..

S: But 'yab' and 'yum' also mean 'mother' and 'father', but they're more honorific. For instance, if you're referring to a respectable lady, you refer to her as 'yum-la' not 'ma-la'. It's the same distinction but one is more honorific than the other.

Vajradaka: It's interesting. In the sixties, among the kind of hippy-folk, there was a tendency among some people, to describe - you know, when talking with men and women - to say, 'Hey, man!' and this was applied to women as well.

S: Yes, I noticed this on a few occasions. But it seems to have died out. But then again, it isn't a common term; it's an extension of the masculine to *include* the feminine.

Mamaki: I heard a lot of women do it, more than men. Still, perhaps still do it.

Nagabodhi: Malini, does she not..

Mamaki: Yeah.

Vajradaka: I haven't heard her do it recently, but she used to, quite a lot.

S: With other women?

Vajradaka: Yes.

Ratnapani: It might quench the irresistible lover! [laughter]

Sulocana: [unclear] man and woe-man? Hmm, nasty one!

Mangala: You want to sometimes hear American women calling women 'guys!' "Look, you guys!"

S: [comment completely drowned by aircraft noise] Vajrabodhi reports, after his visit to China, that there's no (problem? proper?) sex; it's almost like, you know, a community of worker ants, as it were - all the little things that are going on, you know, in our corrupt capitalist society, they just don't go on there. They don't seem to go on among the Finns, either. Not in the way that they do at least among the English and Americans [unclear]. [395]

Vajradaka: It's far more quaint in Finland, I think. It's far more kind of rosy, in a way. I can remember I was there when I was 14, and, you know, ..

S: You were pretty rosy then, I would think!

Vajradaka: Yes .. the general way that the Finns around about that age and a bit older talked about it. It was all kind of very innocent and ...

Nagabodhi: Israel, actually, is an exception, because their language is quite bound up around sexuality - you've got .. the woman says I want, 'amira tsan', the man says, 'amira tse', but there's a quite a unisexual atmosphere, the women join the army, and, on the kibbutz at least, do an equal job. It's quite an exceptional .. in that sense.

Mamaki: Do the men do the looking after the children and the cooking and things like that?

Vajradaka: Yes.

Nagabodhi: The kibbutz I was on, it's men and women who [do] jobs like that, actually. Though my kibbutz was quite exceptional. On a lot of kibbutzim women would work in the fields and men in the kitchen.

S: I did read, though, fairly recently, that at present there's the tendency for women to become less and less interested in kibbutzim, because they, to a great extent, precluded family-type life, and people being, you know, more or less exclusively together, and that the kibbutzim were consisting of more and more men and a minority of women.

Nagabodhi: I think the system as a whole is beginning to crumble.

Ratnapani: Do you draw any tentative conclusions, Bhante, from this situation in Finland and in China?

S: No. No. I've just noted them as facts, but I'd have know a lot more fact gathering before beginning to generalizing from it. No, I've no conclusion; I just find it interesting.

But anyway, to get back on to the more general question, this question of the integration of emotion and intellect, of head and heart, it really does appear, after going through the chapter, and in sense the whole book, that it is very, very important, and it bring's us back again to the Buddha's teaching of the five spiritual faculties. It's all there.

Devamitra: We've also only really talked about that in the light of two of them. I mean there's been very little reference, as far as I'm aware, to meditation or the sort of activity of the Bodhisattva. [396]

S: I think some people are beginning to come up against this in their own life and experience, for instance, within the Movement, when they find that the demands of meditation sometimes conflict with the demands of external activities, so therefore one is at a level where the two are, in a way, contradictory. (pause) I mean, ideally, one should be in a state of meditation in the midst of action and active when one is sitting and meditating. As one progresses, the two should grow more and more together, so that even when one is acting, one is calm and undisturbed, even though one is not actually meditating. That, no doubt, is too much to expect, it's unrealistic, but certainly while acting, however busy and however active, one does not become flustered or confused or tense or anything of that sort, and that would be the influence of the meditation permeating even the activity. And in the same way, the meditation would become more and more vibrant and more and more dynamic, not just a pleasant little session of relaxation. (pause)

Devamitra: His whole attitude, looked at from the significance of that particular teaching, is only two thirds of it, and hasn't even got the most important faculty of all, that of mindfulness.

S: He hasn't mentioned mindfulness at all, has he, all through the book?

Devamitra: I think smrti came up once, but it wasn't taken as..

S: ..as a quite different..

Devamitra: ..in the sense of mindfulness.

S: [unclear] subjectivity. A quite different sense. That was his re-reading and he seems to be basing himself on Chinese, trying to give what he thought was the Sanskrit equivalent of the Chinese word used, and so he cited smrti, but it may not be at all, because he was referring to the Awakening of Faith, and it very likely, almost certainly, doesn't have a Sanskrit original, in any case, being a Chinese composition.

Devamitra: I just wondered if that was an extra ramification of that particular term I hadn't come across in books.

S: No, I don't think so. Not unless there was a Sanskrit original of the Awakening of Faith, and it did contain actually the word *smṛti* in that sort of sense. But we know it in the Chinese. [pause]

Ratnapani: For me, the first time that the actual unification of head and heart has .. well it must .. it can't be the first time I've heard it, but the first time I've really heard it. I thought of the two sides developing: [397] wisdom and compassion, masculine and feminine, and all your other things - but always two, parallel, always going together, preferably; I never really heard any emphasis on merging. When I come to think of it, it's *news!* Though in fact I must have heard it.

S: [throughout the above] Ah, ah. Anybody else feel the same way?

Devaraja: Yes. I suppose it's come across much more strongly because Suzuki's demonstrated how .. what happens when these things *are* separated, so ..

S: And so many other scholars, I must say. Probably so many other people. And there's a sort of underground connection between the two - the very impoverished intellectuality and a crude, often negative, emotion; and the one is affecting the other, but underground, surreptitiously, illegitimately. That's why you find that scholars are such emotional people; the emotionality is completely unintegrated. It's this disturbing factor, an unbalancing factor. It gets in the way even of their scholarly work, sometimes.

Devamitra: It's like he's trying to work backwards from Wisdom towards Faith, sort of .. in a descending order from the spiritual faculties usually taken.

S: Well, I think perhaps some people do this: that you become, as it were, intellectually convinced about Buddhism. It all seems very reasonable and acceptable, then you have to try and work up some sort of feeling about it, and develop faith and get involved with puja and so on. Perhaps this is the approach for many people in the West, unfortunately. I think things are beginning to change, because in the case of our own Movement, to the best of my knowledge, never before has anybody becoming interested in Buddhism, in this country, had the opportunity of direct involvement with a spiritual community; a sangha. And I think this is making a tremendous difference. Because there is a degree of unification in the people making up the Order, at least collective unification, yes? And in many cases a certain degree of individual unification and integration. So they are not just people who've come along newly, or get interested newly, and not just having to read books and so on, but they are in contact with a spiritual community, almost from the beginning, and very often I think that contact is the beginning, so they've got a very good opportunity of developing in a proper, integrated sort of way. There is an *unintelligent* understanding of Buddhism around, there is also a feeling for Buddhism around; and the two are very much together, and new people come in

contact with that togetherness. [398] I mean, did you notice anything of this sort, or anything connected with what I've just been talking about, when you were at the summer school? Was there any feeling of community?

Devamitra: Oh no, not at all. I think germinally, I think so, within Irmgard Schloegl's group. But that was, I mean, the people involved with that were very .. a bit separate, and in actual fact they were a bit separate from one another as well. I mean, there was no sort of feeling that we have, say, within the Friends, certainly not with any older... But, you know, I wondered why a lot of them were there, anyway, you know. I mean, Buddhism? It was just a club that they'd come to, you know, and it just happened to be called 'the Buddhist Society' and you went to talk, supposedly, about Buddhism, but not necessarily so, you know; I just wondered why most of them were there. And a lot of people came up to both Subhuti and myself and wanted to know what we do and why we do it, and they were quite baffled, I think. They were very defensive about what they weren't doing. In some cases.

S: Hmm, that's interesting. What sort of things?

Devamitra: Well, just .. I think, just the general sort of ... They assumed that we must be leading certain .. leading a certain kind of life, which they couldn't quite fathom, and then they knew, obviously, that we did puja and meditation, and so on and so forth, and we found a lot of people were talking about how they felt they must get down and do some meditation sometime. [amusement] But, I mean, some of them had even been thinking about it for years, apparently!

S: Oh, yes!

Devamitra: But they seemed to find excuses for not doing it, and .. I don't know! I was just amazed, actually! The entire attitude there! I mean, one of the incredible things about the summer school is that the dining hall, which is divided into two: meat-eaters on one side and vegetarians on the other!

S: Right!

Devamitra: And the majority plumped for meat!

S: Yes, well I remember that it was just the same in my day, when I went along.

Devamitra: I mean they don't even take the precepts seriously. And in fact I talked to Douglas (?Harding) about this, because I mean he talked, you know, he wasn't shy at all about admitting the fact that he ate meat, and that, you know, most of the time monks at East Sheen did as well and [399] didn't think twice about it. And I said, 'Well, how does that fit in with the Vinaya? Surely that isn't correct?' And he said, 'well, there's nothing in the Vinaya that says you can't eat meat!' And then I said, 'Well, as far as I'm aware, the Buddha had actually said that provided that that meat wasn't deliberately killed for a bhikkhu, or so on, it was alright to eat it, but the implication was that not otherwise.' And

he said, 'Well, you know, I mean, if I go out and buy .. if I have meat in a restaurant, that doesn't mean it was deliberately killed for me, you know. I'm only a consumer!' And I put to him your sort of extension, you know, from your right livelihood lecture, you know, how, in effect, you know, the consumer was responsible for that taking of life, but he just .. I don't know whether he .. it was because he couldn't see it, but even accept it, or he wouldn't accept it.

S: Well this is the attitude of many Theravadins.

Devamitra: But he even quoted the Dalai Lama as an example. He like .. for instance, he said there was a big reception at Windsor Castle for the Dalai Lama and a lot of fussy people, fussy vegetarians, had prepared this delicious vegetarian meal, and when it was served up the Dalai Lama turned and asked for the roast chicken. You know, and he used that as a justification.

S: Well even the Dalai Lama can be wrong.

Devamitra: Yes. Well, I mean..

S: I mean, with less excuse, because he is supposed to be Mahayana Buddhist, and whatever the Theravada scriptures might say, the Mahayana scriptures definitely say that the Bodhisattva should be a vegetarian.

Ratnapani: I gather the impression, though, that meat-eating was common throughout the Tibetan monasteries.

S: It is common, to a great extent because meat is produced plentifully in Tibet and cereals and vegetables are not, but certainly no Tibetan would ever speak against vegetarianism, and if sort of pressed, would apologize for it and say it was due to his personal weakness; he wouldn't defend it as a Theravadin would and try to justify it. And those monks who are vegetarian, and I have met some Tibetan monks who are vegetarian, are highly esteemed for it. In Ceylon, too, I must say, among Sinhalese Theravadins, vegetarianism is esteemed, and there are vegetarian bhikkhus who are more highly regarded than non-vegetarian bhikkhus, other factors [400] being equal. In Burma and Thailand you get the impression that to be a vegetarian is an offence; they really have a most peculiar attitude about it. Not only defensive, you know, but very aggressive and hostile, if you want to be a vegetarian. I mean, I've been told myself, by Burmese monks, that I couldn't be a Buddhist because I was a vegetarian! I was a Hindu! A Buddhist could not be a vegetarian! And if you were a vegetarian you were not a Buddhist. I have been told this myself! By Burmese monks! It is in my memoirs, by the way. [The Rainbow Road, p.429, tr.]

Nagabodhi: On what grounds could you not be?

S: Well, I didn't argue about it. It was just stated quite dogmatically. Also they say that the Buddha took meat and you are trying to be better than the Buddha, which is very

presumptuous. And they also say that the Buddha permitted under such-and-such conditions, and .. But what I say is this, - I've got several arguments, you can be sure! [amusement] - One thing I say is that the bhikkhus in the Buddha's day were dependent upon alms, so when you were dependent on alms you were taught just to accept whatever you were given, not to pick and choose, to eat straight out of the bowl without sorting it out or any such thing. So, in a way, there was a conflict between two principles, that is to say, the vegetarianism and not picking and choosing. So the Buddha did say, as far as we know, to the monks, 'eat whatever is put into your bowl. Nobody knows you are coming,' because they go, you know, to a different place each day, a different village each day, 'nobody knows you are coming and you are trying to practise non-attachment and so on - under those circumstances, take whatever is put into your bowl; it's all right.' But then what happened? In the Buddhist countries, in say Burma and Thailand, the laity people deliberately prepare [meat] for the monks, even kill animals especially for their meal, so it is quite a different situation. That beggars are dependent on a non-Buddhist population for just whatever they get, and in any case practising non-attachment as regards food, and no picking and choosing; and bhikkhus going to the homes of their own devout lay followers were providing them with whatever they want or whatever they express any wish for. So I said to some of my Thai friends that you've introduced all sorts of Buddhist manners and customs in Thailand - for instance,.. They say, well, the lay people give us so we have to take it. Well I said you've taught the lay people all sorts of things, you are the teachers, you've taught the ladies, for instance, when they offer you anything, to put it on a small white cloth so that the lady's finger doesn't come into contact with your finger. Couldn't you have taught them therefore to offer you vegetables and not meat? When you've taught them all [401] these other things? And then they've no reply. I said, 'You are the teachers!' [sounds of agreement] So I say frankly to them, well the fact is you like meat and don't want to give it up! That's what it is, and that's the truth!

I mean I myself would not object to a conscientious monk who really was a begging monk and really trying to practise non-attachment, if meat was put into his bowl and he just ate it, I would not criticize that at all. I wouldn't say it was inconsistent with Buddhism at all. But when you get Buddhism the established religion; everything is, in effect under the control of the monks, the lay people give the monks what they want, and prepare what they know the monks like, that's quite a different situation, if you eat meat then. You are telling the lay people to give you meat, even. And I know that there have been occasions in India when Burmese monks have refused to accept the lay people's offerings because they didn't give them meat! You know? I've seen this! I mean, this is really disgusting! They said, 'Well, what? No meat?'

Sona: Couldn't you also say that the monks should set an example to the laity by not accepting the meat?

S: Right! Yes! I mean, in that way. But if you are begging from door to door, that's a different matter. But when you are going by invitation to somebody's house, and, in any case, they are going to give you what you want, they are not going to give you what you

don't want - I mean, the monk has got such a lot of influence he has only got to say 'I'd rather not have meat', and that's that! He isn't (limited?)

Anyway, one doesn't want to make too great a point of vegetarianism, or, you know, make vegetarianism the be-all and end-all of Buddhist life, or say, well, you can't possibly be a Buddhist unless you are a strict vegetarian. That is carrying it too far. I certainly wouldn't like to do that. But I'm very surprised and disappointed at the attitude of the Theravada bhikkhus in this respect in Burma and Thailand. In Ceylon they are much more reasonable, I must say, though they also are Theravadins, and they do respect vegetarianism even when they don't follow it, and they will never speak against it.

Devamitra: It wasn't spoken against, in this case. It was just completely dismissed. And a bit uneasily.

S: If the Dalai Lama is a meat-eater, so much the worse for the Dalai Lama! For instance, when he came to India first, and it was known to the Hindu public that he was a meat-eater, they were absolutely disgusted! *Maybe* that is a bit wrong of them to attach so much importance ... but if the [402] Dalai Lama had considered skilful means, now that he was coming to live in India and presumably wanting to create a positive impression, he should certainly have given up meat just as an upaya-kausala.

Devaraja: I think he does actually live according to what I am told, anyway, I think he does live on a very simple vegetarian diet in India now.

Lokamitra: I visited his house in Delhi and saw the kitchen and all I could see was meat pies, meat.

S: No, he's certainly never been a vegetarian that I know of. I mean, all Tibetans are pretty simple as regards food; they are not gourmets, except a few members of the aristocracy; it's pretty simple fare; but meat occupies quite a big place in the diet, and I think that applies to the Dalai Lama too. Unfortunately, he could very easily be a vegetarian in India. I mean, Tibetans used to say to me, 'Oh, when we come to India, it's difficult to adapt. We are used to meat.' So I said, 'What about me? I've come to India from England. I was a meat-eater there. I've managed to adapt, why not you?' I think we shouldn't accept too many excuses - be a *little* rigorous.

Devaraja: It's interesting that I was reading that in one of John Blofield's books, he talks about Chinese Buddhists almost being completely vegetarian, and that a whole system of cuisine built up around the demand for vegetarian food, and that soya bean curd, the substitute for meat, really developed as a result of this.

S: Well I remember - this is again something that comes in my memoirs [The Rainbow Road, p.143, tr.] - when I was in Singapore and I was giving lectures in Chinese temples; at the end of the lecture there was always a wonderful vegetarian feast, and it was really beautiful food. The Chinese temples, or monasteries, they really specialize in vegetarian cookery. And perhaps they went to extremes! You see? Again, *they* are diffi-

cult to avoid! But at least as a concession, let us say, well, let vegetarian food be pleasant and appetizing and enjoyable, so that people don't equate a vegetarian diet with something non-nutritious or inadequately nutritious and unappetizing and uninteresting and so on. I mean, let them realize that vegetarian food can be very tasty and very attractive. Like Indian vegetable curry, etc. And then you'll never miss meat. Also it's economically a better proposition. Use land for raising grain and vegetables rather than meat. (pause) I think not many Japanese Buddhists are vegetarian, as far as I know.

Vajradaka: The ones in the temple where I stayed were. [403]

S: Well, traditionally in Chinese Buddhism, vegetarianism was very much the norm, and it is in Vietnam, for instance, the Vietnamese monks are all vegetarian. I think all Chinese monks are vegetarian, and nuns too, and many lay people. Certainly all the monks that I knew.

Ratnapani: Do you mind if I pursue this onto what is really an academic question? Would you say that eating meat is something intrinsically harmful to the psychophysical organism - to sort of one's being in some way - some intrinsic 'bad vibes' over eating meat?

S: Well, I'm not really sure about that. It's something I haven't sort of personally experimented with. Certainly many Hindus believe this. It is also known that many animals that are slaughtered for food die in a state of rage and shock and terror, and I presume - well, it is said and I believe this. I haven't, as I said, personally experimented - that when violent negative emotions are produced, toxins are also produced. These go into the bloodstream, and, in this case, presumably also are present in the meat, and these are poisonous. So I would assume - I think this is quite reasonable - that the eating of meat from an animal that had been slaughtered under those circumstances would certainly be harmful in a degree, from that point of view. I don't want to sort of pursue it too much, to stress too much the 'bad vibes' and all that kind of thing; that also can go to extremes; but I think there is something in this.

Ratnapani: Of course, round here you could eat meat every day and never kill anything or have anything killed - you merely pick it up off the road.

S: I don't think you can argue - as some Hindus do - that because the animal is a lower form of life, you shouldn't eat it because you are a higher form of life and it will affect you. For instance, some Hindus say you shouldn't eat beef .. [break in tape recording]

Lokamitra: ...maybe you've eaten a lot of meat for two days, or maybe Christmas or something, a grossness about them. But that might just be to the general situation at Christmas, but I've the feeling it wasn't.

Ratnapani: I still feel something about meat, in some sort of similar way. Seeing a plate of meat, and eating meat, you know, on occasion, it could be pure projection, but this something about it turns me off.

S: I don't know whether it is something to do with the blood. Because blood has quite a strange effect, it is quite a strange thing. I don't know whether there is anything in animal blood. Because vegetables don't [404] contain blood. Anything in animal blood which is sort of inimical to the human organism. I'm not sure about that.

Sudatta: This whole question has become rather more complicated in recent years by recent research on vegetables, and some of these American scientists have found that vegetables are extremely psychic, and quite respectable professors have demonstrated that they know when they are going to be chopped up and boiled, and doing something equivalent to screaming and becoming extremely agitated, therefore one can't live without taking life, and on a fairly logical basis you can get the position of - are you necessarily, just because it's a sort of form of pain and suffering which is somewhat different from that which we know - is it any less real to them? So to go chopping up vegetables in the kitchen and boiling them, especially bringing them to the boil slowly, you may be doing something which is far more unpleasant to those vegetables and their sort of psyches than a quick shot for ..

S: You can't strictly speaking talk of a 'psyche' of a vegetable; there's no nervous system, There's sensitivity, but I think we have to beware not to interpret the reactions of that sensitivity in human emotional terms. I think that we don't know enough yet to enable us to do this.

Devaraja: Of course, this is a kind of a standard argument which is produced by people who are meat-eaters, and so on, and they are against [laughs] vegetarianism. It's a kind of quite defensive posture, but I think that the thing is that vegetarianism .. it can't be approached as it were scientifically; it's more an emotional response to life, and it's a kind of just living life- forms and wanting to perpetrate as little damage as possible, not a kind of a weighing up of a sort of scientific formulae, and ..

S: Of course Buddhism does say that you can't live in this world without taking life, even if it's only unintentional, and therefore Buddhism differs from Jainism which tries to live without taking life whether intentionally or unintentionally, and believes that that is possible. But Buddhism doesn't agree with that. But we accept this principle of - we feel this emotion, if you like to put it that way, and we try to manifest it as much as we possibly can, but it isn't so much a scientific weighing up of pros and consciousness. You know, perhaps we will never be completely non-violent, but we are going to do our best.

Ratnapani: As to the scientific and the non-violence, I've heard it stated that a vegetable is sensitive possibly more to what the feelings, the emotions, the non-physical more than the physical. In other words, [405] you love your carrots while you pull them out of the ground, and it's a counter-balance. I've just heard that, I don't know whether it's true or not.

Mamaki: There's also a lot of deliberate ignorance in meat-eating from people who said that if they think of meat in terms of muscles being cut up, they couldn't eat it. That if it's

just a nice joint of meat, then it's just a joint of meat, but if they start thinking about what it really is, then they wouldn't eat it. So, you know, they are deliberately having to block off (sounds of agreement) what it is in order to be able to enjoy it.

S: Well, some of the things that Chinese non-Buddhist, non-vegetarian gourmets do is really terrible! Mr Chen used to talk to me about them, and they are so horrible I'm just not going to describe them, even - it would just be too bad. But really horrible! Far worse than anything in the West. Or when you think, even in the West, of how geese are raised for - what is it?

Devaraja: Pate de foie gras.

S: Yes. Or even the wretched broiler hen. One doesn't want to sentimentalize but, you know, there is something quite unpleasant going on, I think.

Devaraja: Perhaps, I mean, the way we get our eggs is perhaps an argument for not eating eggs.

S: Well, one wonders about that, too. Yes. (pause) Though, of course, again people bring up the argument that many animals are kept or raised only for that purpose, and apart from that they just wouldn't exist at all, they just wouldn't be bred.

Vajradaka: And the answer to that, surely, is so what.

S: Well, you know, you could argue therefore that there's nothing reprehensible in breeding them for consumption, provided that while they are alive they live happily and you don't inflict any suffering on them.

Sudatta: Do you think that there is any merit in the Tibetan idea. that they will only eat big animals but not little animals, because they don't mind eating a big yak where one life will feed many folk, but they don't eat things like rabbits and little birds, because you need a vast number of those lives to be taken to feed the same number of people. Is there anything..?

S: I would say there is something in it. I don't think it is the question of the actual number, but the degree of organization involved. I mean biological organization, and therefore evolution. And, I mean, it is, as a [406] general principle in Buddhism, it is a greater sin - to use that word - to kill a more highly developed being, than a more lowly developed being, a greater sin to kill a man than a monkey, or a monkey than a flea. So usually the bigger animal is more developed. For instance the yak does represent a higher stage of evolution than a chicken. So it would really work the other way around, wouldn't it? I suppose it would be difficult to weigh, say, ten chickens against one yak! I say it is the degree of organization involved, the degree of evolutionary development.

Sudatta: There's another factor: that animals such as fish .. that no sea-fish ever dies a natural death, I mean, every sea-fish is destined to be torn apart while still living, either

young or as it grows old and frail and less able to escape predators. So on a fish's life-scale it's an inevitability of its .. the way its going to finish up. Does that make it any less morally bad to eat fish than to eat meat, where you might, possibly..?

S: But again, what you want to do is not to weigh pros and cons, but to express what you innerly feel about life and your attitude towards it.

Devamitra: I've heard from somebody - they said that the Japanese usually .. they didn't consider it .. that their attitude was that if it doesn't run from you, then you can eat it.

S: Oh! Ah!

Devamitra: Which is quite an interesting sort of...

S: What I sometimes wonder is, is there any argument which would apply to eating the meat of animals but not apply to eating the flesh of human beings? If it was not morally reprehensible to eat beef and mutton why should it be morally reprehensible to eat human flesh? On what grounds?

Devaraja: Only on the grounds that it is more highly developed.

S: Yes, and that sends you down and down the scale. If you have the choice between beef and chicken, well, eat chicken; if you have the choice between chicken and fish, eat fish; if you have the choice between fish and rice, eat rice. Yes?

Lokamitra: There is a sect in Benares that ate all its own dead. [Probably a reference to the Aghori sect, tr.] It seems.. [laughs]

S: So the general principle is, you have to exist on other forms of life; go as low down the scale as you can. This is the general principle. [407] You can never go all the way down the scale, because then you'd be dead, and your life is valuable as a human life, but, you know, do the least damage possible, and take the least highly organized organism you can to sustain your own life. So fish is preferable to meat, in that sense.

I mean, the first thing is not to eat human flesh. Then not to eat higher mammals. Then not to eat fowl. Then not to eat fish. So there are degrees. And as I have sometimes said, it is not that someone is a vegetarian and someone isn't; it's never like this, never black or white. It's a question of degree. Even the biggest meat-eater abstains from human flesh. Even the strictest vegetarian, you know, has to pluck a cabbage occasionally. So it's a question of degree. Feeling the general principle of reverence for life, to put it positively, and to apply that as much as you possibly can. But not 'Oh, I'm a vegetarian and he isn't vegetarian - black and white, you know, god and devil sort of thing.

Devaraja: I heard a story of this Tibetan teacher - I think he's called Zopa Rimpoche, a Gelugpa teacher - but somebody was telling me a story about him and his principle disciple - Zopa Rimpoche may have been the principle disciple - but apparently the guru

would pick the flea off him very carefully and put it down on the ground, and then the disciple could pick it up and put it inside his coat so it would be nice and warm!

S: Well, the Jains, the wealthy Jains, to acquire merit - pay, or used to pay, beggars so many annas an hour to lie on the charpoy and allow the bugs to bite them!

Devaraja: Really?

Ratnapani: I like the way they paid someone else to do it!

S: This was certainly within very recent times, within my experience.

Nagabodhi: Feeding the bugs!

S: Yes, feeding the bugs.

Nagabodhi: That's completely going to the other extreme.

S: Well this is Jainism, huh?

Nagabodhi: Feeding the bugs on human beings! [laughter]

S: Well [otherwise] the poor bugs would die(!)

Devaraja: Yeah, right.

S: But the human being doesn't die.

Devamitra: But something's going to die, isn't it? [408]

Nagabodhi: He *could* die.

Devamitra: I mean, like, in that process there must be bacteria and so on and so forth. Bugs are sort of ..

S: Well, of course, Jainism was devised in the days before bacteria were discovered. For instance, they wear a gauze mask - many of the monks - over their mouth and nostrils so they don't breathe in insects and thereby kill them, but microbes just go through the meshes, so, strictly speaking, their religion has been shown to be impossible.

Devamitra: I think there was a discussion along these lines some time ago; you sort of said that really the whole point was that it was not really possible to be objectively perfect, but one could be subjectively perfect, and this was the real crux of the issue.

S: Yes, right! To have, a, you know, as it were, a will to harmlessness; or to have, you know, love and compassion. And to increase this. And this would manifest, if it is genu-

ine, as much as it possibly could in the circumstances. And presumably, the less the manifestation, the weaker that attitude of love and compassion. Always bearing in mind, of course, that vegetarianism isn't the only thing. I mean, you can meet people in India who are really very cruel to other human beings, but who are strict vegetarians! It has become just a sort of fetish.

Devaraja: Like a lot of the brahmins.

S: Right. And you certainly find Tibetans who are meat-eaters who are really warm-hearted kindly people. So, you know, vegetarianism is *an* expression of love and compassion, but it is not the *only* one, and in estimating - if one has to estimate any human being - you have to take everything into consideration: all his manifestations, all the aspects, not just one.

Devaraja: But given certain conditions which are conducive to vegetarianism, it's highly questionably if someone isn't a vegetarian.

S: Yes, right. For instance, in England today, it's so easy to be vegetarian. It's far easier in England than in India.

Lokamitra: The Buddhist Society, at the reception for the Dalai Lama, most of his sandwiches were ham, you know. It just seemed that people could do more to encourage this sort of thing.

S: But they have to believe in it first! You see, it's very easy to [409] just remain a Buddhist in theory and not in practice. And this is one of the reasons I think that vegetarianism is important; at least it is a practice, you are doing something, you are changing something in your ordinary everyday life. Otherwise, what is different between you and the next man, who is not a Buddhist and never read books about it? But you don't want the only difference to be that you read books about Buddhism and he doesn't.

Devaraja: Sure.

S: But very often this is the only difference.

Devaraja: There's a very good story I read. It sort of illustrated (for) me something quite interesting about the attitude of Chinese Buddhists, but it wasn't a kind of a 'do-gooding' thing: 'oh, the poor little animals!' It was a genuine belief in the potential of those animals to attain Buddhahood.

It's in a couple of stories in Charles Luk's book about animal-releasing ceremonies, and it talks about a goose that was bought in the market and let free in the temple grounds, and it took up an almost permanent residence in front of the image of the Buddha and used to look up at it all day and stand very still and just look at the Buddha image for most of the day. And then it died, after a while, but it just kept on standing there, looking

at the Buddha image! It didn't keel over, and apparently its body didn't start decomposing for about a week. [410]

[Day 8]

S: What we are going to do today is this. We've got three days left and we've got four chapters, so what I propose to do today is we cover this Chapter 10: The Doctrine of the Trikaya, and go half way through Chapter 11: The Bodhisattva. And the bodhisattva, you could say, from the practical point of view - though even from the theoretical point of view - is really the heart and centre of the whole Mahayana. And we shall stop half way through that Chapter 11, just as we come to bodhicitta, because bodhicitta is very, very important and central and there are several sections on it, and we shall tackle those, therefore, with a fresh mind tomorrow. And then traverse the ten bhumis of the Bodhisattva's progress.

And then that will leave Nirvana to be considered on our last day. [laughter] That is quite a lengthy chapter. Perhaps we need to do very little more than just read it very mindfully and slowly and let it sink in. In any case, on Monday, inasmuch as Vajradaka and I will be leaving very early for Glasgow, we'll be finishing the session early, which means we are going to start early. I think we'd better start on Monday at 8 o'clock, have a really early day, and then this means that after the session people can, you know, write up their notes and pack their bags and get down to London without having to hurry and just have a quiet evening, perhaps, without trying to do all the things you ought to have done during the last week. A quiet evening and prepare for Sangha Day the day following! Hm? So I suggest you all get your notes written up before you go, because once you get back to London - or wherever you are getting back to - it will probably be very difficult and you'll forget very easily; you'll be surprised how quickly and how easily you forget. So get your notes all written up properly before you leave, so that when you get back to London you've got them all and you can refer to them from time to time and have them all complete, and you'll certainly find them very useful.

So today, therefore, "The Doctrine of the Trikaya", and the first half of the chapter on the Bodhisattva. And inasmuch as here the emphasis is increasingly practical, I think we won't bother ourselves so much about any mistakes or confusions of Dr Suzuki's. [We can just] take those for granted now - we understand what is happening, so no need to go into them much in detail, we just sort of note them quietly and pass on - and if we do dwell on anything it's the more practical side of things, especially so far as they affect our personal lives, so let's try to have a somewhat different emphasis today and tomorrow and perhaps even on the last day.

All Right. "The Doctrine of Trikaya." Chapter 10, page 242.

[411]

Nagabodhi: "The Human and the Super-human Buddha. One of the most remarkable differences between the Pali and the Sanskrit, between the Hinayana and the Mahayana Buddhist literature.."

S: A slight correction here. I'm not just correcting Dr Suzuki, but informing all of you. Pali literature is not synonymous with Hinayana, nor is Sanskrit with Mahayana. There is quite a bit of Hinayana literature in Sanskrit: that is, the whole literature of the Sarvastivada school is in Sanskrit, so you can't equate Pali and Hinayana. You can equate Pali and Theravada, but so far as the Hinayana is concerned there is a vast Sanskrit literature. All right. Just that one small correction.

Nagabodhi: "...is in the manner of introducing the characters .. In the former ... the presence of the teacher, fatherly-hearted and philosophically serene.."

S: Well we certainly found this when we went through the Udana. We had a very sort of vivid sense of the sort of historical presence of the Buddha himself as he actually moved about in the flesh, as it were, in north-eastern India amongst his disciples, meeting people and talking. You didn't even find the Buddha giving discourses or sermons; he was just talking to the people he met. So one had a very vivid sense of the Buddha as he must have actually existed, more or less, in those days.

Lokamitra: Doesn't this rather go against the idea that the Theravada just takes the Buddha's teaching and the Mahayana takes the example of the Buddha too?

S: Yes, well, if you take the Theravada teaching or doctrine, I mean, it ignores the Buddha's presence and personality, but if you examine the Pali documents, then you get a very vivid sense of the whole historical milieu: the whole life of those times, the life of the disciples, the life of the Buddha himself, and the religious ferment of the age generally. Also, it must be said that there are some Mahayana sutras where you get that impression too. Suzuki's generalizing a bit too much. For instance, in the Diamond Sutra there are no what I call 'phantasmagoria'. It's the same sort of setting there as in a Pali sutta. And also in the Surangamasamadhi Sutra, which is also a Mahayana sutra, you could say of that too that the Buddha is presented as a "teacher, fatherly-hearted and philosophically serene". There isn't much of the sort of transcendental touch, the archetypal touch, as it were, though again it is true that very many Mahayana sutras are just as Suzuki is going to describe them as distinct from what the Pali scriptures are like.

Nagabodhi: "While in the latter .. we have a mysterious, transcendent figure .. surrounded .. by figures of all kinds .. and supernatural feats .. by an intensely poetical mind." [412]

S: You get this in the Pali Scriptures, too, to *some* extent, though rather subdued; there are many references to devas and to devas as listening to the teachings of the Buddha, and the Buddha is regularly called in Pali 'sattha devamanussanam', 'the teacher of gods and men', and you do get in the Pali scriptures too, supernatural feats like the so-called 'Twin Miracle' when the Buddha is described as walking up and down in the air

emitting streams of fire and streams of water alternately. You get this in the Pali canon, but the Theravadins don't make much of it and they certainly don't load it with a sort of symbolical significance as the Mahayanists do in similar cases. So it's true that there is a difference of emphasis, the Pali scriptures do have the general character that Suzuki ascribes to them, the Mahayana sutras do have the general character that he ascribes to them, but it isn't by any means sort of an absolute distinction. The Pali scriptures contain very definite traces of the so-called Mahayanistic elements and the Mahayana sutras, on the other hand, are sometimes more, *as it were*, Pali in character, so that it isn't an absolute distinction. We must bear this in mind. But as a very general statement, the *broad* difference, what Suzuki says is completely correct.

Mamaki: "In the Pali scriptures, the texts as a rule open with .. 'evam me sutam',.. but with the Mahayana .. we have .. 'eva maya srutam','.."

S: That's the Sanskrit version of evam me sutam, 'Thus have I heard'.

Mamaki: ".. a majestic prologue .. which will stupefy the reader .. and he may .. declare that what follows must be extraordinary and may be even nonsensical."

S: Of course we find this especially with the Saddharma Pundarika sutra.

Ratnapani: "The following is an illustration: .. 'He was surrounded by a hundred thousand .. Bodhisattvas and Mahasattvas .. sixty times as many as the sands of Ganges."

S: What's the difference between a Bodhisattva and a Mahasattva? Or between a Bodhisattva and a Bodhisattva Mahasattva?

Devaraja: Well, a Bodhisattva Mahasattva, he's a fully realized Bodhisattva, whereas an ordinary Bodhisattva is somebody whose..

S: Well he's at least an irreversible bodhisattva.

Nagabodhi: "All of them were in possession of the greatest spiritual energy .. (Here about fifty bodhisattvas are mentioned).

Devamitra: "All these Bodhisattvas .. [to end of paragraph] .. World-Honoured One."

Mangala: "At this time .. [to end of paragraph] .. beyond description." [413]

Lokamitra: "As is here thus shown .. [down to] .. we cannot but think that the Mahayana Buddha is the creation of an intensely poetic mind."

S: He is, of course, giving an impression of how this Mahayana Buddha would strike the newcomer, as it were. He isn't exactly giving his own feeling.

Lokamitra: "Let it be so .. 'The doctrine of Trikaya, which in a sense corresponds to the Christian theory of trinity.."

S: We shall see later that that is a bit dubious. But meanwhile, there is one point, one misunderstanding that we must guard against. "The Buddha in the Mahayana scriptures is not an ordinary human being walking in a sensuous world." (I'm not going to gay?) what 'walking in a sensuous world' means. "Is not an ordinary human being"? The suggestion is that the Buddha, in the Pali scriptures, *is* an ordinary human being, but is that correct?

Vajradaka: No.

S; Why isn't it correct?

Vajradaka: Because he's a Buddha!

S: Because he's a Buddha! Yes. [laughs] A short, simple, answer. Well, what does one mean, then, by a Buddha, say in the Theravada or Pali scriptural context?

Ratnapani: An extraordinary human being.

S: An extraordinary human being. Actually, this is an expression which is found in Pali: 'an extraordinary human being'. In other words, someone, yes, he *is* human, he has a human form, but all the attitudes and limitations that we regard as typically human (or specifically human) have been transcended; that particular human being is, *as it were*, in a manner of speaking, at one with reality, he has realized Nirvana, he is Enlightened, so he is a human being but an extraordinary human being, he's supra-human. So this ..

Vajradaka: Supra?

S: Supra. This fact comes out very clearly in the Pali canon itself. I mean, you must never think that in the Pali canon the Buddha appears as a sort of amiable human teacher rather like Socrates, and that it's only in the Mahayana that he becomes a sort of supra-human being. This is completely false, hm? In the Pali canon no less than in the Mahayana, the Buddha is *not* an ordinary human being, he is an extra-ordinary human being, someone who has, in a sense, transcended the limitations of humanity. He is Enlightened, he is a Buddha. And we find this sort of feeling, not not expressed in [414] quite the same way as in the Mahayana sutras, very strongly all through the Pali canon. We find the Buddha's disciples, even in the Pali canon, expressing a sense of awe and wonder as far as the Buddha is concerned. I've mentioned before that sometimes in the canon the Buddha is described as the Great Yaksa. A yaksa is a sort of awe-inspiring spirit, almost a sort of daemon, in the classical sense, so he's sometimes described as the Great Yaksa, the Great Spirit, the Great Daemon, because he impressed his disciples as having some extraordinary, supernatural, almost uncanny quality about him, hmm? something they couldn't grasp, something which was completely beyond them. So this sort of Buddha we find in the *Pali* canon. And it's an absolute mis-

take, an absolute misinterpretation, to regard the Buddha of the Pali Canon as just an ordinary human being who has somehow been sort of deified or at least made into a sort of supernatural being in the Mahayana.

Strictly speaking, the view of the Buddha in the Hinayana and the view of the Buddha in the Mahayana, as regards this point - that he is not an ordinary human being - is completely unanimous. So we mustn't try to set the Hinayana and the Mahayana sort of against each other on this score. It's true in the Mahayana sutras there's more of poetry, if you like, there's more of exaggeration, there is more of sort of supernatural splendour, but in principle there's no real difference as regards this matter of the Buddha not being an ordinary human being, as transcending ordinary humanity, as being a supra-human being, an Enlightened being, a Buddha. So it is very important to understand this. All right, let's go on, then.

Devaraja: "According to this doctrine .. [to end of paragraph] .. have their *raison d'etre*."

S: All right. Let's go straight on to the "Historical View". We must bear in mind that Suzuki's historical perspective is distorted by the fact that he regards the *Awakening of Faith* as an Indian Buddhist document of the first century AD, whereas in fact it seems to be a Chinese Buddhist document of the fifth century AD, so just bear that in mind as we read this through, because certain allowances have to be made for that mis-dating, hm?

Sona: "*An Historical View*. At present,.. to .. the first century before Christ.."

S: No, we have to completely disallow that.

Devamitra: If we put the date of this particular bit of writing later on, were there as it were any earlier mentions of the Trikaya doctrine? [415]

S: The Trikaya Doctrine seems to have developed at the 4th to the 5th century AD. [The abbreviation CE (Common Era) was not in common use in 1976, tr.] As regards sutras, it occurs in the Srimaladevi Sutra, and as regards philosophers, it appears quite early in the writings of Asanga and Vasubandhu and it is generally held that the doctrine arose or was elaborated in Yogacara circles, apparently in South India, at that time: the 4th to the 5th centuries AD, and it is reflected in the sutras and sastras which originated during that period, but, though elaborated by the Yogacarins, the doctrine seems to have become quickly very popular in Mahayana circles and was taken over by the Mahayana school generally, and by the Vajrayana too, and became the basis of a great deal of Tantric practice inasmuch as the different archetypal Buddhas and Bodhisattvas could be regarded as different manifestations or different aspects of that one Sambhogakaya Buddha, so it is a very important doctrine, not just theoretically but from a practical point of view. It certainly is as early, in that systematized form, as the first century BC, or even first century AD, and certainly Asvaghosa or the author of *The Awakening of Faith* has no place in this development. He is certainly later than Asanga and Vasubandhu, and almost certainly Chinese rather than Indian.

Devamitra: Was it then - this Trikaya doctrine - was this one of the factors which facilitated the arising of the Vajrayana?

S: I wouldn't say that it facilitated it, but once the Vajrayana had arisen, the Trikaya doctrine - if you can call it that - or the Trikaya experience, certainly provided a framework for the systematization, as it were, or explanation from a doctrinal point of view, of a great deal of Vajrayana practice; it all fitted in very well, not in an intellectual sort of way but organically, because in a sense it all belonged together, so naturally it fitted.

Sona: "This work, as the author declares, .. it is not an original work .. we are supposed not to find (p.247) any Mahayana doctrines that were not already taught by the Buddha and incorporated in the sutras."

S: You see, since Suzuki wrongly dates *The Awakening of Faith*, he also has to wrongly date any teaching which he finds in *The Awakening of Faith*. If he regards it as a systematizing work, if it belongs to the first century BC, well any Buddhist teaching or doctrine it contains, including the Trikaya doctrine, must belong to the period earlier than the first century BC. So in this way his whole doctrinal account of the development of the Mahayana is completely distorted. In his later writings he abandons this point of view because further information came to light, or he studied more intensively, [416] and he realized that *The Awakening of Faith* could not be dated in this way, so he had to revise his presentation of the development of Buddhism, especially the Mahayana.

Sona: "Everything Ashvagosa treats .. [down to] .. the principal teachings of Mahayanism here and there scatteringly told in them."

S: This is true, but it's true of someone writing in fourth or fifth century AD in China, not of someone writing in the first century BC in India.

Sona: His merits lie in compilation and systematization.

Sulocana: "This being the case .. these doctrines were in a state of completion long before Asvaghosa's time.

S: That's quite true, but the time of Asvaghosa or whoever wrote *The Awakening of Faith* is about 500 AD and not about 100 BC. In other words, Suzuki in effect shortens the period of development of the Mahayana and antedates it.

Sulocana: "If our calculation is correct .. the development of the Mahayana during the first century after the Buddha .. when so many divisions .. (p.248) arose .. each claiming to be the only authentic transmission of the Buddha's teaching."

S: In other words, Suzuki puts the rise of the Mahayana about 500 years too early. Of course, the Mahayana existed as a tendency, yes, all through this period, it wasn't that the Mahayana came into existence as something completely new, even doctrinally. The

tendency was there, the spiritual tendency, right from the beginning, but the Mahayana as a recognizable school, or at least as a recognizable movement within Buddhism, certainly dates from about 500 years after the parinirvana of the Buddha, perhaps a little before.

Sulocana: "Did Mahayanism come out of this turmoil? .. This was most probably the case."

S: Yes, we know a bit more now than Suzuki knew then. Conze gives what is probably the correct sequence, very broadly, in his *Buddhist Philosophy in India*. It's a very clear, concise, and reliable work, even though written in Dr Conze's characteristic, slightly ironic style. All right. On we go.

Sudatta: "To give our readers a glimpse of the state of things .. in the early days .. confining ourselves to their conceptions about the Buddha."

Vajradaka: "(p.249) .. [to end of paragraph] .. "

S: The point that comes out very clearly here is that it is very difficult to hold to the middle point of balance. It's very very easy to go to extremes. [417] Here you've got, say, the Buddha, or the Buddha has just passed away, and the different schools are agitating themselves on the subject of who or what was the Buddha, what was he really like, how is he to be described and defines. And as I said earlier on, the Buddha was a human being, but an Enlightenment human being, so the difficulty is how to do justice to the humanity without obscuring the Enlightenment, and how to do justice to the Enlightenment without losing sight of the humanity, and how to, as it were, synthesize these two in a single concept and hold steadily onto that. So different groups of Buddhists, and even people nowadays, tend to go to different extremes, opposite extremes. For instance, among current presentations of Buddhism, you find very often some writers trying to treat the Buddha just like an ordinary human being, just like a character in history such as Socrates, whom I mentioned earlier, just as a very wise man, but they've no conception of Buddhahood, they've no conception of anything transcendental and a Buddha as one who has reached and realized *that*. He is just good and wise. I mean, much more good than we usually are and much more wise, [but] still, essentially, human in the ordinary sense.

There is no conception of a sort of trans-humanized humanity, an Enlightened humanity. On the other hand, there are writers on Buddhism who get the impression the Buddha is a god; they lose sight of the human side, they even say that the Buddha is the god of the Buddhists, or that the Buddhists have made him into a god. So [in] the first case, the humanity is emphasized at the expense of the Enlightenment, and in the second, the Enlightenment, or, better, a sort of pseudo-enlightenment, or divinity, is emphasized at the expense of the humanity. Do you see the difference?

So even amongst the early Buddhists it was something like this. Yes, the Buddha had lived on earth, they remembered that, but he was more than human, he was the Bud-

dha, he'd impressed them as something completely out of the ordinary, something Enlightened and even almost something divine - though the divine is a lesser category for Buddhism, strictly speaking.

So when they started discussing and debating about the Buddha, some were inclined to stress the human more and not to deny but certainly to play down, not so much the Enlightened, or the Enlightenment aspect, but the more sort of magical and mystical side associated with that, and to present the Buddha in more strictly human terms. But others were so sort of carried away by their sense of the Buddha's greatness and the fact that he was an Enlightened human being, that they gave more and more importance to magic and marvels and mystery just in an attempt to bring out that Enlightened perspective of the Buddha's personality. But in so doing they tended to lose sight of the human side, but, of course we must have both. So it the Theravadins who did the first, [418] and the Mahasamghikas, out of whom eventually developed the Mahayana, that did the latter.

But now that we see the whole thing in historical perspective, we can see all the more clearly that you've got to hold firmly to this central point and this central issue. You've not got to treat the Buddha just as an ordinary human being, a sort of Indian Socrates, but neither have you got to divest him of humanity altogether and regard him as a sort of god, a sort of being mysteriously appearing on earth out of some other dimension, even as a sort of god coming down to earth.

Suzuki uses that sort of language - the Dharmakaya sort of descending and leaving its throne of isolation and so on and so forth; that's the other extreme. But you see what we've got to do? It's very, very difficult, but unless we can do it we stray from the middle way of Buddhism as regards the nature of the Buddha. The middle way between treating in fact the Buddha as an ordinary man and the Buddha as a god: he's neither, he's an Enlightened human being, a completely different category from either. (pause)

So books about Theravada Buddhism, or say books about Buddhism written by Theravada authors, say originating from Ceylon or Thailand, they tend very much to play down the more supernatural side, the mysterious side, the magical side, the wonderful side, or wonder-working side, and to present the Buddha as just an ordinary human being. Sometimes you find this sort of statement in books about Buddhism: 'the Buddha was an ordinary human being'. That's completely untrue, and Dr Conze has emphasized this very clearly and very well, saying that no school of Buddhism ever conceives [of] the Buddha as an ordinary human being, ever, anywhere, not even the Theravada. That's one extreme. And the other's just looking at the Buddha as some sort of Eastern god, something marvellous and miraculous and losing sight of the humanity.

Lokamitra: And it is even more so with non-Buddhist writers, they seem to go even further to the two extremes.

S: Right. And some go to the extreme of treating the Buddha as an ordinary human being, a nice old man, a philosopher, who was very well-meaning, but who was wrong! Not

to speak of not being Enlightened, he wasn't even right in the ordinary philosophical sense! Yes? And, for instance, though he was quite sort of intelligent and quite rational in his outlook, he was still very much influenced by current superstition and couldn't shake himself free from the superstition of karma and rebirth! Sometimes the Buddha is written about in that sort of way. And others, of course - not so much now, but certainly before - wrote about the Buddha just as a god worshipped by Buddhists. [419] Anyway, on we go.

Nagabodhi: "(2) .. [to end of paragraph] .. (p.250)"

S: You see the difference of the two points of view and it's very parallel to the two .. the difference of the two points of view before, and in the same way there's a middle way. Do you see this? Do you see the two different points of view here about the Buddha's teaching, hm? The Mahasamghikas tended to hold that everything that the Buddha said had a sublime, mystical meaning, and could be interpreted in various ways, every word he uttered was meant for the good of others and conduced to Enlightenment, but the Theravadins, being more sensible, said no: lots of things - well, some things - that the Buddha said had nothing to do with Enlightenment. The Buddha might say to Ananda, 'Please go and bring me some water.' That's nothing to do with Enlightenment, he's not giving Ananda any instruction. Or the Buddha might say, 'Well, I'm going get my alms now.' Nothing to do with instruction to others. So this is quite true. So we see these two different points of view. But each really represents a one-sided View. In what way? Does anyone see this?

Sulocana: Because whatever the Buddha did was really teaching.

S: Yes, because it was the Buddha doing it! In other words, the Theravadins were considering just the words. Even though the Buddha said just, 'Well, please bring me some water,' it was the Buddha saying it, hm? And when the Buddha said it to you, you were in contact with the Buddha. Behind the words, however insignificant, there was the weight, if you like, the pressure, if you like, of the whole Enlightened personality and being. It wasn't necessary for the Buddha always to be talking about the Noble Eightfold Path and the Four Noble Truths, even when he said just, 'Bring me some water,' he is still the Buddha speaking, the influence of the Buddha is still there, especially to those who are receptive. So in that sense, you can't really divide the Buddha's words into two groups: those which dealt with the path to Enlightenment and those which had nothing whatever to do with it. You know, the Theravada objection presupposes that sort of hard and fast distinction. On the other hand, the Mahasamghikas themselves weren't fully aware of the impact of the Buddha's personality - for want of a better word. They tried to find the special meaning in the words themselves, and to deny that the Buddha ever could say just, 'pass me the water.' No. According to the Mahasamghikas the Buddha couldn't say a thing like that, because he was always teaching. They lost sight of the fact that he could teach in other ways; he didn't have to be always sitting on his throne [420] delivering grand discourses on the Dharma to admiring audiences. Hm? So in a way they were both right, and in a way they were both wrong. Now perhaps we can see that.

Mamaki: When the Buddha is for instance going to get a drink of water, I think what happens with guru figures of any kind is that the naive mind, perhaps, assumes that that is directed personally as a form of teaching, even though the person is not actually sitting there teaching.

S: Yes. Right.

Mamaki: ..which is different from the Buddha expressing himself in something like that.

S: Yes. With, in a sense, no deliberate intention of teaching anybody anything. In a way it isn't necessary. I mean, he teaches, in a way, by being just what he is. Or at least, this was very much the case with Ramana Maharshi in South India. He simply sat there, you know, on a platform at the end of the hall and said very little, but there was a very definite influence there all the time and working all the time, which was quite perceptible, quite tangible.

So we can see that each of these schools is right and each of these schools is wrong; it's quite clear. We have to stick to the middle point of view. I mean, the Buddha is human, but he's also Enlightened. But the Mahayana tradition, inheriting, in a way, the attitude of the Mahasamghikas, does tend to sort of put the Buddha always up on his throne and have the Buddha always preaching. If you read a Mahayana sutra it's as though the Buddha is always seated up on that lion throne and always delivering lengthy discourses, some of them lasting thousands of years, to audiences of hundreds and thousands of bodhisattvas. Well, we can see it has a symbolical value and significance, sure, but as applied to the human historical Buddha it represents only half of the truth. And the Mahayana has, as it were, obstructed that half of the truth and placed it in a supra-historical setting for symbolical purposes which are completely legitimate, completely right and very helpful, but when we go back to the historical Buddha we must bear in mind both sides of the question. All right. On to (3).

Mamaki: "(3) .. [to] .. the Elders generally insist on the humanity of Buddhahood."

S: That is, the human side. Not that he was merely human, but they insisted on the historical aspect more.

Mamaki: "Though the Elders agree .. [to end of paragraph] .. they do not conceive it to be beyond all limitations." [421]

S: It does seem that here the Theravadins are a bit more in the right. It does seem as though some of them Mahasamghikas did want, in a sense, to deify the Buddha. "His majestic power has no limits," huh? "Every Buddha's life is unlimited. The Buddha knows no fatigue." Whereas according to the Pali canon the Buddha was sometimes tired; he did sometimes have to rest. The Mahasanghikas tended to deny that whereas the Theravadins affirmed it. But this doesn't result in any diminution of his quality as the Buddha, as [an] Enlightened being, but even an Enlightened being has only an ordinary

human body, so it was subject, according to the Theravadins, to fatigue and he did have to rest sometimes.

So it does seem sometimes as though the Mahasamghikas did, in a sense, almost want to deify, or at least to magnify, the Buddha, and lose sight of his human limitations to the point where they practically deified him, which wasn't quite correct, which was getting a bit off the middle path.

But also we may say that there was at work in the Mahasamghika a tendency to make the historical Buddha bigger sort of symbolically, as a symbol, and they quite rightly invested the symbol, or Buddha as symbol, with qualities which were not appropriate to the Buddha as a historical character, and there was a bit of conflict. And, of course, later on in the development of the Trikaya doctrine, it was the Sambhogakaya Buddha who fully absorbed all the attributes of the Buddha as symbol, leaving the Nirmanakaya as simply the human historical Buddha. This is partly why that development took place - that the human historical Buddha simply couldn't, as it were, bear that load of splendid and sublime attributes that the Mahayana insisted on loading, as it were, onto him.

So the Sambhogakaya Buddha, as it were, emerged, you know, as a sort of symbol, an archetype, if you like, bearing all those splendid attributes and forming the centre of what Suzuki would call 'the Mahayana religious consciousness', and became rather separated off from the human, historical Buddha who became known as the Nirmanakaya. This seems to be the sort of thing that happened, you know, when the founder of the tradition becomes so much the object of faith and devotion and so much is projected onto him, spiritually, not just psychologically, that he becomes transformed into something other than his original historical character and personality and has a symbolical more than a historical value. So when that happens, we have, in Buddhist terms, the Sambhogakaya as distinguished from the Nirmanakaya. This is at least part of the story. I wouldn't like to say that it is the whole of the story, it's at least part of it, one aspect of it.

Devamitra: Aren't there some great dangers in that, though, I mean sort of projecting [422] even spiritual qualities onto...

S: Well yes and no. In the course of one's spiritual evolution it seems one has to do that, and in a sense not to realize that one is doing it, hmm? If you realize that you are doing it you may not be able to do it, but you may need to do it, so it is best for a while not to know too much, or to be too rational and analytical, but to find out from one's own experience. And this is the great value of tradition, you know, which keeps you on the right path and provides you with the explanations which you need when you need them, not prematurely.

All right. On we go then, to (4).

Ratnapani: "(4) .. [to end of paragraph] .."

S: Hm. You see, the Elders are quite common-sensical. These, of course, are the Theravadins - Thera means Elder. According to the Pali canon, the Buddha did rest, and in a sense sleep, at night. Why do you think even the Elders admitted that the Buddha never dreams, or never dreamed?

Devaraja: Presumably because the Buddha would be fully conscious, therefore there wouldn't be the unconscious process.

S: Well if he was fully conscious, he couldn't be said to sleep. They said he did sleep.

Devaraja: But he might need to rest his body which was tired.

S: Mm. They don't say that, they say sleep. What do you think is meant by that?

Mamaki: If a dream is supposed to be something to do with the unconscious that is making some kind of sense of what comes to our senses, quite often our framework won't accept consciously, so that our perception of things is distorted because of the position we are in, so that the unconscious, so to speak, goes into that, into the dream, is often the bits that we are not recognizing consciously. Well, if the Buddha was fully Enlightened, then there wouldn't be that kind of block.

S: Yes. Clearly. Everybody agrees that the Buddha doesn't dream. What is meant by the Buddha sleeping? If the Buddha is always aware, it can't be an unconscious state, it can't be deep sleep. I did discuss this question once with someone who was believed to be Enlightened, and I asked him what his experience was. And he did say, in fact, that he was no more than resting, and that - I mean, the sort of physical signs of sleep were there, but he was actually conscious all the time, and lying down, the body resting and the [423] organs resting in the sense of being all slowed down. But there was a sort of state of semi-luminosity, I think he described it as, which was not completely obscured, so that he was never sort of asleep in the sense of being unconscious. He described it as a sort of very light sleep in that he was more resting than asleep in the ordinary sense. So perhaps, you know, this was the case with the Buddha.

Mamaki: There is a sort of awareness that goes on, because most people can wake up at a certain time if they wish, so there's obviously some form of consciousness going on.

S I Yes. Yes. And we are also told that even though the Buddha 'rested' - if that is in fact what it was - only for a very short period each night, and that he sat up and meditated and also conversed, according to the Pali scriptures, with gods of different kinds and taught them during the night. That is the Theravada tradition, and that he also spent part of the night walking up and down, and it seems that the actual period of positive rest has quite sort, maybe not more than about three hours, possibly four hours at the most, and that that wasn't sleep in the ordinary sense.

Mamaki: The Vedanta lays quite a lot of significance on the deep sleep, the dreamless state. Is there anything like this in Buddhism?

S: I think this has source of great misunderstanding - misunderstanding of the Vedanta. It is true that the Vedanta, especially Advaita Vedanta, makes much of this analogy of the samadhi state with deep sleep. But what is the point of the comparison? It is not unconsciousness, but absence of subject-object duality. The Vedanta says that in deep sleep there is no duality of subject and object; similarly in the samadhi state, there is no duality of subject and object. But many people have taken this to mean that samadhi is an unconscious state. The Vedanta does not mean that at all. The Vedanta is above as sleep is below the level of consciousness, so they resemble each other in that transcending - I don't know what the opposite is - or descending or - I don't know - 'sub-scending' of, you know, the subject-object duality. But one is unconscious and the other is conscious. When misunderstood in this way, the Vedanta appears to say that samadhi is an unconscious state, which it certainly didn't say. But I must admit the Vedanta itself uses this analogy rather unwisely; it doesn't make this very clear, very often, so Western scholars often mistake this point. And even in India it is sometimes misunderstood, by Indians, by Hindus, that when you're in a sort of state of unconsciousness, a coma-like state, well that [424] is samadhi. Even some Indians have this misunderstanding, due to this rather misleading, possibly misleading, analogy.

Mamaki: In a deep sleep, too, there is an absence of all the constant flow of thoughts and flow of things that pass through the mind, and that waits.

S: Yes. Right. And impressions are shut up as they are in deep meditation, but in deep sleep there is no sort of inner illumination, as it were, but in samadhi there is that, and the Vedanta says this quite clearly, in fact, apart from this particular analogy.

Devaraja: Who was the person who talked to you about sleep?

S: This was Ram Das, about whom I've written in my memoirs. I haven't written about this, but I've written quite a bit about him.

Sudatta: Did the Buddha meditate *every* day?

S: Well, yes, we do find that the Buddha meditated at least nearly every day. I mean, we don't have a day to day record of the Buddha's life, but we do find the Buddha described as sitting in meditation, even after Enlightenment, and as going off to the forest when he got a bit fed up - that's the only word for it - with the bustle and confusion of so many people coming to see him. We find in the Udana that the Buddha is - not exactly annoyed - but certainly made a bit uncomfortable because of this, and in the end has enough of it and goes off into the forest all on his own without telling anybody, not even Ananda, for several months.[Udana, 4.5, tr.] So this rather militates against the Mahasamghika view of the Buddha's not suffering from fatigue and always delivering sermons sort of day and night without cessation.

Yes, sure, if you take the Buddha as a symbolical figure, out of the historical context, as a symbol for the sort of spiritual influence of the Dharmakaya, if you like to think in those

terms, well fair enough then; it becomes quite valid to think of the Buddha in that way, but not if you are concerned with the human historical figure.

Sudatta: What would you say was the function of the Buddha's meditation after he was enlightened? Is it not indicative that Enlightenment is a relative thing, as it were, you know, a threshold stage, and that one can go on indefinitely beyond this enlarging one's consciousness too?

S: There is that possibility. This is even hinted at in one or two places in the Pali canon. I've mentioned one in the *Survey* [p.142, 2001 edition, tr.] in connection with Dhammadinna's exposition of the spiral, as I've called it, and she sort of hints, or indicates, that Nirvana is not the sort of end of the spiral [425] but the last perceivable point, and there is no reason why the spiral shouldn't continue to absolutely unimaginable dimensions, beyond. Of course, even to think of the spiral, you know, is just our way of thinking. But the Theravadins would probably say that the Buddha meditated to set a good example! I would like to put it in another way and say that Buddhas like meditating! [laughter] And why shouldn't they? There you are, you know, you've gained Enlightenment and, you know, you're not even allowed to *be* Enlightened, you know, people keep distracting you from it, *as it were*, but it means we mustn't think too sort of literally, and think, well, here's the Buddha and, you know, he's absolutely perfect. Well of course he is, spiritually, but he - well needs is perhaps the wrong term, but in a sense, he needs, you know, to be able to be like that, and if too many people are coming to see him and requiring his attention, it's very difficult for him to *be* like that, in the fullest sense, so he goes off and he likes to be on his own sometimes. It's quite understandable.

Sudatta: One gets in Soto Zen the concept that so long as one has had, at least in part, a human form, one is permanently to a path of training, and that even if one goes through Buddhahood, it's only part of the path, and you can go on indefinitely. So long as one is still ..

S: I think it's a very healthy emphasis, that you never go beyond the need for training, I think that this is a very healthy emphasis indeed. You can put it even more clearly and say, looking at it in *real* Mahayana terms: you are always there, and you are always training to get there. Do both. Yes? If you sort of think that you are not there but you are training to get there, that's the Hinayana; if you think that you are there, but you don't have to train to get there, that's misunderstood Mahayana, which is worse than the Hinayana; but if you believe, or if you understand, that you are there, that you are Buddha, but that you are having to get there all the time, because you are in time, then, because you're, as it were, the Bodhisattva, then that is the perfect Mahayana position: you are there, and you are always trying to get there. You are Enlightened but you are always training. That is the Mahayana point of view, really. You know, you must have both sides, and Soto Zen certainly brings this out very well: you are Buddha, but you are also the Bodhisattva. If you have only the Bodhisattva, as it were, the path of training, that's more like the Hinayana, with Enlightenment there in the distance, but if you have Enlightenment here and now, but also the path to Enlightenment going on all the time, that's the Mahayana, or more like the Mahayana, that you're quite entitled to [426] con-

sider yourself Buddha now, provided you always keep up your practice. So I think we can look at the Buddha seated in meditation in that sort of way. I mean he didn't have a dualistic attitude of, well, now I'm there and no need to practise. He was there, and he practised. He did not practise to get there, he just practised. (pause) All right. (5)

Devamitra: "(5) .. [to end of paragraph] .. "

S: The Elders seem to be quite reasonable about this. They emphasize that the Buddha is clearing his own mind, but he has to sort of think out, perhaps not logically, but just for reflection on how to put it to his disciples. There is this incident in the Pali Canon when the Buddha teaches some disciples about impermanence and so on and the wretchedness of mundane existence and how one should exert oneself and give it all up and get beyond, that existence isn't worthwhile end only Nirvana is worthwhile. He apparently goes into it at some length and with great enthusiasm, as it were, and leaves the disciples, as it were, to meditate and he goes somewhere. But when he comes back he finds that they've all committed suicide, which was not his intention at all.[Parajika, Sutta vibhanga, Vinaya Pitaka. Also the Ananpana Samyutta, Samyutta-Nikaya, Mahavagga, book 10, tr.] So this is a very good example of the Theravada point of view: even the Buddha has to learn, or at least to think, about how to present things to people, even though everything is completely clear in his own mind, and I think you have to accept that even when you are Enlightened, you can make mistakes with people; people, in a way, are absolutely unfathomable. It's quite easy to understand oneself; to understand other people is very difficult indeed. And with the best will in the world, and knowing them very well, you can make a mistake, you can say the wrong thing, do the wrong thing, and provided you've made a sincere effort and not been presumptuous, or you are not a fool rushing in where angels fear to tread, you shouldn't feel sort of guilty if you find that, in retrospect, that you did in fact say the wrong thing and do the wrong thing. I'm sure this is something that people have thought about quite a bit.

Not that they are Buddhas, but, you know, there is a certain understanding, people do ask you for help and advice, so what is one to do? One does one's best. It may be that things turn out wrong. And maybe you think on reflection that you ought to have said something else, and given some other advice. But - alright - learn from that experience, sort of store it up in your memory, but don't feel bad about it, at least not too bad. Because a human being is so complicated you just don't know. And that complicated human being is living in the midst of a very complicated world. For [427] instance, you may give a certain advice to somebody that is quite correct and would have worked wonderfully well provided somebody else had not said something to him or to her an hour after you had given your advice and affected their mind in a certain way, in such a way that they took what you said differently and it started working in a different way from what you intended, and you could not have foreseen that that person was going to speak in that way after one hour! How can you blame yourself? This is the sort of thing that happens. So just do your best in the light of your own understanding and experience, but if you fail, don't feel too bad about it. And you will fail from time to time, and this is one of the limitations that you have to accept: you can't help to the extent that you would like, you can only do your best, and you certainly can't - I mean, you're not dealing with a

sort of passive object that is just responsive to your treatment and does not have a will of his own, as it were; you are dealing with a person who is very idiosyncratic, can fly off at all sorts of tangents, has got all sorts of aspects and angles that you don't know anything about. Even if you have known them for years and years, and even lived with them, something unexpected comes up that really takes you aback and staggers you, and then you realize, well, I never really knew that person. It's very difficult to know another person, and therefore you can't be a hundred percent sure at any time whether the advice that you give is right. At the same time, you have to give advice, sometimes, in certain situations, and shouldn't shrink from doing so, but do it with as great awareness as possible, and with all your understanding and with real sincerity.

All right. On we go.

Mangala: (p 252) "Now to return to the doctrine of Dharmakaya and Trikaya ... The Buddha .. did (not) tell them to accept the Dharma on account of his divine personality."

S: In fact he denied that he was a divinity. He didn't just keep quiet about it. We must be very careful not to think that. He was asked by a certain person, you may remember, whether he was a deva, a divine being, and he said 'No'. [The encounter with Dona, Anguttara Nikaya ii.37-9, tr.]

Mangala: .. but solely for the sake of truth .. [to end of paragraph] .. such questions must have been repeatedly asked before they could answer them by the doctrines of Dharmakaya and Trikaya.

Lokamitra: "*Who was the Buddha?* The evidence .. is scatteringly revealed .. the immediate followers .. did not ask the Buddha to prolong his .. life, while the Buddha told them that he could do so if he wished." [428]

S: Hmm. He told Ananda. He did not tell 'them'. He told Ananda. This story is related in the Udana, [Udana 6.1, tr.] and also, I believe, in the Mahaparinibbana Sutta. [Digha Nikaya 16, 3.3-5, tr.]

Lokamitra: Then did Ananda ask him to? Did he?

S: The Buddha gave a hint that he could so prolong his life if he was asked, but Ananda was obtuse and didn't ask.

Lokamitra: I thought Ananda asked him and he didn't.

S: We've gone into this, when we studied the Udana, so perhaps we don't need to go into it now, it's all on those particular tapes.

Lokamitra: "...and their lamentations over the remains of the Blessed One, 'How soon the Light of the world has passed away!'"

S: They did, of course, lament like that, but not because they had neglected to ask the Buddha to remain longer in the world. It seemed, you know, such a short time that the Buddha had been with them, even though it was about 45 years, as Buddha, but it didn't seem long, they would have liked it to continue, I think any unenlightened one would.

Lokamitra: "these utterances may be considered .. foreboding the showers of doubt and speculation as to his personality."

S: I think, in a way, Suzuki has got it all wrong. I don't think there was doubt and speculation, or that they were all sort of glum, and troubled with not being able to understand. I think in those early days they had a very strong, a very intense, spiritual life, and they had a tremendous sort of feeling of what the Buddha might have been like. It was only, you know, a few decades earlier, or a few generations earlier. But there was a sort of wonder, in a very positive sense: who was the Buddha, and what was the Buddha really like? We certainly mustn't imagine them as sort of having doubts in the sense that Victorian curates had doubts about the divinity of Christ and becoming all troubled and guilt-ridden by it. I mean, Suzuki tends to give that sort of impression. "These utterances may be considered the first drops foreboding the showers of doubt and speculation as to his personality." That was not the atmosphere and climate at all, I'm quite convinced. It was very, very positive, there was a lot of spiritual life and activity and realization and very joyful feelings about the Buddha, and feelings of thankfulness and so on.

Devaraja: "According to the Suvarnaprabha Sutra .. [to end of paragraph] .. he showed an earthly death merely for the benefit of sentient beings." [429]

S: Here, the Buddha figure has become a symbol for the absolute, pure and simple, we may say. In other words the Sambhogakaya has emerged.

Sona: "Here we have the conception of a spiritual Dharmakaya germinating out of the corporeal death of Sakyamuni. Here we have the bridge between the Buddha and the Dharmakaya."

S: I remember in this connection that I heard of a ding-dong battle that went on between two people, both of them known to me, both, in fact, friends of mine, attending one of the meetings of the World Fellowship of Buddhists. One of them was Dr Ambedkar, leader of the ex-untouchables, and the other was a very elderly lady called Dr Irene Basto-Hudson - a very formidable creature indeed: [laughter] a lady of British origin and about 75 and a real battle-axe, if I may say so [laughter] [unclear] also a staunch Buddhist. And Ambedkar happened to remark one day, or made some reference to it: 'Now that the Buddha is dead..' and she at once got up and said, 'The Buddha is *not* dead. The Buddha is *alive!*' You know, just in that sort of way, and they had a really sort of furious argument about it. So this also illustrates the same sort of thing, huh? Whether the Buddha is dead, or whether the Buddha is alive. So, yes, physical body dead, but you *can* say, in a *way*, the spirit of the Buddha is alive, *if* you don't interpret it too realistically and literally, hm? After all, the Buddha, the human Sakyamuni, realized Enlightenment, came in contact with Reality, so the fact that the human historical Buddha is no longer

with us doesn't mean that Reality is deceased! Reality is still there, though no longer expressed in that particular form of Sakyamuni who has realized that Reality. But Reality itself lives on, and inasmuch as in the past the Sakyamuni had realized that and was the living embodiment of it, you *can* take the Sakyamuni figure as a symbol of that eternal Reality. In that way the figure of Sakyamuni himself comes to be thought of [as], as it were, eternal, as infinite, etc., etc. And in this way we get, as Suzuki says, the Dharmakaya concept, the conception of spiritual Dharmakaya, "germinating out of the corporeal death of Sakyamuni." All right. Let's go on. But inasmuch as you are dealing with two levels at once, there are great possibilities of confusion, as we shall see quite soon. [laughter]

Nagabodhi: Can you say, then, that Sakyamuni in time was a particular expression of Reality, and outside time is a symbol of it?

S: You can say that, though Sakyamuni is an expression of Reality after his Enlightenment, or upon his Enlightenment he became a sort of window [430] a transparent window through which the light of Reality shines.

Nagabodhi: In time.

S: In time, yes, and after his death the Sakyamuni can become a symbol outside time for that eternal Reality, become a symbol of it in a highly glorified form, and then, of course, we get the Sambhogakaya, or what I sometimes call the archetypal Buddha, you know, the Buddha ideal, concretely existing but outside all limitations of space and time. On we go, then.

Sona: "The Buddha did not die .. His life did not pass to an airy nothingness when his urns were divided among kings and Brahmins."

S: If you want to be a bit more accurate, you can [say] Sakyamuni died, but the Buddha did not.

Sona: "His virtues and merits .. [to end of paragraph] .. solution to the problem above cited."

S: On to "*The Trikaya as explained in the Suvaraprabha*". That is, the Sutra of Golden Light".

Sulocana: "What, then, is the Trikaya? .. [to end of paragraph] .. Dharmakaya to Godhead."

S: From a Christian point of view, to equate Christ in Glory and Holy Ghost is absolutely inadmissible! I mean, no Christian theologian would let you get by with that. I think the whole correspondence between "two trinities" just falls to the ground. In the case of the Christian trinity, the Three Persons - that is, God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost - are a distinction within the Godhead; they are as it were on the same level.

But in the case of the Trikaya it is definitely three different levels: Dharmakaya, Sambhogakaya, Nirmanakaya, like that. Whereas in the case of the Christian trinity it is a triangle, you know, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. So you can't really compare these two. That's much too clumsy.

Sudatta: "Let us again quote .. concerning the doctrine of Trikaya. 'The Tathagata .. [to end of paragraph] .. the Nirmanakaya of the Tathagata."

Vajradaka: "But when the Tathagata .. [to end of paragraph] .. Sambhogakaya."

S: Again what I call sometimes, the archetypal Buddha, a non-historical Buddha, but not the sort of as it were abstract principle of Buddhahood: a concrete form, a sort of sublimated human form, glorified human form, endowed with all possible human perfections, but existing, as it were, out of history, outside space, outside time, at a sort of spiritual centre of the universe, in the middle of the mandala, as it were, and forming the object of what [431] Suzuki would call 'the religious consciousness', especially as regards meditation.

Nagabodhi: "When all possible obstacles .. [to end of paragraph] .. this is the Dharmakaya.

Mamaki: "When the first two forms .. [to end of paragraph] ..(arising from particularity).

Ratnapani: "According to the above, .. [to end of paragraph] .. the Mind (Dharmakaya).

Devamitra: "But the Buddhas revealed .. a human Buddha."

S: Yes. So far, in this chapter, Suzuki has stuck pretty well to Mahayana tradition and Mahayana thought. We haven't had any of his characteristic Suzuki-isms, but I have an uncomfortable feeling that in the next section, "*Revelation in all stages of Culture*", he is going to go full pelt again! Anyway, let's see. If there are any confusions, I think we'll just quietly mark them in our own minds and just sort of pass on.

Mangala: "*Revelation in All Stages of Culture*. En passant, it is in this sense that Christ is conceived by Buddhists also as a manifestation of the Dharmakaya."

S: Well, I think one must at least ask here which Buddhists? Most of them in the history of Buddhism never having even heard of Christ! [laughter]

Mamaki: He is a Buddha. It suited their taste best this way.

S: I think this image here of 'the stage' is not quite accidental, because it is the concepts being set to work and made to act, the reified concepts.

Mamaki: "The doctrine of Trikaya,.. [down to] .. The Great Lord of Dharma knows the animal's needs are for things more substantial.

S: i.e, less substantial. [laughs]

Mamaki: "He does not reveal himself. .. [to end of paragraph] .. the Spirit of the Lord."

Lokamitra: "The Mahayanists now argue .. the folly of clinging to it as the final reality."

S: There is no real question of the historical, phenomenal Sakyamuni being eternal, or able to be eternal, as it were. Here you see a bit of confusion between the two planes, that of the Sakyamuni, the historical Sakyamuni, [and] that of the Dharmakaya.

Lokamitra: "As for his Dharmakaya .. [to end of paragraph and section] .. into one spirit."

S: Hm. One can say that the point of St Paul's utterance is rather different from that which Suzuki is trying to make. St Paul isn't preaching a sort of religious universalism; he would have been rather horrified by it! He was talking of the one spirit and Christ. But at the same time, there is a very definite truth in what St Paul says here: that if you do share a common spirit - in the case of the Christian it's the spirit of Christ - [432] with a number of other people, you mustn't be surprised if that spirit manifests itself in different ways, in different gifts. And this is certainly something that we can apply, ourselves, to our own Movement. You might say that everybody goes for Refuge, or you might say, at a later stage, that the bodhisattva is manifesting in everybody, but it will manifest in different ways according to the different inclinations, the different temperaments, different abilities, different qualifications, of those people, and some may be meditating, some may be writing, some may be organizing, some may be painting, but it is all the same spiritual life, it's all within the same sangha, it's all diverse gifts, all manifestations of the same spirit of Buddhism, as it were: the same Bodhicitta.

So we mustn't regard one manifestation as being more spiritual than another. If you are meditating, you are spiritual and a good Buddhist, if you're organizing, well, you are being rather worldly, neglecting your meditation, possibly, and not being a very good Buddhist. It all depends on the spirit in which you do it, and so on. So there's a definite lesson for us in this particular passage, looked at in this particular way.

Devaraja: "*The Sambhogakaya*. One peculiar point in the doctrine .. Buddhists sometimes call themselves Bodhisattvas, that is, beings of intelligence, because intelligence (bodhi) is the psychological aspect of the Dharmakaya as realized in sentient beings."

S: There seems to be a terrible misunderstanding here, it's almost as though you are a Bodhisattva automatically if you are a human being, because a human being has intelligence and bodhi is intelligence. Hm? Therefore, if you are a human being, you are an intelligent being. A Bodhisattva is an intelligent being. Therefore, if you are a human being, you are a Bodhisattva! But this seems to be completely erroneous! Bodhi is not intelligence, in that sense, it far transcends it. It's Enlightenment!

Devaraja: "But the conception of Sambhogakaya [to end of paragraph] .. the Bodhisattvas."

S: Corporeal here doesn't mean material, of course, but having a form, as it were; an archetypal form, you might say.

Sona: "For further confirmation .. Asanga and Vasubandhu will be referred to."

S: That is, the joint founders of the Yogacara school.

Sulocana: "In a comprehensive treatise .. all-conserving mind." [433]

S: In other words, the Samboghakaya is something conditioned, and inasmuch as the Dharmakaya is a form of, or represents, the absolute, the unconditioned, the Samboghakaya is to be considered subordinate to the Dharmakaya. This is the great point here.

Ratnapani: The Samboghakaya's conditioned?

S: Yes.

Ratnapani: Oh, I thought just now it was an archetype outside of space and time.

S: Yes, but still conditioned, still not the Dharmakaya, not the Absolute. You could say, in a way, that it isn't sort of quite so straightforward as that, because when you, say, meditate on a Sambhogakaya form, it has a form, but it's not a material form, it's a sort of spiritual form, you can say, or, as I say, an archetypal form. But in the last analysis, it is something that you get beyond, something that, say, in the meditation you dissolve back into the Void. So in that sense it is something conditioned, even though, for instance, when you are meditating upon it, you regard it as a symbol of the Dharmakaya, even the Dharmakaya itself, but as it were *in* itself. Taken, as it were, literally, it is a conditioned thing, though you won't be reflecting on it as a conditioned thing until you are really advanced in your spiritual practice. If for the time being you regard it as Absolute - it's all-in-all to you - fair enough, that is what you need to do for the purposes of your spiritual practice. So, in that way, the Sambhogakaya has a *sort* of absoluteness.

Ratnapani: Subjective absoluteness.

S: Subjective absoluteness, but ultimately - objectively - you see that it is not Absolute, and you go even beyond that, to the Dharmakaya.

Sudatta: "These six peculiarities .. do not .. penetrate into the deep nature of its nature."

S: I sometimes compare the Sambhogakaya to a stained glass window through which the light is shining. If you have a sort of stained glass Buddha window, that would give you a very good idea. And behind it is, of course, the sunlight streaming in through the stained glass window, but you are concentrating on the stained glass window, and the

light comes to you through the stained glass window, and you are enjoying not just the clear, bright, pure sunlight, but all those rich, glowing colours. You're getting out, as it were, all your sort of emotional and devotional feelings towards those. But it isn't just colour, it's also light, so, in that sense, the Sambhogakaya isn't just Sambhogakaya, it's also Dharmakaya, because through the many-coloured form, [435] as it were, of the Samboghakaya, the light of the Dharmakaya is shining, so you can't sort of say, well, here's the Samboghakaya and here's the Dharmakaya, and the Samboghakaya is conditioned and the Dharmakaya is unconditioned. That is correct but it can be misunderstood if taken literally, because you are, as it were, experiencing the Dharmakaya *through* the Samboghakaya, just as you experience the light of the sun through the stained glass window when it lights up that stained glass window. You are not just enjoying the colours; you are enjoying the colours letting through the light too. So in the Samboghakaya you also experience the Dharmakaya.

Sudatta: "Its supernatural incomprehensibility remains .. (it) may be considered as corresponding to the Christian idea of an angel."

S: That's a bit diminishing, in a way. You could say all the angels together, in other words, turned into one angel; that might give you a very *slight* idea. Not just one single individual angel, surely!

Sudatta: "Supernaturalness .. [to end of paragraph] .. can it be .. compared to Christ in Glory?"

Vajradaka: "Let us take another quotation .. what notions are involved in the idea of the Body of Bliss?"

S: Well, it isn't really 'complicated notions' and it certainly isn't an idea. It's a question of spiritual experience and spiritual perception.

Vajradaka: "According to the commentators .. [to end of paragraph] .. Mahayana Dharma."

S: One can say that the Happy Land or the Pure Land is to the ordinary phenomenal world as the Sambhogakaya is to the human historical Sakyamuni, just in the same way that the human historical Sakyamuni is universalized and glorified and becomes a sort of symbol of the Absolute, the Sambhogakaya, in the same way all worldly scenes, all worldly historical scenes and localities, worlds and universes, are universalized and glorified in the Pure Land or the Happy Land. And the Sambhogakaya Buddha, therefore, quite appropriately, takes up his position of the centre of the Pure Land. That is his sort of glorified environment, the glorified environment of the glorified Buddha. And, of course, in Tantric terms, it's the Buddha at the centre of the mandala. The mandala, in a way, is that Pure Land or that Happy Land in a more formal, as it were geometrical, presentation. All right. On to another section.

Nagabodhi: "*A Mere Subjective Existence*. Judging from all these .. the most plausible conclusion that suggests itself to modern sceptical minds ..

S: I don't think modern sceptical minds are at all capable of dealing with this! [436] It isn't just a sort of idea or a notion or a philosophical theory! But anyway, let's go on.

Nagabodhi: "...is that the Sambhogakaya must be a mere creation of a .. finite mind .. but not able to grasp the object in its absoluteness, fabricates .. all its ideals .. into a spiritual-material being, which is logically a contradiction, but religiously an object deserving veneration and worship.

S: I don't see how the Sambhogakaya is logically a contradiction. You could say that the Sambhogakaya, the archetypal Buddha, is the Buddha who unfolds himself in the spiritualized consciousness of the meditator as he ascends into more archetypal dimensions, above and beyond the historical, in a way, above and beyond space and time, above his own ordinary consciousness. So what he sort of feels and sees then, in different aspects and glimpses, is the Sambhogakaya. All right. On we go, then.

Nagabodhi: "And this being is half way between .. Dharmakaya and Nirmanakaya."

S: This is, of course, correct.

Nagabodhi: "It does not belong to either .. The Mahayanists .. produced .. sutras .. and made the Body of Bliss .. the author of all these works."

S: We can see Suzuki now rather reverting to that tendency that we spoke of before.

Nagabodhi: "For if the Dharmakaya .. why .. could he not deliver sermons .. The Suvarnaprabha again echoes this sentiment as follows."

S: Once again, in other words, we see Suzuki thinking of the Sambhogakaya Buddha, in this case, as the object of unsatisfied emotion, rather than as a spiritual reality perceived long after thought and emotion have been unified and harmonized, when one is on an altogether higher level of consciousness, what we may call archetypal.

Mamaki: "To illustrate by analogy .. [to end of paragraph] .. needs of sentient beings."

Ratnapani: "And again .. [to end of paragraph] .. a change on this account."

Devamitra: "According to this .. [to end of paragraph] .. fountainhead of the Dharmakaya."

S: All right. On to "*Attitudes of Modern Mahayanists*."

Mangala: "Modern Mahayanists .. do not place much importance on the objective aspects of the Body of Bliss. They consider them at best the fictitious products of an imaginative mind." [437]

S: I wonder who these modern Mahayanists are? They are probably Japanese scholars in Mahayana Buddhism who've just lost any devotional attitudes and any sort of meditative practice, and find themselves confronted by all these mysterious Buddhas in Mahayana scriptures, and just dismiss them as fiction, as an imaginative product. They've got no feeling whatever for their spiritual value or spiritual reality.

Mangala: "they never tarry a moment to think .. that .. Bodhisattvas .. are objective realities."

S: Perhaps they are being a bit defensive, and a bit conscious of possible criticism from Western scholars or Western thinkers.

Mangala: "..that the Sukhavatis .. are decorated .. [to end of paragraph and section] .. as his own."

S: Suzuki's clearly taking all this sort of imagery and symbolism of the Pure Land so in a grossly literal manner. I think one of the sort of services that Jung has performed is to make it clear that things of this sort have a symbolical, archetypal character, and a definite value and function of that kind, and are not to be taken literally.

Devaraja: It really ties in with what you were saying yesterday about Suzuki not having a symbol.

S: Right. He seems insensitive to the value of these descriptions as symbols. I mean jewels and light and colour, these all have an archetypal sort of significance. It's not that the Buddhists are being, well, ostentatious and materialistic in describing the Pure Land as containing all sorts of precious stones. Anyway, we've come very nearly to the end of this chapter, and we have now a recapitulation.

Lokamitra: "*Recapitulation*. To sum up, the Buddha in the Pali scriptures was a human being .. but his disciples could not be satisfied with this .. humanness .. so .. the Pali traditions gives him a supramundane life besides the earthly one."

S: It doesn't *give* it to him. It would seem it was there from the very beginning, implied in the very conception of Buddhahood.

Lokamitra: "He is supposed to have been a Bodhisattva .. praised throughout his innumerable past incarnations."

S: It rather makes Bodhisattvahood sound like a knighthood!

Lokamitra: "While he was walking among us .. [to end of paragraph] .. the personality of the Tathagata." [438]

Devaraja: There's a point there. He says there were already seven Buddhas before him, and that was only seven Buddhas as specifically recounted by the Buddha Sakyamuni. But in actual fact there were innumerable Buddhas.

S: Well, the tradition grows. In the early Pali texts, there's only reference to one Buddha, and then there's reference to one or two previous ones, then we get a set of four, and in late Pali texts we get a set of seven, and then of course, in much later Sanskrit literature - and this comes in with the Sarvastivada - we get a thousand previous Buddhas. And then of course it sort of generalized into a sort of cosmic law, almost. But the process began quite early, and exactly how many previous Buddhas the historical Buddha Sakyamuni referred to, or whether he in fact referred to any at all, isn't clear, so we can't say. But we can say that from quite an early period, possibly during the lifetime of the Buddha himself, these references to specific historical Buddhas did start appearing. Of course, the Buddha is represented as saying that he had uncovered the same path trod by previous Buddhas, but at that stage there's no specific reference to previous Buddhas by name, as it were, there's just the general principle.

Devaraja: "But there was at the same time .. [down to bottom of p.272] .. which alone is immortal in us as well as in Buddhas."

S: This doesn't seem to follow at all! He seems to have had it much clearer and better and sounder before.

Devaraja: "The first religious effort .. [to end of paragraph] .. destined to become Buddhas."

S: In other words, at the same time that you make the Dharmakaya a sort of cosmic principle manifesting everywhere, at the same time you make everybody a Bodhisattva - a sort of honorary Bodhisattva. In both cases it leads to a complete collapse of any specific spiritual life.

Sona: "This idealized Buddha [to end of paragraph] .. in all possible ways.

Sulocana: "In this wise .. [to end of paragraph] .. views of grandeur and splendour.

Sudatta: "The Buddha does not depart .. [to end of paragraph] .. enlightenment and salvation.

Vajradaka: "The practical sequence .. [down to] .. the Spontaneous Will that pervades everywhere and works all the time."

S: This sort of equates Dharmakaya, with a vengeance, with a sort of life force which might well be behind everything and everybody but can hardly be equated with the Dharmakaya. The Dharmakaya has been degraded to a cosmological principle! [439]

Nagabodhi: He seems to be advocating totally indiscriminate toleration. I mean you could apply it to Nazism.

S: Right, or Guru Maharaji [laughter]. [Prem Rawat, founder of the Divine Light Mission, a popular cult in the 1970s, tr.] In other words, it does away with the conception of mithyadrsti really.

Devaraja: Micchaditthi?

S: Micchaditthi, yes.

Ratnapani: Couldn't do without that.

Vajradaka: "Though, superficially . . . [to end of paragraph, section and chapter].. to this cause."

S: Well, say, Theravadins are just as tolerant as Mahayanists, but they don't have the Trikaya doctrine, they certainly don't believe in that sort of Dharmakaya and would at once reject it, but they are tolerant, they don't persecute any more than the Mahayanists do. If anybody has ever persecuted, it's only the Nichiren sect or school, who do technically accept the Trikaya doctrine, and do believe in an archetypal Buddha, a Sambhogakaya Buddha, but they have been very intolerant and fanatical.

Ratnapani: Where are they situated?

S: Japan. They are nationalistic Buddhists, or at least, they incline to nationalism. I think on the whole Suzuki has been clearer and more truly Buddhistic in this chapter than he has been for some time past, which is perhaps a good sign, a good omen, for the Chapter that will come now, after tea. [tea break] [440]

Nagabodhi: "Next to the conception of Buddha .. is that of Bodhisattva .. the subject-matter of this chapter.

Mamaki: "Let us begin with a quotation .. in which a .. distinction .. is given."

S: We have, in fact, covered this ground earlier on in the book.

Ratnapani: "*The Three Yanas*. Now Sariputra .. the beings who .. have faith in the Tathagata, the father of the world .. apply themselves to his commandments."

S. "The father of the world!" Now what do you think this phrase means? It's a little bit like the Vedanta comparing samadhi with the deep sleep state. it's easy to miss the

point of the comparison, or to mistake the point. Just as in the case of the Vedantic comparison, it isn't the unconsciousness which is the point of similarity, but the fact that subject-object distinction doesn't obtain. So here, when the Buddha is described as 'the father of the world' or compared to a father, he is not conceived of as the progenitor of the world - as would be the case in a Christian context - but what is being referred to is his fatherly attitude, his kind and fatherly attitude in teaching and helping, hmm? Fatherly in that sense. So this needs to be understood.

Ratnapani: "Amongst them are some who, wishing to follow .. an authoritative voice, apply themselves .. fly from the triple world.

Devamitra. "Other beings desirous of unconditioned knowledge .. apply themselves .. fly from the triple world.

Mangala: "Other beings .. desirous of omniscience .. apply themselves .. fly the triple world. Therefore they are called Bodhisattva-mahasattvas.

Lokamitra: "This characterization .. (is) one of the most significant features of Mahayana Buddhism."

S: Earlier on, you may remember, we say that this classification was a bit unreal and didn't in fact correspond to the facts of the spiritual life. So it is best to consider the Bodhisattva in himself, as it were, as the Mahayana's presentation of the ideal Buddhist life.

Lokamitra: "Here the Bodhisattva .. exert(s) himself .. for the sake of .. fellow creatures .. he could enjoy .. undisturbed tranquillity in which all our worldly tribulations are forever buried."

S: I did, as a matter of fact, quite recently come across some passages in early Mahayana literature which suggested [441] that at one time Hinayana Nirvana was understood to mean the four dhyanas. So then it does become sort of quite understandable that some Hinayanists might have been regarded as lingering in the four dhyanas, hm? rather than as devoting themselves to Enlightenment proper. But of course this wouldn't be Nirvana in the original, archaic Buddhist sense, but it does make some sense of the facts of the spiritual situation: that there might be some Buddhists - leave aside the terms Hinayana and Mahayana - who as it were remain contented just with meditation, and just remained absorbed in these blissful states, and didn't bother themselves about - well, they would not be bothering themselves about the fate of other beings - but even about their own higher spiritual development. And then again, you might well imagine that there were other Buddhists - again leave aside the question of Hinayana and Mahayana - who were concerned with the further development beyond that. It might even have been that some Hinayanists, after a few hundred years, started imagining that when they were only, in fact, experiencing the dhyanas, they had gained already nirvana. Then the Mahayanists to use that name - would have to say, 'No, there is a state beyond Nirvana.' But in fact, on the basis of this, what they were meaning was there is a

state beyond the four dhyanas. So one *could* understand that particular development in this way, because there are these references to Nirvana as a term for the four dhyanas, which is quite surprising in the light of archaic Buddhism.

Lokamitra: It's a very severe transgression from the teachings.

S: Right. Yes.

Lokamitra: ".. he could seclude himself .. and await .. final absorption into the Absolute All."

S: This does suggest a sort of meditative absorption, doesn't it? Someone just sitting and meditating, not someone who actually gained Nirvana.

Lokamitra: "..as streams and rivers .. run into one ocean .. but the Bodhisattva .. would devote all his energy to the salvation of the masses of people .."

S: We really must avoid thinking and speaking of the Bodhisattva as a sort of glorified social worker, there's a great danger here.

Lokamitra: "who, on account of their ignorance are .. without making any progress towards the final goal of humanity."

Devaraja: "Along this Bodhisattvaic devotion .. the sravakas and pratyekabuddhas .. sought peace .. in asceticism and cold philosophic speculation."

S: That's really a caricature of their position. [442]

Devaraja: "Both of them were intently inclined .. [to bottom of p.280] .. even by the doer himself."

S: One does sometimes find this attitude among some modern Theravadins, but it isn't *really* supported by the Pali scriptures taken as a whole. They are not nearly so cold and narrow as this.

Devaraja: "Things done were done once for all .. [to end of paragraph] .. the law of karma."

S: I doubt whether this can be said, because we saw not so long ago that when the Bodhisattva transcends - or, as is often said, breaks - a commandment, for the sake of others, he is quite willing to do that even though he may have to suffer karmic retribution for that particular action, so there is no question of the law of karma being (broke?) in that sort of case. It is true that a Bodhisattva goes out of his way, as it were, to help others, but then that doesn't represent any break, as it were, in their karma, because karma is not the only force at work in the universe. One could say, from this point of view, there is also the Bodhisattva's own spirit and heart, and this would apply even to followers of

the Hinayana who were going around teaching and preaching - they also offer themselves in this particular way. Again, there is not a question of *breaking* the law of karma. The fact that somebody is undergoing karmic retribution doesn't mean that somebody else can't place help within their reach. Though in the case of the spiritual life, the final decision must be theirs. But you can certainly make available, whether you are a Bodhisattva or when you are a sravaka. So this rather falls to the ground about the Bodhisattva "mitigating the mechanical rigidity of karma"; this is just a rhetorical rubbish. The best you could say would be that the Bodhisattva went out of his way much more than the sravaka to help others, but karma remains unmitigated.

Sona: "*Strict Individualism*. The Buddhism of the sravakas .. is the most unscrupulous application .. of the individualistic theory of karma .. 'I am helpless .. to emancipate you from the misery of perpetual metempsychosis.'"

S: It's almost as though the Mahayanist, according to Suzuki, if only strong enough, can sort of emancipate people almost against their will, almost sort of coerce them, but this is surely not what the Mahayana means. You *are* helpless, even the Buddha was helpless; if people don't want to develop spiritually, there is nothing you can do about it. You can influence, you can plead, you can persuade, but they are free to reject that, as Devadatta rejected the Buddha.

Sona: "But with the Buddhism of .. the bodhisattva .. it is all love." [443]

S: Well that may well be, but even all the love, and all compassion, and all sympathy, can't affect a thing if the object of that compassion, sympathy, and love just doesn't want to be affected. You can't bully people, even spiritually bully them, into Enlightenment.

Nagabodhi: He's also making a distinction here, because the Hinayana enlightened person could only show the way intellectually.

S: Right, yes. Well, the Hinayana follower can show a good example, he can have a spiritual influence, surely. Once again, this split between the intellect and emotional: that Hinayana is all intellect, Mahayana is all emotion; the Sravaka is all intellect, the Bodhisattva is all emotion. It is certainly a wrong way of looking at the Bodhisattva, as a sort of embodiment of emotion, one-sided emotion. The Bodhisattva is the embodiment of the Bodhicitta, which is the first synthesis, from one point of view, of wisdom and compassion both at work, in harmony.

Ratnapani: That's how you defined Bodhicitta, in fact, wasn't it, quite crudely, but was it knowledge and love or something?

S: No. Intelligence and love actually.

Ratnapani: Intelligence heart.

S: Intelligence being, for a Bodhisattva.

Sona: "A Bodhisattva would not seclude himself .. [to end of paragraph] .. of praj'a and karuna."

S: This, of course, is very correct - or wisdom and love, rather, wisdom and compassion.

Lokamitra: He's wrong again! I mean, if the Bodhisattva would not seclude himself into the absolute tranquillity of Nirvana, I mean the whole conception of Nirvana's different.

S: Yes. Right. Well, no spiritual person would sort of seclude himself in this way at all. This is a quite unreal conception of Nirvana, and an unreal conception of the Hinayana follower, really.

Sudatta: "The irrefragibility of karma .. and individualism .. does not allow the transferring of responsibility from one person to another."

S: I mean, you might love somebody very, very much, but you can't suffer for them! If someone is suffering from a terrible disease, you might be very willing to take it on so that they just get relief, just out of love for them, [444] but you can't. So the fact that you love, doesn't necessarily mean that you can help, and you can't just say, the more you love the more you can help, not necessarily. You do come up against that sort of almost irreducible - certainly in the ordinary psychological level - irreducible difference between you and somebody else, and you can't get over that. And it seems very tragic, because sometimes you might feel you'd give almost anything to be able to help, but you can't, even with all your willingness. So the fact that the Bodhisattva is all compassion, and all - love, as well as wisdom, - we mustn't forget that - doesn't mean that he is really able to help any more than a Hinayanist, in principle. Maybe because he has a greater equipment, and a greater willingness, and more qualifications, he can get around more, contact more beings, but with each individual being he is in the same position as the Hinayanist is!

Sulocana: "From the viewpoint .. curse of karma .. clings to our soul."

S: He's rather fond of this word 'curse', even 'curse of karma'. Karma isn't a curse! It's good as well as bad, positive as well as negative. You don't only get the recompense of evil actions and unskillful actions, but of good and skillful ones! Why this purely negative view of karma? It's a mechanism that can lead you upwards as well as downwards.

Sulocana: "But when viewed from the religious side .. they are too weak to resist the .. force of evil, whose reality .. cannot be contradicted."

S. This just doesn't seem to be true to the facts of the situation. I mean, it really means that you have to have more respect for the individual and realize that the individual is an individual. And you can help, you can advise, you can even influence, can be very positive, but that individual remains an individual and it's up to them, ultimately. You can't, as I said, coerce people into Enlightenment, or really into anything else.

Sulocana: "The religious necessity .. [to end of paragraph] .. the oneness of the Dharma-kaya."

S: Hmm. "*The Doctrine of Parivarta*."

Sudatta: "The doctrine of turning over .. seems to have been the teaching of primitive Buddhism."

S: Actually we find, as someone pointed out as regards, I think, Burmese Buddhism, and in Theravada too, there is a sharing of merits at the end of every ceremony, merits are shared, so it isn't really the monopoly of the Mahayana. All right. Let's go on. [445]

Sudatta: "In fact it is more than a departure .. [down to] .. final emancipation of all beings."

S: Well, it can fail. It's not something irresistible.

Sudatta: "Thus the religion of the Bodhisattvas .. is the turning over of one's own merits to the service of others."

Nagabodhi: "All ignorant beings are daily .. performing evil deeds .. which .. gives rise to the .. resolution that he .. will carry all the burdens for ignorant beings and help them to reach the final goal of Nirvana."

S. Carrying the burden for them and helping them; these are two quite different things, and Buddhism really, whether Hinayana or Mahayana, says, or should say, that you can help but you can't actually carry the burden. You could say, of course, metaphorically, that by helping, by advising, in a sense you are carrying the burden, in a manner of speaking, but you can't do it all, for anybody, because an individual is an individual, not something passive to your will, as it were.

Vajradaka: Do you think that that is an actual practical thing? That when you are concerned with somebody's, say, spiritual, mental, or psychological life, and are concerned with helping them, that you do take on some of their .. not all, but some of their karma? Burden.

S: Well, speaking metaphorically, yes. Because the part of the burden is that they feel very much on their own, neglected, and nobody cares, hmm? So that when you show concern, kindness, and interest, and you give good advice, well, you help them, so in a sense you lift the burden. They feel it, it weighs on them less, but they still have to do it themselves. And you can find that if you try to do too much for other people, then it is counterproductive, because they are too passive in relation to you. If you are doing it all for them, that will put them in a passive role. And if they are a healthy person they will start reacting against that, and they even experience great resentment against you, and that isn't going to help them, and it isn't going to help you. So you shouldn't try to do

everything. It is a great mistake to try to do everything for anybody; it is very presumptuous and very foolish. You should be very circumspect about helping, do it in a very kind of sober way; kindly but, yes, sober, and not thinking that you can do an awful lot. There's very little you can do, usually, but that very little is quite important and should be done. And sort of don't attribute too much importance to what you are doing for other people. They [446] are doing a lot for themselves too, almost always, that you may not be seeing. And sometimes they are doing it for themselves just in refusing to let you do it for them! But the idea of this great active fatherly Bodhisattva figure sort of doing it all for you: this is *terrible!* This is almost *immoral!*

Sulocana: But is says often that the Buddha made them feel joyful and that helped them.

S: Yes. Well, sure. In the presence of the Buddha, the fact that somebody else has made it, as it were, and that he started off with a human being just as you've started off, this can be a tremendous encouragement. But still, *you* have to observe the precepts, you have to meditate, you have to understand. It's an encouragement, but an encouragement to you to do it yourself, not a doing of it for you. All right, then.

Nagabodhi: "Inestimably heavy as these burdens are .. [to end of paragraph] .. ignorant beings."

S: If you are not careful, you sort of emphasize this altruistic and burden-bearing aspect of the Bodhisattva Ideal to such an extent that you lose all sense of the self-responsibility of the individual, and that is a very dangerous thing to do.

Mamaki: "The Bodhisattvas do not feel .. that they are being compelled .. [to end of paragraph & section] .. Bodhicitta, heart of intelligence."

S: This is quite good, and very true, this little bit. "All that is done by them" - that is, the Bodhisattvas - "springs from their spontaneous will, from the free activity of the Bodhicitta, which constitutes their reason for existence, and thus there is nothing compulsory in their thoughts and movements. Whatever may appear to the ignorant and unenlightened as a strenuous and restless life, is merely a natural overflow from the inexhaustible fount of energy called Bodhicitta."

Very little has actually been said about parivarta. Perhaps we should consider it briefly. We've gone into it at great length on the seminar on the Bodhicaryavatara, there's quite a bit of material about it there. But is there such a thing as transference of merits, and why is there a doctrine of transference of merits? And to what extent, if at all, is this basically incompatible with self-responsibility?

Lokamitra: First of all, if you are sending forth positive currents in the world, then there should be no question of transference of merits, because it will automatically be for the good of all beings.

S: Right. Yes. [447]

Ratnapani: Yes, technically, there is no transference of merits, but with the sort of Mahayana attitude, the Bodhisattva attitude, it's a part of the path, the cultivation of that.

S: Yes, this gets very close to it indeed, because, owing to the very structure, the very nature of language, you cannot help speaking about the spiritual life, to some extent, in terms of accumulation and even collection: gaining this, developing that. So if you are not careful, it'll become a sort of refined egoism, a refined selfishness. So to counteract that, and to prevent you as it were thinking of your merits as literally yours in an egoistic sense, there is this doctrine of, or teaching of, sharing merits, so that you don't think that these are really mine, that these merits or these virtues are something that really belong to me. So it's just to counteract that idea, mainly, that you have the doctrine of parivarta. Yes, develop virtues, yes, acquire all these wonderful Bodhisattva qualities, but share them. In other words, don't think that they are really yours in the sense that they belong to you as a real, separate, unchanging ego. So this is the sense, basically, of the parivarta teaching. And you have it, in a simple form, even in the Theravada, even in the Hinayana.

Ratnapani: It's also the cultivation of metta at the same time.

S: Yes indeed!

Vajradaka: And the expression of it.

S: And expression of it, yes, at least verbally. For instance, in Burmese temples, whenever anyone makes an offering, they ring the bell, and the significance of this is said to be that they aspire that whoever may hear the sound of that bell may share in the merits of the offering which has just been made. The whole business .. this is more of poetry, and related to your inner attitude; this is not meant to assert a doctrine or to maintain that anything has literally been transferred from one person to another, but it is just to break down this sort of wall of separateness and to avoid the error of attributing to one's imaginary spiritual ego spiritual possessions as though they really could be possessed.

Devaraja: It seems that in a way that the problem with Suzuki's approach to it has been a case of not treating a lot of things as a kind of a way of breaking things down, or developing the right attitude. They become sort of cosmic absolutes.

S: And treating them as doctrines and theories rather than as methods. [448]

Devaraja: Yeah, right.

Ratnapani: In places he has reminded me of the sort of pubescent spirituality that crops up.. [laughter]

Vajradaka: You what?

Ratnapani: Pubescent spirituality, religiosity, rather.

S: Yes, you're right. Anyway let's go on.

Ratnapani: "Bodhisattva in Primitive Buddhism. (first paragraph)

Devamitra: "(second paragraph)

Mangala: "(third paragraph)

Lokamitra: "From this it is apparent that .. in 'primitive' Buddhism .. the highest aspiration .. was .. to attain at most to Arahantship."

S: Historically speaking this was not true, because in primitive or archaic Buddhism we see the so-called Arahants, or Arhats, as they later came to be called, attain to the same state of bodhi that the Buddha himself had attained to, and there is a Pali text in which the Buddha clearly says that 'the only difference between me and my Enlightened disciples is that I attained Enlightenment before, and they attained Enlightenment after.'

Lokamitra: "The idea of Arhatship [to end of paragraph] .. was .. unsatisfactory to be an object for the Bodhisattvas of their highest religious aspirations.

Devaraja: "The Mahayanists .. wanted to remove all the barriers .. between Buddhahood and the common humanity."

S: This is really a misuse of language. You get the sort of humble being, imagined sort of just passively existing there, and you are going to give them Buddhahood, as it were, and distribute lavishly all the riches of Enlightenment. This is a really misleading and very sort of false way of speaking. And in a way, really, it shows no respect for that individual, that humble being: you almost impose yourself upon him and imagine that you can distribute, you can give. His role is merely passive. And it seems a completely un-buddhistic sort of approach. But this sort of language is very common in popular writings describing the Bodhisattva. As though the wretched Hinayanist is very selfish: here he's got Enlightenment in his hand and he's doesn't give it to anybody, as though it's something to be given, like that, like alms thrown to a beggar. But here's the rich and generous Bodhisattva who's got Enlightenment in his hand and is giving it to everybody so generously out of compassion! Well that's an absolute sort [449] of caricature, almost a sort of blasphemy, as regards the Bodhisattva ideal. It's not like that at all. So one has to really beware of thinking of it in these terms.

Devaraja: "But how could they do this when the iron hand of karma held tight [to end of paragraph & section] .. great problem of Buddhahood."

S: I think we'd better pass straight on.

Sona: "We are all Bodhisattvas. As Sakyamuni was a Bodhisattva, so we are all Bodhisattvas .. The Dharmakaya manifests in us as Bodhi .. This .. can suffer no change in quantity even when the Bodhisattva attains .. to perfection as (great as) Sakyamuni Buddha."

S: The idea of bodhi being quantitative at all is rather absurd.

Sona: "In this spirit .. the Buddha exclaimed .. 'It is marvellous .. that all beings .. partake of the nature of Tathagatahood.'"

S: This is of course from a Mahayana source. According to the oldest sources, as far as we can make them out, the first thing that the Buddha saw and the first thing about which he spoke, after his Enlightenment, was the law or principle of conditionality.

Nagabodhi: And he saw how difficult it was going to be.

S: Right, yes.

Nagabodhi: For most people.

S: Right, hmm.

Sona: "The only difference between the Buddha and the ignorant asses is that the latter do not make manifest in them the glory of Bodhi .. [to end of paragraph] .."

S: It's almost as though the difference is unimportant!

Sulocana: "They only are not Bodhisattvas .. philosophically review the world of tribulations."

S: In other words, you know, the wretched Arahants, you know, absorbed in their blissful Nirvana! [laughter]

Sulocana: "Even we mortals .. are Bodhisattvas .. capable of being united in the .. love of the Dharmakaya .."

S: Here again you get this reification of concepts. You say that everybody who makes the effort can gain Enlightenment, then everybody is potentially Enlightened, and then everybody has the potentiality of Enlightenment, and then you think of the potentiality of Enlightenment as something actually existing, and then everybody has it equally, actually! [450]

Sulocana: "And also of obliterating .. [down to] .. Nirvana is conceived of to extinguish the fire of the heart and leave only the cold ashes of intellect."

S: Is it really conceived like that, even in the Hinayana? That Nirvana is conceived to extinguish the fire of the heart and all it leaves is the cold ashes of intellect? I mean, is that an idea or a conception of Nirvana that has *ever* been held by *anybody anywhere* in the Buddhist world? [loud laughter] Even by these wretched undeveloped Hinayanists? It is really *extraordinary!* But still this is the sort of language used by many Buddhist writers *still!*

Vajradaka: Maybe he is mistaking heart for desire?

S: It seems like that, doesn't it? Or maybe he is sort of basically protesting - I mean, all this sort of talk about the cry of the heart - against being a Buddhist at all and having to make any kind of spiritual effort and give up the world. It is almost like that! As though he wanted to lead a worldly life! And had got rather fed up with all this abstract, dry, you know, study of Buddhist literature and texts and wanted to have a good time! [laughter] While he had the chance! And here he was, 38 or 39, and never had a fling, or something like that? Who knows? It's almost like that! I really wish that there was a biography of Dr Suzuki available.

Devaraja: Yeah, right.

Mamaki: Maybe he had spent a lot of his time assuming that feeling was desire and had tried to repress that, and was sort of reacting against that.

S: As a Mahayana Buddhist, what would have led him to do that?

Mamaki: No, I mean, perhaps as a misunderstanding of desire, attachment.

Vajradaka: I don't think it is difficult to experience sensational feeling as desire! I mean, all one has to do is just kind of change the Buddhist words around a little bit and change one's kind of approach in one's feeling and there you have it!

S: It seems to me that he got involved in academic life and academic activity, intellectual activity, to such an extent that his entire emotional side was suppressed, or virtually suppressed. This seems to me to be what happened. And it also seems that he started feeling that Buddhism itself has somehow suppressed him and suppressed his feelings. But he couldn't, as it were, admit that, that it was his studies of Buddhism and his intellectual approach and his academic preoccupation which had stifled his own emotional [451] and creative life. He projected it all onto the Hinayana, therefore the Mahayana became the emancipator from this repression and this iron law of karma, and the Mahayana became the liberator of his feelings and his emotions in that narrower sense. This seems to me to be the sort of psyche-analysis of Suzuki, if you could use that expression.

Mamaki: Perhaps when he was aware of having these emotions and [unclear] perhaps his movement to the Mahayana, perhaps, since, if they'd been represented, they'd come up in a rather florid and uncontrolled and undisciplined way. Maybe his fear of that

made him see them as 'the fires of the heart that had to be killed with the intellect' or something.

S: "The ashes of the intellect."

Devaraja: It's interesting. I've seen some photographs of Suzuki, and he had a very, very high brow. It's almost like his whole sort of head was swollen up here and he was completely top-heavy! And very, very thin, sort of up and down.

S: A little man, hmm.

Devamitra: I don't remember, but I know..

S: He was Japanese.

Devaraja: He struck me as being quite noticeable in that way.

Lokamitra: Maybe he, too, was influenced by the overall Protestant attitude of that time, too.

S: Yes, quite.

Lokamitra: Which was attracted to Buddhism on account of the intellectual side, and didn't appreciate the other side.

S: Well, I think the basic sort of position was that his own intellectual preoccupation with Buddhism, his own engagement in Buddhist studies as a purely academic discipline - or almost purely academic discipline - stifled his own emotional creative side, and he began to feel Buddhism itself, as it were, as oppressive, so then he transfers this feeling to the Hinayana, and then cast the Mahayana as in the role of liberator from this oppression.

Mamaki: In terms of development, it's a very primitive level, isn't it? You know, the good and the bad.

S: Yes, right.

Mamaki: The split between the good and the bad.[452]

Sulocana: He's got this "iron hand of karma", always..

S: Yes, this comes again and again, the iron law and the iron hand, the cry of the heart, and so forth. Irrefragible. He's very fond of this word Irrefragible. Anyway .. [laughter]

Sulocana: "[to end of section] .. in this way we are all made bodhisattvas.

Sudatta: "*The Buddha's Life*. The spirit of universal love prevails .. [to end of paragraph] .. in every phase of the life of the Buddha."

S: Well, the fact that he is speaking of the Mahayana as a gospel of love is quite significant. Love was there, of course, but there are other things as well.

Mamaki: He feels more and more like a Christian writer than a Buddhist.

S: Yes. A later work of his in which I personally, even the first time that I read it, detected a great deal of confusion and thought, was 'Buddhism and Christian Mysticism' - or was it 'Zen and Christian Mysticism'? [It's *Mysticism, Christian and Buddhist*, tr.] - where he makes his comparison between Mahayana on the one hand and Meister Eckhart on the other. This seemed quite a confused work, though quite lengthy.

Vajradaka: "The Mahayanists first placed the Buddha in the Tusita heaven (as was done by the Hinayanists)."

S: The Mahayanists didn't place him there then, did they?

Vajradaka: "made him feel pity .. [to end of paragraph] .. a practical demonstration of the 'Great Loving Heart'."

S: Mahakarunacitta: great compassionate heart, you could say. All right. One more section and we are going to stop for today. "*The Bodhisattva and Love*".

Nagabodhi: "Nagarjuna .. elucidates .. Bodhisattvahood .. a great loving heart, and all sentient beings constitute the object of its love."

S: We *must* beware of interpreting - or rather, misinterpreting - this in a purely sentimental fashion. Karuna is the expression of *prajña*. The compassion that is intended here is an expression of spiritual understanding and spiritual insight, that is to say, transcendental understanding and transcendental insight. It has got nothing to do with sentimentality, nothing to do with ordinary pity, nothing to do with compassion in a purely emotional sense. [453] *This* karuna, we could say quite correctly, is not an emotion at all.

Nagabodhi: "Therefore, all the Bodhisattvas do not cling .. to meritorious deeds which may heighten their own happiness.

Mamaki: "Their spiritual state is higher .. [to end of paragraph] .. Buddha-knowledge.

Ratnapani: "With a great loving heart .. [to end of paragraph] .. those miserable beings.

Devamitra: "But they are well acquainted .. [to end of paragraph] .. infatuation.

Mangala: "Therefore .. [to end of paragraph] .. contaminated by it.

Lokamitra: "Their great hearts of sympathy .. [to end of paragraph] .. is never outside the world of sins and sufferings."

S: That's quite important, that one maintains one's own inner attitude of wisdom and compassion and so on, but one's external manifestation, one's work and activity and life, is in the ordinary world, as it were. within your, as it were, dwelling in the Absolute. Without, you're manifesting in the world of the relative. This is very much the Bodhisattva life and Bodhisattva attitude. Anyway, today it has been a somewhat more straightforward and less confused Suzuki.

Ratnapani: Bhante, you said that karuna is not emotion. I can see that. Is it just that we don't have any words for things that that aren't emotional ones?

S: In fact, we can't help thinking of it as an emotion. Anyway, any points on what we've gone through so far today? sort of general questions arising about what we've studied?

Mangala: Could you say that the Bodhisattva's concerned with just all forms of life or existence, or only just sentient beings?

S: Well sentient means everything that lives, even vegetables.[sic. This is not a standard definition, tr.]

Mangala: What about inanimate things like, say, rocks or..

S: I don't recollect any statement to that effect.

Mangala: Just everything down as far as vegetables?

S: Right.

Nagabodhi: You said earlier that he was getting confused between some idea of the life force and the Dharmakaya, and you said - as to a life force - that may be, but it has got nothing to do with the Dharmakaya. This is certainly [454] something that I have in the past confused: the idea of a 'life force' as a spiritual thing, and when you said that 'that may be', you see it as a biological, as a .. if it's a force at all, then it exists purely in the realm of ..

S: Well, it can be spiritual but still phenomenal. What you can't have is the transcendental life force.

Nagabodhi: Ah, yes.

S: Because the cosmos, samsara, consists of various levels and layers, right up to the Brahmaloaka, which is something very refined and spiritual, and everything emerges from there at the beginning of the aeon, and merges there at the end of the aeon. And this sort of alternation, this sort of pulsation, goes on indefinitely, it stretches back infi-

nitely far into the past and forward infinitely into the future. But Nirvana is above, as it were. Nirvana is the transcendental. So you could even have a sort of spiritual force of Brahmaic origin working through the cosmic process, and process of evolution and involution, but the purely transcendental is still above, still something different. And the two are not connected, as it were, as cause and effect. However far back you go, you don't find a point at which this whole cosmic process is fastened onto the Absolute, as it were, and issues out of it or is caused by it or created by it.

Vajradaka: So what's the Brahman-like spiritual force?

S: Brahma-like, not Brahman. Brahman is a Hindu term with an entirely different meaning. Brahma-like.

Vajradaka: Brahma-like. Is it still relative?

S: It is still relative, yes. still phenomenal, though very, very sublimated, and what we would regard as spiritual, and so highly spiritual that we could even confuse it with the transcendental. But according to Buddhist tradition and teaching, it is to be distinguished from the transcendental.

Vajradaka: I think in one book - I can't remember which one - a Buddhist book - that was correlated with the Christian God, and saying that if Buddhism does see that there is a God at all, it's the metta, the realm of higher spiritual metta, which is still phenomenal.

S: Well you could say that God was Brahma, but if you want to make that equation, you have to be prepared to accept that God was relative and phenomenal, and not absolute, not unconditioned. [455]

Ratnapani: It's news to me, this talk of life force.

S: Well, as a manner of speaking, they are thinking in terms of Bergsonian Vitalism, for instance. It's a manner of speaking. Again, we mustn't reify a concept. Things do evolve, things do develop, so you sort of posit a life force or evolutionary energy to account for that. Strictly speaking you need not do so, and science as such does not. It is only when you come to the philosophy of science, to the philosophical interpretation of scientific facts, that any question of life force or evolutionary energy comes into the picture. [end of session] [456]

S: We are going to go straight on to "*The Meaning of Bodhi and Bodhicitta*", which is page 294, which means we have come on to something quite important.

Nagabodhi: "*The Meaning of Bodhi and Bodhicitta*. (first paragraph)"

S: Well, it wasn't used in the simple sense of knowledge by the Sravakas; they used it in the sense of Enlightenment.

Mamaki: "Bodhi, according to the Mahayanists, is an expression of the Dharmakaya in the human consciousness."

S: I am not so sure that the Mahayana - that is to say, the sutras and sastras of the Mahayana - actually said any such thing. I feel this is probably Suzuki's interpretation. But anyway, let's go on.

Mamaki: "Philosophically speaking .. [to end of paragraph] .. finite intellect."

Ratnapani: "Bodhi .. Bodhicitta or Bodhihrdaya"

S: Bodhihrdaya. I don't think this is an actual Sanskrit expression, actually, certainly not one in general use in the Mahayana.

Ratnapani: "Which means the same thing .. [to end of paragraph] .. the Dharmakaya."

S: There's a bit of reification here. Bodhicitta - usually I translate this as will to Enlightenment - is, in a sense, a sort of psychological - not taking 'psychological' in the narrow sense, but signifying a sort of matter of personal experience rather than speculation or theorizing and to speak of it as a sort of reflex of the Dharmakaya: this is sort of speculative interpretation. It doesn't really help you very much.

Devamitra: "Bodhicitta .. [to end of paragraph] .. most perfect."

Vajradaka: "It will be easily understood now .. the essence of the Bodhicitta is the very same thing that makes up the Dharmakaya."

S: Fair enough.

Vajradaka: "For the former .. [to end of paragraph and section] .. the same activity."

S: This is much too sweeping. He says "the fundamental teaching of Buddhism", but the Theravada certainly wouldn't agree there that this was the fundamental teaching. He might say that this was his sort of presentation, his kind of summary, and what he considered from the Mahayana point of view was the fundamental teaching, but it isn't really possible to say that this is the fundamental teaching of Buddhism. Anyway, on we go to "*Love and Karuna*". [457]

Lokamitra: "*Love and Karuna*. (first paragraph)"

Devaraja: "Christians say that without love we are become sounding brass or a tinkling symbol."

S: This is, of course, St Paul's famous discourse on charity. [I Corinthians, 13:1, tr.]

Devaraja: ".. and Buddhist would declare .. [to end of paragraph] .. after a blazing fire."

Sona: (third paragraph)

S: Right. Let's go from Suzuki, now, to "*Nagarjuna and Sthiramati on the Bodhicitta*."

Sudatta: What's chiliocosm?

S: Chiliocosm is a whole great universe of universes, as it were, a galactic system, perhaps.

Mangala: "*Nagarjuna and Sthiramati on the Bodhicitta*. (first paragraph)."

S: I take it that everyone knows what the skandhas, ayatanas, and dhatus are? This is a series of terms very frequently occurring in all Buddhist texts.

Lokamitra: What are the ayatanas?

S: You know what the five skandhas are? [sounds of affirmation] And the ayatanas? [sounds of uncertainty] The ayatanas, the twelve bases, are the six sense organs and their respective sense objects, that is, the five physical senses and the mind, together with their objects. For instance, the eye, the organ of sight, has as its object visual form, and so on, and then the mind has as its object dhamma in the sense of ideas, or mental impressions they are sometimes called.

Mangala: Dhamma?

S: Yes. Dhamma or dharma in the sense of ideas, mental objects. For instance, if you think of a tree, your mental object is a tree. You are not perceiving the tree. You can think of the tree with your eyes closed, so your physical senses aren't working; it's your mind that is working, and you have an idea of the tree which you saw at some time or other in the past. So that *idea* in Pali is dhamma. That's one of the meanings of dhamma. So these are the six ayatanas.

And the eighteen dhatus are these ayatanas with their respective consciousnesses. [458] When the organ of sight, the eye, comes into contact with visual form, there arises 'eye-consciousness', so that makes three. So the eighteen dhatus are the twelve ayatanas plus their respective consciousnesses - that is to say, eye-consciousness, ear-consciousness, and so on up to mind-consciousness.

Sona: Well how come there are eighteen?

S: Hmm?

Sona: Why are there eighteen?

S: Because those are all the senses you have. Five physical senses and your mind. So these make up the whole psychological system, hm?

Devaraja: So you have the sense organs, the sense objects, and then the sense consciousnesses?

S: Yes, the sense consciousnesses which arise in dependence on the contact.

Devaraja: Between those two?

S: Organ and sense object, yes.

Devaraja: Ah, that's the awareness of..

S: Right, yes, the consciousness and the sense of awareness.

Devaraja: And just .. this mind organ and ... Where does the idea, then, come from? I mean, the idea that the mind organ perceives? Well, does the idea within the actual..

S: Well, that would be from a .. you know, from a (bit of a?) Hinayana point of view, a sort of epistemological speculation, and they would say all that we need to know is that it is there. They don't (agree to?) where it comes from; might regard it even as an artificial question.

Devaraja: Well, what I was .. I think I've understood it. Does it mean that the idea arises within the sense organ? I mean, I'm trying to .. I just wondered if there was a category of .. er .. [pause] In that.. When .. there's a sense object, and then I'm something perceiving it? I'm just wondering if the mind object is viewed as separate from the mind that perceives it?

S: At this stage of enquiry the question doesn't arise, because there are the facts with which we are presented: we perceive an idea, i.e. we think of a tree..

Devaraja: Yeah. [459]

S: Yes? There's the mind at work and there's the mental object. Yes? So at this stage of the analysis it is left simply there. And of course, the purpose of this eighteen-fold analysis, as well as of the twelve-fold, and five-fold analysis, is simply to help us understand that what we usually speak of as 'I' or 'myself' is not one unchanging thing or entity, but it is essentially a process, a process consisting of various parts, a process governed by the law of conditionality. So it is a sort of structure or framework for meditative exercise. I mean, you try to see how there are these five skandhas in you, you identify them: here is form, here are the sanskaras, here is consciousness, and so on. In the same way with the twelve ayatanas and the eighteen dhatus. You try actually to see or to experience that you have these five physical senses and the senses come into contact with their objects. And then a certain kind of consciousness or awareness arises.

And the same with the mind. And you see these activities going on all the time and interacting and influencing one another, and this is you. So essentially, at least originally, these were intended as frameworks for meditation, especially, that is vipassana - that when you were in a highly meditative mood, deeply concentrated, when you practised samatha, then you just adverted, you turned your attention to your own 'being', as it were, and analysed [it] in terms of the five skandhas, the twelve ayatanas, and the eighteen dhatus. And you started trying to actually *see* yourself as a complex process, hmm? not as a 'self'. So these terms aren't intended to state any sort of epistemological doctrine or anything like that, but just to provide a framework for that sort of particular vipassana-type meditative exploration.

Nagabodhi: I think it's a very similar question, but the problem arose for me in trying to do that, to just investigate the ongoing process in terms of the five skandhas, and what I was wondering was, which skandhas are involved in the arising of a mind-object? Is it samskara? Are mind objects a form of sanskara?

S: Well no, they can't be, because they're presentations. The sanskara is a volitional thing, you know? Volition would enter in when you decided whether you were going to attend to the idea or not, or whether you were going to do anything about it. But in itself it is a presentation to consciousness, yes?

Nagabodhi: So it would be a form of rupa?

S: No it wouldn't be a form of rupa.[460]

Devaraja: Mental phenomenon?

S: It would be a form of samjna, wouldn't it? A form of concept. It would be something not directly perceived through the five senses, something which is perceived, either as idea or concept, by the mind itself. So therefore it would be included under samjna.

Sona: Which is usually translated as?

S: Oh there are various..

Mangala: Perception.

S: Perception, or even concept.

Mangala: I think concept is better. It seems better than perception.

S: Because that implies sense-perception.

Mangala: Yes, yes.

S: It's also sort of recognition. When you have a sort of idea in your mind and you recognize that it's an idea of some actual existing material object that you are not perceiving at that moment. So when it is said that the Bodhicitta is free from all determinations, that it is not included in the categories of the five skandhas, the twelve ayatanas, and eighteen dhatus, it is making it absolutely clear that in terms of the traditional Hinayana classification or analysis, that the Bodhicitta is not phenomenal, not empirical, and that it is not being conditioned, and that it is something transcendental. It is not a thought, it is not an idea, it is not a volition, hmm? It is something quite different from all those things. It is non-atman, universal, uncreate in its self-essence, void, so it's transcendental.

Lokamitra: In a sense, can't be called a volition.

S: Well, I speak of the will to Enlightenment, yes, but only analogically! If you want to use Suzuki's language - though you must be very cautious when using *his* language - it is the will of the Dharmakaya sort of breaking through into, and as it were taking over, *your* will, hmm? Because if the Bodhicitta is functioning through you, and you are doing certain things on account of that, to somebody else observing you, it will look as though *you* are willing, as it were! They won't know, unless they know you very well, or they are spiritually very perceptive, they won't know that it is the will of the Bodhicitta, the will of the Dharmakaya, as it were. So it is rather like in Christianity when one speaks of doing the will of God, not your own will. Hmm? Yes? It's a very mysterious thing and very [461] difficult to speak about. You can say your will is blended with the will of the Dharmakaya, or the will of God, or whatever, but it's not that you've become a sort of passive machine and, you know, you are just being operated from outside. It's not like that! It is you! The Bodhicitta in a way is *you*, but you, in a way - again there is a difficulty of language - have ceased to be just something phenomenal. You've been transformed, as it were, into - if one can use that language - something transcendental, to some extent, something transcendental, has germinated within you, or come into you from outside. These are both valid modes of expression. That is the Bodhicitta. It isn't explicable in terms of anything that you were before, and before, all that you were was the five skandhas. Or the twelve ayatanas. Or the eighteen dhatus. But that Bodhicitta, which is mysteriously you and yet not you, is none of those things, and included in none of those things: it's transcendental.

Perhaps we could use an analogy from the horizontal - a horizontal analogy for a vertical reality: suppose you do something that somebody else wants you to do. Is it your volition or theirs? Hmm? Suppose there is someone whom you love very much - I mean, love in the genuine sense - and they want something done. They want you to do something. And you do it. You can say that you make their will your will. There is no question of them taking you over by compulsion, or using you just like a sort of puppet, or operating you like a puppet. Their will, as it were, becomes blended with your will. Yes? You see? Now suppose that person is spiritually more highly developed than you, and wants you to do something. And you completely genuinely take their will upon yourself, your will becomes their will becomes your will. You're not just obeying. You are not just submitting. You sort of genuinely embrace their will and their will becomes your will. Not that you are doing what they want. No. You are doing what you want, but the initia-

tive came from the other person. In a way, the other person showed you what you really wanted. And as soon as the other person says, 'Do this. I want you to do this.' You've made their will your will, so that you cease to be doing just what that person wanted to do: you are doing what *you* want to do, but the other person has pointed out, as it were, to you, what you want to do. So that person's will, which is higher than yours, which is a higher will than yours, has become your will. Now if you sort of carry that to extremes, and you make that an Enlightened person, you make that the Buddha, then you do the Buddha's will, you make the Buddha's will your own. Then we come very near to the manifestation of the Bodhicitta in the empirical personality. It's not a mechanical taking over; your will is transformed into the Bodhicitta. [462] Not only your will but your thought and emotion, too, are transformed into the Bodhicitta, your phenomenal being is transformed to some extent into the being of the Bodhisattva, you become to some extent a being of Enlightenment. But to the extent that a transcendental dimension is entered into, your existence and your being, there's a sort of break at the same time, it's not completely continuous, it's not a mere refinement of the phenomenal, there's a radical break, in a sense.

Lokamitra: This break. Is this where paravrtti takes place? If one can say it takes place at any particular stage.

S: Well, comparing the two, I mean, the Yogacara conception of paravrtti, turning about, and what we are now concerned with - the arising of the Bodhicitta - you could say that the paravrtti, when it actually takes place, corresponds to the actual arising of the Bodhicitta. When that turning about takes place, something decisive happens. When the Bodhicitta arises, something decisive happens. There's a new situation. There's a new attitude. There's a new will. There's a new being. At least germinally. Well, let's go on.

Sudatta: "One who understands the nature of the Bodhicitta sees everything with a loving heart, for love is the essence of the Bodhicitta."

S: Well, there are two points to be made here. "One who understands the nature of the Bodhicitta". Well, not one who understands it intellectually, looking at it from outside, but one who has realized the Bodhicitta to some extent, one in whom the Bodhicitta has arisen sees everything with a compassionate heart - that is, karuna-citta, "for love is the essence of the Bodhicitta."

Sudatta: "The Bodhicitta is the highest essence."

S: I'm not quite sure what this expression "highest essence" means. The original Sanskrit isn't given. Anyway, let's carry on.

Sudatta: "All Bodhisattvas find their *raison d'etre* of existence in this great loving heart."

S: In other words, it's the Bodhicitta which makes the Bodhisattva. If you haven't got that Bodhicitta, if that sort of transcendental dimension hasn't entered into you, if the will of the Dharmakaya, as it were, is not actually manifesting through you, working through

you, you can do anything you like, you can be as altruistic as you like, but you are not a Bodhisattva. Hmm? You can engage in endless social activity, do lots and lots of good, as it [463] were, but you are not a Bodhisattva unless that Bodhicitta has arisen, unless it isn't all seen and done from a completely different, as it were, transcendental, perspective.

Sudatta: Is there any test one could apply to ascertain whether or not the Bodhicitta had actually arisen? If one clinically took a person, could one apply any sort of objective tests or assessment to..?

S: Not clinically or objectively, but spiritually you would see. If you saw someone just altruistic, sooner or later there would be a reaction. Sooner or later you would probably even start hating the people that you were trying to help. You couldn't stand it! There would be a reaction. Or at least, you would feel strained. The Bodhisattva, acting out of the Bodhicitta, does not feel strained or tension. I think this is a great indication. And very often if you are just acting as it were altruistically, and trying to help people on that sort of basis, if you are not appreciated, if they don't seem to appreciate what you are trying to do for them, you might even get a bit resentful, or even be a bit hurt, or a bit disappointed. And then this would show that this was not the Bodhicitta and that you were not a Bodhisattva.

Lokamitra: But this is a valid way, or this is one of the ways, of preparing?

S: Oh sure, yes.

Lokamitra: For?

S: But one must prepare with also the intention of preparing: that 'I am doing this not because I am a great Bodhisattva, but I am just hoping that the Bodhicitta may, as it were, descend.' And certainly this is one of the ways, very definitely. But, you know, you must be careful not to be doing so much for other beings that you end up by hating them. And this can actually happen. [pause]

Nagabodhi: It's just like the lines in the Four Quartets - I can't remember the exact quote - when he says love would be love of the wrong thing, hope would be hope of the wrong thing, there is faith but the love and the hope and the faith are all in waiting.

[I said to my soul, be still, and wait without hope/

For hope would be hope for the wrong thing; wait without love/

For love would be love of the wrong thing; there is yet faith/

But the faith the love and the hope are all in the waiting.

(T.S. Eliot, 'East Coker' iii, lines 123-125), tr.]

S: And of course, you know, until such time as the Bodhicitta arises, practise metta, and actions based on metta, but don't delude yourself that you are being a Bodhisattva. A Bodhisattva is something higher, something greater, [464] and constituted essentially by the Bodhicitta, which is something transcendental. And once the Bodhicitta has arisen,

then you really are leading a spiritual life. But it's clearly said that it isn't included in the five skandhas, or twelve ayatanas, or eighteen dhatus, that it's non-atmanic, it's in a sense nothing to do with you. You provide the basis on which it manifests, but once it's manifested, it sort of becomes curiously blended with you, you become blended with it. We really don't have language sufficient to describe what happens, apart from my illustration from the horizontal, as it were, of you making somebody else's will - perhaps (an Enlightenment?) will - your will. And your will their will.

Mamaki: We had a Christian example of this back in the book, where Paul was saying, 'Not my will but Christ's'.

S: Well, this is, in principle, much the same thing, but, you know, it is not a 'taking over', it's not a 'replacement of' your will by somebody else's will, not your ego-will driven out by somebody else's ego-will. I mean, very often people can 'do the will of God' in that sort of way, or even observe the precepts in that sort of way, but it's just a sort of .. the only adequate sort of expression I can find is a sort of merging of blending of your limited phenomenal will with some higher transcendental purpose, and you become that, that becomes you, which you weren't before. It transcends this five-skandha, twelve-ayatana and eighteen-dhatu framework.

Sudatta: "The Bodhicitta, abiding in the heart of sameness, creates individual means of salvation."

S: "The Bodhicitta, abiding in the heart of sameness" I expect it would be translatable also mind of sameness or attitude of sameness ... "creates individual means of salvation". What do you think this means? "The Bodhicitta, abiding in the heart of sameness." Samata. What do you think this means?

Devamitra: An expression, or an attempt at an expression, of the fact that it isn't an entity, that it's the same, and when it manifests, well, it is the one Bodhicitta that manifests throughout different individuals.

S: Ah! There is a connection there, yes. Yes. Getting a bit nearer.

Lokamitra: Samata?

S: What is the samata/ana? There are five nanas, you remember? Each embodied in a particular Buddha. [465]

Devamitra: Equanimity, is it?

Lokamitra: Eqanimity.

S: Well, no. Not equanimity. There's a different word. Usually we render upeksha equanimity. Samata is the same sort or thing on a more transcendental plane. it's the even-mindedness, you have the same attitude towards all things, yes? And in this case, to-

wards all beings. So to say that the Bodhicitta abides in the heart of sameness is a sort of slightly poetic way of saying that the Bodhicitta has an attitude of even-mindedness, same-mindedness, same attitude towards all living beings. In other words, no prejudice, no partiality, no preference, completely even, completely equal, the same love, the same compassion, the same desire to help, with regard to all, no preferences. So the Bodhicitta "abiding in the heart of sameness, creates individual means of salvation": the Bodhicitta has essentially the same attitude towards all living beings, and having this same attitude simply tries to help all according to their need by devising the various skillful means of upaya. In other words, the Bodhicitta functions impersonally; he's no respecter of persons. Usually, when we use the word 'impersonal' we suggest something cold, indifferent to the person. But it is not like that here. The Bodhisattva is not, as it were, indifferent to persons, it sees each one clearly, distinctly, he sees all with the same attitude, the same love, same compassion, same concern, and he devises means to help, and these are called the upayas. He's not concerned with putting anything of his own across, he's not concerned with helping one more than another. The same attitude towards all. *Whom* he helps, of course, depends on actual circumstances. I mean, who is actually nearer, who is more accessible, who he is more qualified to help. But his essential attitude is one of even-mindedness. And, of course, in the ultimate sense, he sees all as void, sunyata, and equally void.

Mangala: It's like the fifth stage of the metta.

S: It is very much. And even in the Pali tradition, upeksa has a sort of double meaning. There's upeksa as tranquillity, or equanimity, in a sort of almost psychological sense, and there is upeksa almost as a synonym for Nirvana itself. You're troubled by absolutely nothing, and not troubled by anything conditioned, and when you are completely untroubled by anything conditioned, well, that is Nirvana, surely? Hm? So when upeksa occurs as the seventh and final member of the seven bodhyangas, the seven limbs of Enlightenment, then it is more or less synonymous with nirvana. So [466] this samata, samata/ana, comes very close to upeksa in that kind of sense.

Devamitra: Is this samata/ana, , is it one of a series that are usually listed?

S: Yes. It's one of the five nanas which are embodied in the Five Dhyani Buddhas. Each Buddha represents, as it were, or symbolizes, one particular nana. All right, straight on then.

Sudatta: "One who understands this heart becomes emancipated from the dualistic view of birth and death and performs such acts as are beneficial both to oneself and to others."

S: In other words, the Bodhicitta, when fully developed, functions spontaneously, or rather, the Bodhisattva, as his Bodhicitta develops, functions more and more spontaneously, he is not limited by the dualistic frameworks, not limited by the dualism of conditioned and unconditioned, birth and death, or self and other, he just *functions*. And his functioning is an expression of wisdom and compassion.

Sulocana: "Sthiramati .. [to end of paragraph] .. the state of Nirvana.

Nagabodhi: "Being a reflex of the Dharmakaya, the Bodhicitta .. is free from compulsive activities."

S: In other words, spontaneous.

Nagabodhi: "It has not beginning .. [to end of paragraph] .. its original purity is never lost."

S: You see, the Bodhicitta has what we may describe as varying degrees of manifestation. At first, on its first manifestation, within the psychophysical context, it is just a spark, just a germ, just a seed. But this spark or germ or seed grows, develops, becomes brighter and brighter, flowers more and more. And as the Bodhisattva himself develops, that is to say, as his Bodhicitta becomes more and more clearly manifest - or rather, as the Bodhicitta becomes more and more clearly manifest in him - that Bodhicitta becomes more and more like Enlightenment itself. So when you describe the Bodhicitta, if you are not careful, if you allow your enthusiasm, as it were, to carry you away, then you end up by describing Enlightenment itself - and quite naturally - because the Bodhicitta, fully developed, is Enlightenment.

We see this happening a bit here with Sthiramati and his explanation of the Bodhicitta. So if you start by describing the Bodhicitta, and you describe it fully, well then you end up describing the state of Enlightenment or Buddhahood itself, which may not be very helpful if you are just wanting to know what the Bodhicitta is like in its sort of initial [467] manifestation so that you can, as it were, recognize it if necessary and so on. Anyway, let's carry on and see what Sthiramati says.

Mamaki: "It may be likened unto .. sunlight .. passion and sin .. may sometimes darken the light, but the Citta itself forever remains free from these external impurities."

S: We have to be a bit careful, because if we are not careful, instead of thinking of the Bodhicitta as being, from our point of view, something which actually develops - that is our actual experience - we think of it more and more metaphysically and ontologically as something there, even there in us, which is sort of breaking through. And if we are not careful we end up thinking the Bodhicitta is there, fully developed, behind the clouds, as it were, behind the clouds, and we don't have to do very much about it; it's just there. So it is, perhaps, from a practical point of view, more helpful to speak in terms of developing the Bodhicitta rather than sort of imagining the Bodhicitta actually existing already there in us, behind the clouds of passion. This may be quite true from a higher point of view, but that higher point of view is not yet really ours, it's only something theoretical and conceptual as yet, and therefore doesn't provide us with a very satisfactory basis for our own real attitude and our own real spiritual life.

Mamaki: "It may again .. [to end of paragraph] .. above the reach of birth and death.

Ratnapani: "So long as it remains .. [to end of paragraph] .. intrinsic spiritual worth."

S: It is just a question of which is the most helpful language. You can say, I mean, of Buddhahood, just as you can say, apparently, of the Bodhicitta, that it's there, that you are Buddha, that you have the Bodhicitta, fully developed; the only thing is, it isn't showing itself, there's no sign of it whatever in your actual behaviour, activity, attitude, life, and so on. But that isn't really very helpful, to speak in that sort of way, but this is how the Mahayana does sort of end up speaking, and Suzuki sort of seizes hold of this and develops it in his own way; the Vedanta, too. But the really Buddhist attitude is to speak in terms of growth and development, not speak in terms of something being already there, in its complete total perfection, and that being even you, but you just not knowing anything about it, as it were. That isn't really very helpful. It's like someone saying that you are a multi-millionaire, and you've got millions of pounds, say, in a bank in Switzerland, but you can't touch it, you can't have access to it, and you can't even spend a penny of it, but it's yours! But, you say, if I can't use it, if I can't spend it, not even a penny of it, and I can't pass it on to anyone, in what sense is it mine? You'd much rather have a much smaller sum actually given to you which you can actually use! [laughter] [468]

So what is the use of it all? You're a Buddha, you know, you're a Bodhisattva, you've got that Bodhicitta there in all its glory; the only thing is, of course, you can't see it, you don't know that it's there(!) Of course, we know it's not manifesting. You are mean selfish, dirty, [drowned by laughter], slothful, ignorant, mean - but what does it matter?(!) I mean, you're a Buddha behind all that, yes?(!) Or your Bodhicitta is fully developed behind all that(!) Well, that isn't very helpful! It's much better to say, well, look! You aren't a very highly developed person, but sometimes there is a brighter side showing itself. Sometimes you are kind and helpful, you are able to concentrate, so these little germs and seed are there. Develop them, help them to grow, and then, if you persist, gradually, as time goes on, something really great and worthwhile will manifest. Even the Bodhicitta will manifest! And so on. That seems to be much more helpful, and that is much more the attitude and the language of the Hinayana and of still the Theravada. But this late Mahayanistic language, and Vedantic language, isn't really very helpful to us.

Nagabodhi: The myth of the Return Journey from the White Lotus Sutra is a blending of the two, isn't it?

S: That's right, yes, yes.

Lokamitra: Santideva doesn't say that it's there before, does he? He talk..

S: He doesn't, no. I mean he might just give a hint of it.

Lokamitra: He talks of realizing it and..

S: He does, very much so.

Lokamitra: And preparing for it.

S: He speaks of the Bodhi *carya*, the actual course, or the walking. But if you are not careful, you end .. and your whole spiritual life consists in a complacent acceptance of your own actual perfection, even though you can't perceive it. But you end up a bit inflated. And not doing anything. Not doing any practice. [pause] All right. On we go.

Devamitra: "Destroy at once .. [to end of paragraph] .. to things worthless.

Vajradaka: "However defined .. [to end of paragraph] .. is the Dharmakaya.

Lokamitra: "As far as the Bodhicitta .. [to end of paragraph] .. classification can be made.

Devaraja: "(1) .. [to end of paragraph] .. profanity." [469]

S: Suzuki uses the word profanity in a rather odd kind of way. Perhaps worldliness would be a better rendering of whatever the original term was.

Sona: "(2).

Mangala: "(3)."

S: This classification is quite clear: the ordinary worldly person, subjected to karma; the Bodhisattva, in whom the Bodhicitta is manifested; and then the Buddha, in whom the Bodhicitta is fully manifest, who has become completely Enlightened.

Well, I think we'll go straight on to "*The Awakening of the Bodhicitta*", which is probably the most practical part of the whole chapter for us, and possibly the most practical part of the whole book. "*Awakening of the Bodhicitta*".

Sudatta: "The Bodhicitta .. [to end of paragraph] .. circumstances permit.

Sulocana: "Now the question .. [to end of paragraph] .. its lethargic inactivity."

S: We may say that from the practical point of view, this is the most important question raised by the whole Mahayana. Everything depends upon this. So let us go into it.

Nagabodhi: "The Bodhicitta .. [to end of paragraph] .. the highest Enlightenment.

Mamaki: "To describe there .. [to end of paragraph] .. the noblest beings.

Ratnapani: "All the Buddhas, by .. [to end of paragraph] .. not attain it?

Devamitra: "All the Buddhas, erecting .. [to end of paragraph] .. emancipate yourselves.

Vajradaka: "All the Buddhas, the noblest .. [to end of paragraph] .. transmiration.

Lokamitra: "All the Buddhas, manifesting .. [to end of paragraph] .. noble examples."

S: You'll notice, as soon as it comes to a matter of practice, one speaks in terms of development and practice, and becomings and change, and one thinks even of Buddhas of the past as having made that effort, and succeeded in that effort. But I think that, anyway, even Vasubandhu doesn't bring out the meaning of this thinking of the Buddha really very clearly or fully. It's true that the Buddha acts as an example - yes, this is very correct - and that by reflecting that the Buddha aspired to Enlightenment in the past, or someone aspired and realized, therefore we can. Surely this is very helpful. But there is rather more to it than that. "By thinking of the Buddhas". So what does one really mean by thinking, thinking of the Buddhas? Leave aside this question of the example. [470]

Devaraja: Meditating, contemplating.

S: Meditating, contemplating.

Ratnapani: Or just reflecting.

S: Or just reflecting.

Lokamitra: Puja.

Mamaki: Being open to the ..

Sulocana: ..the possible.

Mamaki: ..the symbolic aspects of the Buddha.

S: Being open to the symbolic aspects, too. It's sort of sensitivity to the ideal represented by the Buddha, isn't it? I mean, in the Pali scriptures, there are instances of the people being tremendously inspired simply by seeing the Buddha, not hearing a word about Buddhism but they are just inspired by the presence, by the aura, if you like, of the Buddha himself.

Lokamitra: So puja would be an important part.

S: Ah! Exactly! This is what I was getting at! For what is puja? Puja is thinking about the Buddha! Yes? You see the point? You are occupying your mind, you are occupying yourself, with the thought of the Buddha, which is not just a cold intellectual thought. But the ideal of Buddhahood is occupying the forefront of your consciousness, and when you are doing the puja, well, yes, there is the Buddha, as it were, in front of you, either in the form of the image on the image table, or else very vividly present in your own

mind, sort of visualized or imagined, if you like. So this is one of the reasons why the puja is so important and the whole sort of devotional approach, and the making of offerings, giving flowers, arranging flowers and so on: you are thinking of the Buddha. So all these devotional exercises are forms of thinking of the Buddha. You are being inspired by the Buddha idea, you are opening yourself to the Buddha ideal, becoming more sensitive to the Buddha ideal. And this paves the way to, or for, the breaking through in you of that higher spiritual dimension which we refer to in that sort of broken-through form as the Bodhicitta.

Sona: And when it breaks through, you keep on performing the devotional side and it helps it develop?

S: Oh surely! Yes indeed! I mean, according to the Mahayana sutras, no one [471] sort of keeps up more offerings than the Bodhisattvas. The Bodhisattvas are always making offerings in the form of pujas and praising the Buddhas and so on and so forth. And some Bodhisattvas, we are told, have a vow that they'll worship all the Buddhas in the universe; they spend all their time - millions of years, as it were - going from one part of the universe to another worshipping all the Buddhas that exist. This is a typically Mahayana way of stressing the importance of devotion and worship, even for Bodhisattvas. Even if you are a Bodhisattva of the ninth bhumi, you should go around worshipping the Buddhas, who, of course, are even higher than that.

Devaraja: Prostrations would be very good, too.

S: Prostrations, too, yes. Everything of that sort. So thinking of the Buddhas also involves the whole devotional side of the spiritual life. It includes, we could say, thinking of the Bodhisattvas, thinking of the great teachers; it includes all of this, not just Buddhas technically. Not that you mustn't think about the Bodhisattvas; I mean, to a less developed Bodhisattva, a more highly developed Bodhisattva is a Buddha! To someone in whom the Bodhicitta hasn't even arisen, well, Bodhisattvas are like Buddhas, he can hardly tell the difference. So, thinking about the Buddhas.

Devamitra: Can I just ask you a general point about devotion? If you sort of extend the whole idea of devotional practice into practical things that you are doing, you know, I mean, for instance, if one is working for the Movement - is that in itself an expression of devotion? Is it part of the devotional practice?

S: Well, it certainly can be, because one can say, as it were, or feel, 'Well, I'm doing this, as it were, for the sake of the Buddha. I'm not doing it for my own sake.' So in that way it becomes something devotional. If, of course, you are doing it for the sake of other living beings, then you are doing it out of compassion. It's still an aspect of your spiritual practice, but not an aspect of devotion as such.

Devamitra: I quite often find, though, that I might be doing something, and I enjoy doing it, but I feel i@m just doing it for that really. And yet in a sense it is something which is helping the Movement.

[S:] Well you can say, well, whatever joy I experience in doing this, I dedicate to the Buddhas, yes? [pause] But it is clear that unless one has this devotional attitude and thinks about the Buddhas in this sense quite a lot, there's not much hope of the Bodhicitta arising, and therefore the devotional [472/473] element plays a very important part in the rise of the Bodhicitta.

Mamaki: The external forms seem very gross.

S: You mean external forms of devotion?

Mamaki: Yes, which I find a great pity.

S: Well, there is such a thing in Buddhism as what is called mental puja. You can sit and go through the puja as a meditation and visualize the offerings and so on and so forth. And this is certainly regarded as a higher level of practice, if one can do this, if one has the time and if one has the necessary power of concentration. You actually visualize the Buddha or the Bodhisattva or other object of devotion and make the offerings mentally, feel that you are offering, and even visualize the offering, just in the same way that you visualize the Buddha or Bodhisattva himself. This is not only perfectly acceptable; the mental puja is considered as being on an even higher level. That is why sometimes you find that yogis and lamas have a minimum of equipment, they just have a picture hanging on the wall, everything else they do mentally, whereas those who need something more concrete, or who enjoy something more concrete, they may have vases upon vases of flowers, and rows upon rows of puja bowls, and lots and lots of images and little flags, and streamers, and hangings, and curtains, and little golden knots, and things of that sort all over the place, but one can just as well do it, if one is able, purely mentally. In fact, mentally, you can do it on an even grander scale, because you can visualize a thousand lamps, and you can end up by offering the whole universe, which you could hardly do concretely, however devoted you may be. But it is very much of a feeling, and if you do it just mentally, or by way of visualization, you can be completely carried away by devotional feeling in a way that is hardly possible, you know, when your sense-consciousness..

[break in tape]

Sudatta: At meal-time graces, and for other little things that go on during the day, I think it [unclear] they carry this to the extreme and have a little toilet verse, and every little single thing you do has an appropriate little verse! But reading through some of these, I thought some of them were terribly naive and, you know, if one sat back, once could have produced something much better, or more appropriate. [474]

S: Well I just think there are different points of view on this. I think the main point is does one find these things actually helpful? Hmm? And then I think that's for people themselves to say. I mean we have been having longer pujas. I understand [that] on the or-

der retreat there was a seven-hour-long puja which people found very enjoyable and helpful. Yes?

Vajradaka: Yes.

S: Or not? I mean own up, frankly. If you don't like extended pujas, say so!

Ratnapani: I went to bed half way through.

S: Well you'd had enough. What about .. Were you there Mamaki?

Mamaki: No.

S: No? Just as well. [he laughs] You'd have gone away and had a good long think in the garden!

Mamaki: Not think exactly.

S: No, I mean Buddha-think!

Lokamitra: Yes. [laughs] I found it quite strange, but I found it *really* .. umm .. I couldn't leave, you know?

S: Ah! Couldn't tear yourself away?

Nagabodhi: I nearly did. I got up and went around and looked around the house and then went back in. I found it quite a strain, and I found my attention often wandered, but the effect it had on me was very deep and very worthwhile. It impressed itself on me on a very deep level, even though I wasn't giving myself totally to it.

Vajradaka: There were times ..

Nagabodhi: Oh there were certainly times! [laughs]

S: And how do people feel about little graces and things like that?

Devaraja: We used to do it on the Easter retreat. We used to have a little kind of meditation on the origin of the food, and all the sentient beings who die, help to bring this food into existence, and then we used to offer it to the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas and Mahasattvas on behalf of all beings.

S: Well, this is on retreats, which is obviously a special situation, but I take it you are thinking of more sort of everyday use? Yes. How do people feel about these sorts of things?

Ratnapani: I've done it on my own, and it had an effect. I think I ate more mindfully afterwards, but I didn't pursue it very long, and I think [475] it was very personal. And I find graces, as such, - it might just be an old school thing - en masse I find them cold and worthless usually.

S: It can become very much a formality. I remember last time I went and gave a lecture - or one of the last times - at Oxford, I was entertained to dinner in Hall, and suddenly - you know, there was the usual buzz of conversation - and suddenly someone rapped on the table, everyone sort of shot up to their feet, and he rapped out a couple of Latin lines, and everyone sat down and continued their conversation! [laughter] It seemed completely meaningless.

Sona: It seems as though you need to do it sort of rather formally at first, and then you can develop it personally. Maybe like on retreats, it may be an idea to do it on retreats, say it sort of formally, and then not ..

S: Of course, the Theravadins stress the important thing is to eat mindfully, and there's not much point in doing a little grace, or having a little grace, however sort of devoutly, if you at once plunge back into unmindful eating.

Sona: I found it was quite helpful doing graces, to be mindful about what I was doing. I didn't think of it as devotional.

S: Right. I think there are these two different aspects, perhaps, that one can consider: grace as a form of mindfulness, and grace as something devotional. I mean, in Christianity you do it as something devotional: you thank God for giving you the food, you don't do it to help you eat more mindfully, in the Buddhist sense.

Sona: I rather like the Quaker system of just being silent for a couple of moments before you eat.

Mamaki: Yes. One doesn't have to make it obvious to people what one is doing, and in this way it doesn't necessarily be something that one is being ostentatious about.

Devaraja: You believe that there's a possibility of it going the other way, you know, of people?.. I mean, after all, if one is feeling those devotional feelings, I mean, why not express them externally as well?

Mamaki: Because if people are feeling that way anyway, they will feel that way, but to express something externally may be imposing on somebody else's position, and to impose a form on somebody who isn't ready for it is [unclear].

S: He may not even want it at all! Because I would say if someone was feeling really devout about their food, they wouldn't need to say grace at all. The purpose of the grace is more to get you into that frame [476] of mind, but if you really felt thankful, you'd just be feeling thankful all the while that you were eating, and you'd be eating in such a way

that people present would feel somehow that you were being thankful, you wouldn't need to have a grace. But I mean, to say that, well, 'I'm feeling very thankful, therefore I'm going to express that by saying a grace, almost whether people like it or not,' you know? Well, you are not really being very concerned about human beings, you are almost imposing, you know, your forms on them.

Devaraja: No, it's just that what I'm trying to get at is that I sometimes think there is a fear of people sort of almost objectifying in the quite .. on the sensual level what they are feeling, and sometimes that the refusal or the inability to objectify on the sensual level is justified, and say well, 'My attitude is more skilful, more spiritual, it is more sort of subtle because I..' But it is really just an inability, an inhibition, and I mean, I notice this in the puja sometimes people are almost incapable of saying the words, almost incapable of making a dynamic statement.

S: Or a statement. Yes. But it is rather a different situation when one is, say, in this case, entirely with Buddhists, or entirely within a Buddhist situation, and you are performing a puja. But if, for instance, you are invited out to dinner, I think you should be a bit careful about reciting your graces, however, you know, devout you may be feeling and however thankful, because others may feel it simply as an imposition. I think it was more this that you meant, wasn't it? People who do not necessarily share your feelings and attitudes, wasn't it?

Mamaki: I think not only people outside, but where everyone is. I think it..

S: I do think it would make a difference if you were dining with fellow-Buddhists or dining with people who weren't in the least interested in Buddhism.

Mamaki: Oh yes, it would make a difference.

S: I think it would be rather surprising if a Buddhist couldn't accept your actually saying grace, even though they didn't want to, whereas one couldn't expect non-Buddhists to do that, in that kind of way.

Mamaki: I don't see why it seems necessary to say it outwardly. That's, I think, where I find..

S: But I think, in general terms, what Devaraja says is correct: that many people [477] sort of rationalize about this, and that if you do express externally, you enact it, or you say it, you not only express what you feel: you strengthen it and intensify it. And I think quite a lot of people feel a bit hesitant, or even very hesitant, about expressing, doing, saying, just because they are not sure about the feeling itself, or because, maybe, the feeling itself is very undeveloped, and that is what one must be careful of. If it is a case of what we were talking about before, the feeling is so strong or so refined, it wants to express itself purely spiritually and mentally, leaving behind the physical plane. Well that's fine, but we have to be very careful to distinguish between that sort of development, which is completely legitimate and positive, from someone's inability or inhibition to express.

Mamaki: Agreed. Yes, of course.

S: I think this is what Devaraja was getting at.

Devaraja: Mmm.

S: And that is quite common. You know, people who have reached a higher level, and are really ready to do it, say, mentally, are comparatively rare. But people who are a bit inhibited about expressing concretely, they are very common, even in the Buddhist movement.

Devaraja: And the people who express mentally probably spent years expressing verbally, anyway.

S: True. Yes. Yes. Yes. This is very true. One certainly finds this, you know, with Tibetan Buddhists. It's the hermit in his cave who's spent years and years there, who is likely to be doing the mental puja.

Ratnapani: I found with the prostrations that, to begin with, they were very gross, I was sort of throwing myself on the floor, but it had an effect [S. laughs] and eventually they were refined.

S: Well Tibetans absolutely fling themselves down! To begin with anyway.

Mamaki: Probably this is perhaps why, for instance, why a lot of Christians who've been to Quakerism a lot .. because it then becomes a .. the external form becomes less important.

Devaraja: One could equally..

Mamaki: Quite a lot of them, I think, Catholics and Jewish people, who go into Quakerism, having, well Anglo-Catholics, having had a lot of the ritual...

S: I think, personally - and I'm only speaking personally - I'm very suspicious about this, because when one says a lot of ritual what do you mean? [478] You usually mean half an hour on Sunday morning and half an hour on Sunday evening! It's not usually very much more than that!

Mamaki: Well it comes from homes, where people are kind of thing..

S: But it doesn't go on much at home. I personally feel, and again I'm only speaking personally, and generalizing from just a few people I've met, I would rather tend to say that people who go from Catholicism or Anglo-Catholicism into Quakerism have lost their faith in Catholicism, and even, in a sense, in Christianity, and Quakerism represents something sort of Christian but sort of acceptable at the same time. But it's ac-

ceptable to the extent that it isn't Christian, I feel, you know? And that what's really happened is that they've gone away from Christianity altogether..

Mamaki: Well I don't think they necessarily feel themselves being particularly Christian, anyway.

S: ..And to that extent, to some extent, away from spiritual life, hm?

Mamaki: Hmm, well..

S: This is a personal impression. I mean [of] some Quakers I've met.

Mamaki: Some, yes, but..

S: It all seems a bit attenuated and watered down. And that the watered down version is about as much as you can stomach, hmm? Anyway, these are purely personal impressions and therefore quite selective, I don't want to generalize too much from them. But I must say, frankly, my suspicions are awoken by instances of this kind.

Lokamitra: Doesn't one have to be ready from inside to be able to do something externally? Like we are talking in terms of the Path of Regular steps, and devotional things coming later on now, or perhaps not quite (or right?) at the beginning.

S: The traditional Path of Regular Steps is: devotion comes right at the beginning! It's the first thing you start with. Yes? And therefore you say that even wretched Buddhists who can't observe the precepts, who are getting drunk, you know, every week, and fornicating all over the place, at least they keep up their puja. At least they can do that. At least they can manage to make offerings. At least they can put flowers (on the Buddha?). That's the traditional approach. I mean, for us, in the West - in the benighted West - puja comes a long way on, because of our psychological limitations and inhibitions.

Lokamitra: This is what I was meaning referring to Mamaki's point, that perhaps people have been conditioned and brought up in the Roman Catholic Church, but [479] suddenly realize, you know, they've never accepted this ritual, maybe they haven't done ..

S: Yes, perhaps they realize they've never really done it.

Lokamitra: And they suddenly realize it doesn't mean anything to them, so it is a positive step to ..

S: Yes. That's right. Well, this is perfectly true, because they are then being more honest. But sooner or later they have got to come back to it. And that would mean leaving the Quakers, because the Quakers don't have any ritual.

Devaraja: But it must be an honest acceptance of the inability to do it, rather than a kind of a justification, saying, 'Oh, well, I'm really doing it mentally.'

S: 'No, I've gone beyond it! Ritual isn't necessary, and the Quakers represent a higher level of development.' They don't necessarily.

Lokamitra: Well, on one level they have gone beyond the conditioned reaction, the conditioned behaviour or reaction, to that ritual before. They've realized that ..

S: Well, they may or they may not, you know. You couldn't really say without being confronted by actual persons. Some Quakers, I'm sure, merely continue to react against ritual, like some Protestants, some Puritans, they are just reacting against ritual, without ever having really understood ritual, or ever having really become involved with it. And if, in the case of a, say, particular Catholic who has become a Quaker, it's because he recognizes that 'I'm not getting anything out of ritual. It doesn't really mean anything to me. Let me try and do things some other way.' Well surely that's a step forward because he is being honest, and recognizing where he actually stands, but if he puts it in the terms of, 'Well, I've transcended the ritual, that is only for the low and ignorant and undeveloped. I've now got onto something higher,' well that would be rather unfortunate.

Mamaki: I think it's a necessary - well, perhaps not necessary, but - it can be a step from having been involved in ritual for emotional or aesthetic reasons.

S: Yes, there is a lot of that, of course.

Mamaki: And to get beyond that, I think one has to do away with those - so to speak - props.

S: Yes, there is, of course, as you say, a sort of, well, sensuous, aesthetic involvement with ritual as spectacle without much spiritual sensitivity.

Devamitra: How could you actually tell? [480]

S: You know, like in Browning's poem, about the Bishop orders his tomb when he speaks of 'good strong thick stupefying incense-smoke', and he imagines sort of lying there in his tomb and breathing it in all day and all night! [Robert Browning, 'The Bishop Orders His Tomb', 1.80., tr.]

Mamaki: And just thinks it would be surely space and colour and light and sound, bells and things.

Devamitra: I must say that in my own case I am aware that I appreciate the aesthetic side of puja and I just wonder how one can as it were learn to see whether one was having a genuinely spiritual experience or just, you know, enjoying a rather nice aesthetic little ritual?

S: I think if one is sincere and receptive and sensitive, you can't do that, you know it's the Buddha. You see it's all being offered to the Buddha. However sort of germinal or obscured that awareness is, it's there. It's all for the sake of the Buddha. And if you feel that you are subject to that sort of temptation or that sort of danger, well, just think more about the Buddha, and that this is all worship of the Buddha.

Ratnapani: I think one can feel the difference in quality quite clearly. I've found that the 'better', as it were, the flower arrangements on the shrine, the richer and the more aesthetically pleasing, the higher the feeling, they just go together. I just don't differentiate.

S: That doesn't mean, of course, the more abundant the offerings, necessarily. If they show care, which means devotion, someone has obviously cared to do them.

Vajradaka: Something quite interesting has been happening in Glasgow, with a Quaker who has been coming to the Centre for quite a long time. He came to the meditation class and he comes every day to the Centre during his lunch hour and he meditates. And in the past he has always been very wary about emotions and puja, and if there wasn't any Order member at any meeting - like if Gotami was away - he would always run them down. But just recently, as a result of his meditation, his energy has been bubbling up within him, and he has been feeling these emotional feelings, and a couple of weeks ago he came up to me quite excited and he said, 'Do you know, I sat down in the meditation today, and the Tara mantra came up!' And I said, 'Oh, yes.' And he said, 'And it wouldn't go away!' [laughter] And I said, 'Well, what did you do?' And he said, 'Well I just sort of had to sit there with it.' And he said, 'I could feel this amazing feeling of love and warmth and feeling coming up, and my body began to shake, and I got frightened, but I rode with it and stayed with it.' And it was like he had got to this point where [481] all the time he's been with the Friends, for the last years, - he's living in a Quaker community, he's very involved in Quaker activity, he's not a Buddhist - he says. But here he is coming along probably more than anybody else, with the exception of one or two other people, and sort of experiencing very sort of Buddhistic emotional, devotional feeling.

Mamaki: One of the difficulties that I always come to with the Quaker meeting was that because people minister, it upsets the silence, and it very often brings in something purely false. Some people who are ministering are sometimes doing something purely from a head level, and are sometimes doing something purely - well, it feels purely - from a psychological level, and I think this is where the Buddhist finds meditation - well, I find it - infinitely preferable. It's very hard sometimes to get to any depth in a Quaker meeting where a lot of people are ministering.

S: By ministering you mean they..

Mamaki: Start speaking.

S: Start speaking, yes.

Nagabodhi: Yes, it's very often, I think, an amazingly low level, what people say.

Mamaki: Yeah, yeah.

Nagabodhi: You know, [they] get up and talk about a radio programme they heard the other day, and..

Mamaki: That's right, yes.

S: Oh, I had no idea of this!

Nagabodhi: Well, people can say anything! Sometimes it can be a very nice human situation, that .. I don't think I've ever witnessed, even into the very intimate meeting, a genuinely spiritual situation emerge, and I've been to quite a lot of meetings.

Mamaki: Mmm.

S: Oh, I'm quite surprised!

Nagabodhi: Something also I noticed. I went to a Quaker school, [Leighton Park School, Reading, tr.] and I'd often seen Quaker parents arriving, and at Quaker meetings see Quakers, and I was very struck by Quakers: a quality they had on their faces, especially the women, which, you know, I found a very admirable quality that seemed to be shining through. But on reflection, I see it as a very passive form of spirituality, it seems to be precisely lacking in this assertion that maybe ritual.. I'm not saying against your point about silence being preferable to woolly-minded talking, [482] the element that ritual brings, asserting and hearing the effect of your feelings on the world, which adds a dimension which I very rarely actually saw or felt in Quakerism.

Mangala: I've never actually been to any [Quaker] Meetings, but just the impressions I've gathered is that I feel ... they are a bit sort of inhibited or afraid, even, to really come out front, like they hold themselves back a bit.

Mamaki: Well, they do do this in Meetings. They do come out. I mean, they will stand up in perhaps a Meeting of anything from 13 to 60 people, which takes some doing to stand up and speak, so to speak, from one's depth.

Mangala: And no doubt the body, actually, (can't?) in relation to the rest of the environment, the world, even.

Lokamitra: From the mundane point of view, they are very successful people, I give them that. [pause] Which, I think, must be some kind of reflection, or could be.

Vajradaka: A reflection of what?

Lokamitra: An attitude to - maybe not a spiritual attitude, but an attitude to life. [laughter]

S: Lloyds Bank was started by Quakers, wasn't it?

Devaraja: A lot of big companies: Cadburys, Rowntrees..

Mamaki: It does a lot of social reform.

S: Well this is true, sure, Elizabeth Fry and the prisons..

Mamaki: And Tuke and the mental clinic. [William Tuke, founder of the York Retreat, which opened in 1796, tr.]

S: Anyway, have we talked enough about "Thinking of the Buddhas"? Is the importance of this clear?

Devaraja: I think so.

S: And also the fact that it is a factor in the development of the Bodhicitta?

Vajradaka: Mm. Just one thing I want to clear up - something that you said a couple of days ago - about the shrine not being an object of worship, but a symbol.

S: The shrine?

Vajradaka: The shrine, yes, with the Buddha on it.

S: Mm? No, I don't remember saying that! I thought I said something about the altar. [that] it wasn't an altar, hm? It was an image table, hm? An altar, [483] strictly speaking, is a place, or an object, where sacrifice takes place. Originally, of course, an animal would be slaughtered, or even a human being would be slaughtered, and then, after that, fruits and flowers would be offered, or burned. Yes? So, of course, in Christianity you quite properly get the altar, because Christ is regarded as a sacrifice, and the Mass is referred to as the sacrifice of the Mass: it is Christ the innocent victim being offered up to God as an atonement for the sins of humanity. So this is all sacrifice, so 'altar' is appropriate. But in Buddhism, there's no sacrifice and therefore there shouldn't be an altar. The object of devotion is the Buddha image and, purely for purpose of convenience, it is placed on a table, on a pedestal, on a stand; it's not an altar, yes? So, sometimes we do speak of the altar, and I myself have done this, but strictly speaking it's the image table.

Mamaki: I think it might be better if we kept to that term, image table.

Ratnapani: What about 'shrine'? What connotations does that have?

S: Well, 'shrine', as I understand it, 'shrine' means simply the place, the room, or even the building, in which the image is installed on its table, or on its flight of steps or whatever.

Ratnapani: Could we come to use that as being the table?

Nagabodhi: Yes, because we talk of the shrine-room rather than the shrine.

S: Or you could even say the shrine table. This would be quite correct. But I think we should avoid the expression 'altar' just as I think we should avoid the expression 'priest', a priest is one who officiates at a sacrifice, and a Catholic priest officiates at the sacrifice of the Mass.

Sulocana: Is shrine a similar word to stupa?

S: 'Stupa' is sometimes translated as 'shrine', but I don't think that is very accurate, really. You've got, of course, the relics of the Buddha which are, we could say, 'enshrined' in, or contained in, simply, the stupas, and they become the focus of devotion. So here the object of devotion and the building that it occupies are, as it were, conterminous. You haven't got a particular object of devotion within a building, the building is the object of devotion, the object of devotion is the building, i.e., the stupa.

Mamaki: Do you think though, it would be useful to have the Indian terms for this rather than terms that one tends to slide into? Like 'shrine' which has so many other connotations. [484]

S: Well, 'shrine' is not too bad, though one does hear of Catholic shrines, (and grottos).

Lokamitra: I don't think I've ever heard the word 'altar' used at the Centre. So I don't think there's any danger ..

S: I have.

Lokamitra: Have you?

S: Yes, oh yes.

Lokamitra: By whom?

S: By lots of people: 'flowers on the altar..'

Devamitra: Never been a mention at the Centre recently of that. Anyway, I think it .. [several people talking together]

S: Well that's quite good. [laughter]

Sulocana: Christians tend to talk of it, if they see one, as the altar.

Ratnapani: And somebody at the Centre nowadays is likely to say, 'the what?', and use the word 'shrine' then, which I think is preferable.

S: How do you refer to the table then?

Ratnapani: We talk about that as the shrine, in the shrine room.

Lokamitra: Or the table and the shrine.

S: Well that's all right then.

Devamitra: The whole place is a shrine.

S: Yes, right.

Lokamitra: Even the typewriter? [laughter]

Devamitra: I meant upstairs actually.

Devaraja: Also I suppose 'officiant' would be a good word rather than a 'priest'. 'Officiant' would be quite a good word to use. It would be easy for people to understand without..

S: I prefer just the 'leader', someone who leads. 'Officiates' sounds so very official!

Devamitra: What about the 'guide'? [laughter] [485]

S: No, that doesn't seem quite appropriate at all, does it? To guide the puja? No. You lead the puja. You are doing it yourself and others are following. Yes? I don't think you could speak of guiding the puja. That suggests that you are standing outside it and directing it from without.

Lokamitra: Do we need a word to begin? I don't think the question ..

S: To take? I mean, to have a very neutral word: 'Will you take the puja?'

Ratnapani: Well that's what we do use, and we use the word leader as well.

Lokamitra: 'Lead' and 'take'..

S: I think 'lead' is all right, especially if it isn't always one and the same person. Anybody can lead, so you can't get the idea of a Leader with a capital L springing up. Well on we go then: number 2.

Devaraja: "(p.304) (2) *The faults of material existence.*"

S: I think this should really be "The faults of conditioned existence," not material as opposed to mental, but conditioned in the sense of phenomenal, non-Nirvanic, not ultimately real.

Devaraja: "This our bodily existence .. [to end of paragraph] .. through the six gatis."

S: This seems to me to be a bit one-sided, though alright as far as it goes. The heading says "The faults of material" - i.e., conditioned - "existence", but what I would say that this represents, this particular factor, is that one should become less attached to conditioned existence, including, in particular, one's own physical body, and that only when one becomes less attached - and one becomes less attached when one sees the imperfection of conditioned existence - can the Bodhicitta arise. This really means a sort of sensitiveness, in a way, to dukkha, I suppose: that you begin to really see as well as to feel that conditioned existence, bodily existence, can't give you all that you really want, all that you really need, can't by its very nature give you what you really need, i.e., Enlightenment, and you begin really to see that. It's not just a sort of revulsion against conditioned existence in a psychological sort of way, but you've had a certain amount of experience of life, you've had a certain amount of enjoyment, a certain amount of pleasure, a certain amount of success, but you see quite clearly and quite soberly that if it's Enlightenment that you want, well, you're not going to find it just from material things or worldly things or conditioned things, they can't give you any real, true, lasting satisfaction, and you see that quite clearly. So you begin to detach, you sit a bit loose to them all. [486] I think this is what is meant, rather, by "see the faults of conditioned existence". You are no longer so blinded, so fascinated, or so infatuated as you were before.

Mangala: There's all the limitations to it as well.

S: You see the limitations, yes, because you've experienced them, you've come up against them, so now you see them. Maybe before, you didn't see them, so you went blindly on, head on, you know: crash! Then you see the limitations because you've experienced them, you've picked yourself up and you see more clearly in future. I think this is what is meant here.

Vajradaka: From this passage it's easy to see how some people got into the way of thinking - some Christians, you know, theologians - about the idea that Buddhists destroy their will to live, or destroy themselves.

S: Hmm, yes.

Nagabodhi: It has to be counter-weighted with the idea of the good fortune that you've had in being born into the world ..

S: Right, yes! That you are a human being, you have a human body. Right. Of course, also, as regards Christian theologians, there are far more extreme passages than this in Christian theological literature. Some of the Church Fathers really went to town about

the body and the world and the flesh, [for] page after page after page! I mean, Buddhists are very moderate in comparison.

Mamaki: It's a sin to be alive anyway, isn't it?

S: Right!

Lokamitra: But it's like a lot of these things; the practices designed to counter them are very positive things.

S: Yes indeed.

Lokamitra: Like metta.

S: Or upeksa. Yes, right. So you just see, quite objectively, quite coolly, if you like, that conditioned existence, ordinary worldly life, though it gives you a certain amount of pleasure and a certain amount of gratification, sure, but it's not completely satisfying, that you still need something more, and that something more is represented by the spiritual, the transcendental dimension, or Buddhahood, Enlightenment, call it what you will. And if you want true and lasting peace and happiness, and genuine satisfaction, and real development, then you have to go in *that* direction. But this isn't just a sort of highly reactive, essentially psychological, disparagement of material [487] and physical things. But any sort of general reflections upon that? Well I suppose in practical terms it means you are just not so keen any more on having a colour television or running a car. It doesn't seem as important as it used to. You reckon: yes, they are quite useful things to have around and get a certain amount of satisfaction and pleasure from, but so what? You are not all that interested, you know, you want something better than that, something more than that, something really satisfying.

Ratnapani: In the same way, one can look through one's life until you come up against a lump. You know, you've drifted through car and colour telly, but there's a lump there which you haven't detached from, and you can work on that one next.

Mamaki: The relationship.

S: The relationship, yes. You've gone through so many personal relationships, and in a way they were quite happy, quite satisfying, but usually it seems that they are not, actually, judging from what I hear! [laughter] But you think, well, there's something more, they don't really give you all that much, when you look back on them. They're alright as far as they went, but they didn't go all that far, and there were so many of them, from one to the other, and each one was *the* one [laughs]. And even after ten or fifteen years, maybe, you are still thinking of the latest one a *the* one, but then you gradually wake up to the fact, or eventually wake up to the fact, that there's no *the* one, or *the* whatever it is. You've got to look, you know, in a quite different direction.

Devamitra: What he's getting at is the process .. of genuine, real, disillusionment.

S: Yes, in a very positive way, not a sour, negative, cynical way: that's very undesirable.

Ratnapani: I think what this statement here is perhaps more real at a higher level, in fact, when from the outside one looks down on the faults of the body and all the rest of it, and for us it's not very much help.

Mamaki: Do you think that the trap that the Christian - maybe not so much now but the Christian side got into - was in seeing that it's not the highest, to than decry it ..

S: Degrade it.

Mamaki: Degrade it, yes, and reject it.

S: It wasn't of God; it was of the Devil.

Mamaki: And therefore to be got rid of in some way. [488]

S: Right, yes, or trampled upon.

Devaraja: There's a very popular statuette of the Virgin Mary with her standing on a snake, and she's trampling on it. Well I don't know if she's trampling on it, but it looks as though she's trampling it into the dust.

S: Maybe sometimes you feel like the snake.

Mamaki: [unclear] [laughter]

Devaraja: What do you mean by that? [laughter] You ought to be a little less cryptic.

S: [unclear] and the Virgin said no, as it were. [laughter]

Ratnapani: Boo-hoo. [laughter]

Devaraja: I think I'm acquiring an inaccurate and unfair image. [laughter]

S: I thought you were going to say you were acquiring an accurate assessment of virgins! [laughter]

Lokamitra: Oh!

Ratnapani: You're just jealous.

S: Anyway, on to (3). (3) 1st para.

Sona: "(3) (first paragraph)

Mangala: "(second paragraph) (p 306)"

S: So what this really means is that the Bodhicitta starts arising when one sees what a mess people are really in. And you can't really see that at all until you are a little bit out of the mess yourself, because until then you are also one of these miserable sentient beings and in a mess, but once you have started getting out of the mess yourself, well, you really do see what a mess most people are in, most of the time, and what a miserable time they do have of it, very often, and, you know, what this particular passage says is really true. "They are needlessly haunted by the fear of birth and death and old age." You can really see this, you know certain people who are afraid of growing old or who are afraid of death, and "do not seek the path of emancipation", but at the same time they do absolutely nothing about it. "Mortified with grief, anxiety," Well, how many people are anxious? Nearly everybody is anxious, to some extent. "Tribulations, they do not refrain from committing further foul deeds. Clinging to their beloved ones and being always afraid of separation, they do not understand that there is no individual reality." Well, these are things that we feel almost every day! And it is on this account that people are in a mess. There's no sort of spiritual object to their lives, no [489] spiritual orientation, no real clarity: there's reactivity, conditionality.

The great danger here is that we, from our sort of relatively superior position, start looking down on others and pitying them in a sort of superior way, and this is really the sort of elitism that people can with validity object to. And this is really quite wrong. 'Oh, you sort of poor people, never heard of Buddhism', sort of thing. That's quite undesirable. But apart from that, if you do look at people, the majority of people, they are in a state, they do need the Dharma! One can see that very clearly. And when one sees that, when one sees what a pitiful condition they are in, much of the time, so many of them, then a certain sort of compassion develops and a wish to help, and that is a factor in the arising of the Bodhicitta. You want *really* to help, you know, not just alleviate, not just palliate, but really to help, in a very radical fashion, and that can only be by spiritual means, by enabling people to see, or helping people to see, that there's some spiritual dimension, higher, some spiritual purpose in their lives.

Mamaki: I agree with what Jung says about people lacking in spiritual dimensions and some (of these occur?), that those with the most intractable problems are ones who have no religious beliefs and they are not really open to the possibility (of anything beyond them?) It's not part of my job to help their spiritual life, but it really does seem to be the cause of a perpetual problem.

S: You just see that if the spiritual factor isn't there, it's almost as though the situation is hopeless, and you just see that hopelessness, and they're going round and round in circles. [pause] And if you, say, well, I'm going to be greedy, I'm going to be selfish, I'm going to do exactly what I want, I'm going to make demands on others, I'm not going to do anything for them - but I want to be happy! And why am I not happy? Why can't I be happy? It's not fair! But I don't want anything to do with religion!

Mamaki: Yes, yes, yes!

[Change of tape transcriber. The new transcriber doesn't recognize all the participants' voices.]

S: I encountered a terrible example of this sort of thing. A friend of mine of whom some of you might have heard - Terry Delamare - committed suicide, and his parents came to see me afterwards, and his mother's attitude was absolutely extraordinary! She didn't seem in the least affected by her son's death except to the extent that it affected her! And it was absolutely extraordinary! I would not have believed it, that a mother could be like that: so completely and utterly selfish. Why should he do this to us? What will the neighbours say? What are we going to tell our relations etc. etc. All this and nothing but this. Not a word of regret for the state of mind that *he* found himself in so that he had to commit suicide. Not a word, not a murmur. Entirely herself and completely unsympathetic to his interest in philosophy and Buddhism. And in the end she said, well it's all that philosophy that did it, that spoiled him, he was alright before that. Which of course was rubbish. This is what I thought. I began to understand why he committed suicide! It was really terrible. And she even went as far as to say that he could have spent the weekend with his dad helping in the greenhouse; what more does he want than that?

I thought this was really terrible, completely selfish and completely closed to anything almost human not to speak of spiritual. She felt she had a genuine grievance that he'd committed suicide and what were they going to tell the neighbours and what would the neighbours say if they heard. This was the main consideration. Then the question arose about him having a Buddhist cremation. He'd left instructions addressed to his parents that this is what he wanted. She wouldn't even consider it. She said 'I want him buried in the church near us so I can go and put flowers there every week'. There seemed to be no consideration of him whatever, and it seemed extraordinary. The father, I must say, was rather better, but the mother - I would not have thought a mother could have been like that, I really wouldn't, but she was.

So this is a good example of spiritual blindness of human beings. And she was miserable and depressed and neurotic. She was very, very depressed, and her son apparently picked up the depression from her. A very depressed person. I'd met her before once or twice - always moaning and grumbling and complaining. But anyway this is the condition of many people.

So the Bodhisattva or would-be Bodhisattva just has to consider this and think, well there's only one remedy to all that and that's a spiritual remedy, and it's not much use my trying to help unless I'm a spiritual person, a spiritual being. So this is a factor in the arising, in the development, of the Bodhicitta. The remedy is radical not palliative, it's spiritual not mundane, or even it's transcendental, not even spiritual. And you can't help in that sort of transcendental way unless you are a transcendental being, a Bodhisattva. Otherwise better leave well alone. You might only compound the confusion - get involved yourself, become a party to it all. Even when one considers within the Movement, even within the Order, there's so much of this sort of thing going on just as Sthi-

ramati describes it. This is going on in so many quarters, and people, even Order members, still continue to suffer. And one sees this, and the only remedy is a purely spiritual one. Let's go on to the fourth and last.

Sudatta: "The virtues of the Tathagata .. an account of ignorance." [491]

S: This is a sort of contemplation of the greatness of the Buddhas. It's somewhat akin to number one, though in number one you're thinking more in terms of, as it were, potentiality: what they have attained, you can attain. So you have to consider to some extent *what* they have attained to inspire yourself to attain it. But here you're simply, as it were, lost in admiration of the noble qualities of the Buddhas. You're fully absorbed in that contemplation. And here again, of course, puja is relevant, devotion is relevant. Here you're almost absorbed in the contemplation of the Buddhas for their own sake, not even thinking in terms of your realization of that state, not consciously anyway.

Devaraja: I suppose you'd say the first one was more the devotional aspect and perhaps this fourth one involves things like visualization.

S: Yes, more symbolical, as it were. The Buddha becomes the symbol of the absolute.

Sulocana: "In short .. weighing upon it."

S: Just a minute... One could say that number one perhaps develops self-confidence in the spiritual sense - what the Buddhas have attained / can attain. And one can say that number two develops understanding - detachment. Then number three develops compassion, and number four develops devotion in the highest possible sense.

Devamitra: Number three?

S: Compassion. Number four was devotion in its highest possible sense.

A voice: One and two?

S: One was self-confidence. Number two is understanding and detachment.

Devamitra: Are there any other formulations for the preparation for the arising of the Bodhicitta other than the sevenfold puja? [unclear]

S: I don't remember any. These seem to be the major ones.

Sulocana: "When this unification .. eccentric practices."

S: It's interesting the way he puts side by side suicide or asceticism. This is very true I think, actually. All these things are very much akin. [492] Asceticism of course in the repressive self-torturing sense.

Sulocana: "But if .. Bodhisattva."

S: It also occurs to me that, in a way, these four factors are aspects or four out of five of the spiritual faculties. The first is more like virya: you think as the Buddhas of the past attained; *so can I*. This stirs up your virya. Then when you see the faults of material existence and you become detached from them this is more like samadhi which is the counterpart or the opposite, in a sense, of virya. Then you see the miserable conditions of sentient beings, this doesn't quite work out, that's compassion. But the last one is sraddha. Just a minute ... wisdom ... the faults of material existence: that could be wisdom, couldn't it?

A voice: The first one could be that.

S: What about the (third?) one. That doesn't quite work out. The last one works out very well - that's sraddha. And prajña seems to work out and virya works out. (It's) the miserable condition of sentient beings. That ought to correspond to samadhi but it doesn't quite. [laughter] So I don't think we can quite say it.

Devamitra: Is the teaching of the five spiritual faculties a Mahayana teaching specifically?

S: Oh no, not at all. It occupies a very prominent place in the Hinayana. In the Pali texts, anyway, it comes again and again. There is a little booklet published by (Nyanaponika) in the Buddhist Publications Society series which translates a lot of texts dealing with the five spiritual faculties from the Pali Canon.

Devamitra: So it's a very very basic teaching?

S: It's very basic. Conze in his *Buddhist Texts Through the Ages* treats the formulation of the three refuges, the formulation of the five spiritual faculties, as the two basic formulations for early Buddhism - as important as that. Anyway to conclude this section one can see quite clearly the sort of exercises, the sort of attitudes, that are necessary if the Bodhicitta is to arise at all. One must develop one's own self-confidence. Realizing that what has been achieved by other human beings in the past i.e. the Buddhas, can be achieved by oneself because one is also a human being, and then one sees quite clearly the imperfections and basically unsatisfactory [493] nature of one's ordinary worldly life. One also sees what a mess other people are in and that one can only help them by means of something genuinely spiritual in the sense of transcendental, and then you're absolutely fascinated by the idea of Buddhahood anyway.

I remember an instance which was quite extraordinary. I think I mentioned this before. When I was in Calcutta at the Maha Bodhi Society a Muslim turned up. In India, Muslims will never enter Hindu or Buddhist places of worship or anything like that. There's very strong feeling between Hindus and Muslims. And this particular Muslim had a very strange story to tell. He came from Assam, quite a few hundred miles to the east, and he said on many many occasions recently that repeatedly he kept seeing the Buddha.

And at first he hadn't known who it was. He knew nothing about the Buddha, he hadn't even heard of him, but he kept seeing the Buddha, had a sort of vision of the Buddha. He wasn't meditating or doing any sort of spiritual practice; he was just an ordinary Muslim. He kept on seeing this vision of the Buddha. So in the end he started describing to his friends, the people he knew, and they said that's the Buddha you're seeing, because he saw this figure with a yellow robe and so on and so forth exactly as he's shown in Buddhist art. And eventually he found his way to the Maha Bodhi Society in Calcutta. And in the end he became a Buddhist, which is absolutely extraordinary, for a Muslim to become a Buddhist. They're so fanatical they never get converted to anything else. And other Muslims were after him when they got wind of this and he had to be smuggled away and hidden away from Calcutta. They wanted to murder him even, being so fanatical about this change of religion!

Muslims regard any change of religion on the part of an individual Muslim as an insult to the whole Muslim community, and that insult has to be avenged, and they were after his blood. But anyway we kept him out of the way outside Calcutta for some years and he became a Buddhist. He changed his name. It's really extraordinary. He was drawn simply by that, and we weren't able to explain it except that, well, maybe this is what Suzuki would call the activity of the Dharmakaya. In that case, why the Dharmakaya doesn't appear to all Muslims I just don't know. But it's very strange. There are possible interpretations. You could say, well, maybe he'd been a Buddhist in a previous life. Maybe he has, perhaps, as a child, seen a picture of the Buddha in a school book. This is not impossible. And that that image was there and subsequently for one reason or another was activated. There are all sorts of possible explanations. So this is what happened: this was seen, this vision of the Buddha, this image of the Buddha.

Devamitra: Did he become a bhikkhu?

S: No, he didn't become a bhikkhu, or hadn't when I last heard of him. Just [496] a lay Buddhist. He was an ordinary sort of Muslim, not very educated, and didn't understand it at all. He was rather bewildered by it all. He felt as though he'd been driven by something.

Nagabodhi: "The Bodhisattva's Pranidhana ... ever effective."

S: It's almost as though in the same way that the will is transformed into Bodhicitta, karma is transformed into pranidhana. Anyway we'll go a bit more into it at the end of the paragraph.

Mamaki: "All that is needed .. its end."

S: I think we'd better try and look at it, as it were, more directly. The Bodhicitta arises, the Bodhisattva therefore as Bodhisattva is born and then he makes pranidhanas, he makes vows. So one can look at the vow, I think, from two points of view, or rather two aspects. To one extent or from one point of view the vow is an *expression* of the Bodhicitta. It's the Bodhicitta, the partially arisen Bodhicitta, functioning within a particu-

lar framework expressing itself in a specific manner or taking a particular direction according to the needs of sentient beings. Also one can say, in a sense, analogously, that the pranidhana, the vow, has a sort of disciplinary function, at least at first. The Bodhicitta is only partially manifested. It is weak. It needs support. So that in the same way that when, say, one's moral practice is weak, one tries to observe the precepts, one takes the precepts - or one vows to observe the precepts - just to discipline oneself and to give oneself a sort of support. In much the same way, when the Bodhicitta is still weak and relatively embryonic, the pranidhanas give it a definite support, something to hold on to, something to go by, definite lines to pursue. So I think there are these two aspects of the vow or the pranidhana - as expressive of the Bodhicitta in a particular manner and as supportive of the further development of the Bodhicitta.

Devamitra: Do you think there's any point in us taking any specific kind of vows? I mean not necessarily the Bodhisattva vows, but we don't have any vows as such.

S: Well in a sense you do. There's the ten precepts..

Devamitra: They are precepts and there's a distinction between a vow and a precept.

S: Well when you say vow, which Sanskrit word are you referring to? [495] Pranidhana pertains to the Bodhicitta, the Bodhisattva. Precept is our translation. What you actually say in Pali, for instance: panatipata veramani sikkhapadam samadiyami. Samadiyami, I undertake, I will exert myself. It becomes like a vow, doesn't it? We do sometimes refer to the upasaka 'vows', don't we? So it's an undertaking, you promise yourself primarily to stiffen your own resolve, and so on. So one certainly can look upon the ten precepts as vows. But there's no reason that you shouldn't supplement them or make them more specific privately. For instance there has been fairly recently, and not so recently, this question of people taking, from time to time, vows of celibacy: that for a certain period, maybe a year or maybe a month, they would observe celibacy as a more specific form of the third precept. This would be a vow, that for the coming year I shall completely abstain from meat, or for the rest of my life I will completely abstain from meat. And there can be all sorts of minor ones, very minor ones. From today I will give up tea and coffee for a month, and so on. These are all vows and they certainly have a good value. It's not a question of strengthening the will but more of reducing attachment and not allowing oneself to get into a rut with any particular indulgence or any particular thing that one does. Or you can make positive vows. That as from tomorrow every day I will give something to somebody. This is quite a popular vow in some parts of the East. I will give something in charity every day, either food or money or clothing to someone. Or you can make a vow that every day for a month I will read through a certain text once, however long it takes me. I will read it every day for a month. Again, another vow. Or again vows with regard to food. That for the rest of this month I shall not eat food after twelve o'clock midday or I shall not take an evening meal, and so on. These are all vows and they're certainly very valuable, very supportive, but I personally suggest people take them, to begin with, for limited periods, because if you make a vow and then you don't keep it, this has a very demoralizing effect. It's much better to have it for a short period and *really* keep it, and then consider again or extend it for another short period.

Devamitra: The reason why I made the distinction: I felt the impression that a vow is something made for definite and in a sense rigid, that is definitely going to be the course of action or non-action as the case may be, that you are going to stick to come what may. Whereas there does seem to be a much more fluid and flexible attitude generally taken to the precepts. Whether this means they're not taken seriously enough I don't know.

S: I think that it means that they're not taken seriously enough. I think people take them for granted. And here again you come back to the distinction [496] of the path of irregular steps. If you're all into tantric this and tantric that, and Zen anecdotes, and samadhis, and satoris, and the latest book in Madhyamika philosophy, you're not really considering each day, well, 'am I observing the precepts?' 'How sincere am I in going for Refuge?' And these are the foundation of the whole thing.

Devamitra: It's very difficult though to be able to see the precepts in a way that ... at least, my tendency is either to be too flexible or too rigid. I get lost, I get confused about all this. Such as people (can) be very rigid about certain attitudes and a bit too free in others, and I just don't understand.

S: I certainly think that, broadly speaking, certainly as regards the people in the Order and the Friends on the whole, I think people are more inclined to err on the side of laxity, and that is probably true of almost every individual. I don't think, apart possibly from Kassapa, there is anybody who is likely to err on the side of rigidity. [Mahakassapa Thera, one of the Buddha's disciples, tr.] So I think no Order member need worry about being too rigid or too strict. Does anybody disagree with this? Anyone think they're at all Kassapa-like in some respects at least?

Ratnapani: I think the only time it comes up is a self-denigrating attitude inside but that's often not reflected in the actions.

S: Well there are extremes and one shouldn't go to extremes. For instance, some people have felt not very happy about Kassapa being extreme, but the point is that Kassapa goes to one extreme and everybody else goes to the other extreme, and because everybody else goes to that extreme, and he's outnumbered forty-five to one or whatever it is, that extreme is regarded as the norm and acceptable and OK.

Ratnapani: I think we also have to accept the fact that it changes. When one first sees the precepts, first hears the precepts, you give them a slightly gentler picture often to avoid misunderstanding ...

S: Because in the East, in ancient days in Buddhism in India, bhikkhus were not told what the rules were till after they were ordained, because monks said that if they were told beforehand they'd never get ordained, they'd be frightened off! So they're only told what rules they had to observe after actually being ordained, [laughter] when it was too late to withdraw!

A voice: It's a bit like the Order, in a way, what happens in the Order. [497]

S: The fact [is] that you're told what the rules are beforehand but you don't really take much notice.

Devamitra: Could you then speak in a very general way about how you feel the Order could be a bit more tighter as regards the precepts?

S: First of all, stricter about vegetarianism. What's the second one?

Mangala: Taking the not given.

S: Taking the not given. I think more giving is indicated here, more generosity, more sharing. And the third one?

Mangala: Sexual misconduct.

S: Well, that's promiscuity for purely neurotic reasons obviously. There's quite a bit of that still around. Fourth one?

Mangala: False speech.

S: Reporting Bhante correctly! [laughter] Watching speech generally, not only false speech, it's harsh. Even strong speech is allowable, but not just rough or harsh speech or rough or harsh expressions. And the samphappalapavaca, the idle babble-babble, well no need to say any more about that. And then pisunavaca, which is indecent and also covers, you could say, sick humour and things like that which are still quite common. So there's quite a few areas in which one could tighten up. And then as regards the three concluding ones covering the mind, there's endless room for improvement there. If you fulfilled those properly you'd be practically enlightened, wouldn't you? But one which has come up lately is greater attention to micchaditthi, an endeavour to clear up one's thinking. To think more clearly and more sincerely and more authentically. It doesn't mean trying to be a more orthodox Buddhist or even necessarily just get doctrine right, but just think more clearly. So there's still quite a lot of work to be done within the context of the ten precepts even. If these are fairly shaky, what about your superstructure? So maybe from time to time at Order meetings it would be a good idea to just go through the precepts and try to help one another to a more faithful observance. Not a more puritanical observance but a more faithful observance. And certain individuals might find that subsidiary vows, as it were, even taken from time to time for short periods, will help buttress up their observance of the precepts.

Devamitra: I was thinking in my own case of taking on one or two subsidiaries [498] to reinforce a very lax attitude in certain directions.

S: Well, some people need to tighten up in, say, this precept, others will need to tighten up in that. Some might be observing the first precept beautifully and be being strict vegetarians and so on and so forth, but they might be rather lax about precept number three, for instance. One shouldn't think that being strict about one precept sort of lets you off the strict observance of another precept, it doesn't really work out like that. Obviously one will be better at some than others and will gradually make them all perfect, and some may complete the list in a different way from others. But I think there must be more attention to this. This is all part of the transition from the path of irregular to the path of regular steps. It means in a way a sort of going back to the beginning, in a way, not completely because you couldn't have gone *back* to the beginning unless you had been more advanced. It's only a relatively advanced person, to speak paradoxically, who can go back to the beginning. The beginner cannot start at the beginning. It's only the more advanced person who can begin. The beginner hasn't begun; he's only thinking about it. He may not even be thinking about beginning very often, he's thinking about more advanced experiences, he's thinking about Perfection of Wisdom, he's thinking about satori and tantric initiations. He's not thinking all that seriously about the precepts and about the going for Refuge. It's only the comparatively advanced person who can start thinking really seriously about these things and who can really begin.

Devamitra: Have you never come across people who, as it were, really began at the beginning, really got down to the refuges and precepts seriously?

S: Yes I have, in the East. Maybe one or two here. I'm not quite certain but this usually happens in an environment where there are no books, no literature, at least not generally accessible, and everything is seen as actually functioning and being done and practical. For instance, you might get a village in Thailand and some village boy sees the bhikkhus every day going for alms; he sees their strict life, but he doesn't know anything about Buddhist doctrine, hasn't read any books about Buddhism. He's merely gone to the temple, repeated the refuges, but he's deeply impressed by the monks and he wants to be like them. And he goes to the temple and he asks to be ordained as a novice, and he does begin at the beginning, but you notice there's no Buddhist literature in circulation. It's all practice, and understanding keeps pace with practice. Theory and practice go on hand in hand. He doesn't have a sort of general browse or general ramble through Zen and tantra and Vajrayana and Mahayana and Chinese Buddhism and [499] Japanese Buddhism and the odd mysticism thrown in here and there, and *then* start thinking of practising. It's all very systematic. But that sort of situation is rare now even in the East.

So I think we can't avoid a situation in which people have a quite extensive experience of the path of irregular steps before coming back, as it were, to the path of regular steps. I don't think, owing to the historical situation, that we can avoid that.

A voice: It seems a question of humility.

S: Humility too. I remember talking about this in a lecture in the Buddhist Society. Also a lack of reverence in the approach, sampling this and sampling that, thinking you're

equal to everything and you can understand anything as soon as you read about it. And that you're *qualified* to take up everything and qualified to look into everything and qualified to be initiated into everything. It's absolute presumption.

Nagabodhi: I found on the course, not with all of the people, but there were one or two who would invariably argue, not so much to clarify their understanding of what they'd been told but from a position of higher knowledge. They were always contradicting from a standpoint of greater understanding.

S: I must say I often have ... this is an experience none of you will have - not yet anyway - I often have the experience of people coming to see me who are not members of the Friends, certainly not Order members, who don't attend classes, who are not part and parcel of the Movement but they know about it, and they ask, 'How are the Order members getting on? Are they making good progress?' and 'How's Order member so-and-so. Is he getting over his problems?' as though they were almost the Dalai Lama or some great guru, and I really object to this. I think it is very objectionable and I never discuss - I won't discuss - Order members with anybody outside. But they ask these sorts of questions in a very patronizing way, as though they were a Buddha come from some other universe and were enquiring about upasakas of the Western Buddhist Order! It's really amazing, but so many people do this.

Devaraja: I know somebody like that. They said to me over the phone, 'Well, in a way I am a member of the sangha. There's a special relationship between me and Bhante' [laughs] 'I don't need to go in for ordination.' [pause]

S: All right, let's go on. [500]

Vajradaka: "According .. all sentient beings."

S: Perhaps there's not really much to be said about these pranidhanas. One obviously takes the spirit of them rather than the letter. There are all sorts of alternative sets in Buddhist literature, and Bodhisattvas are represented as making all sorts of vows. The most famous set probably is that of the Four Great Vows. I take it most people remember these. To deliver all beings from difficulties. Secondly to follow the Dharma, to abandon all passions, and to lead all beings to enlightenment. These four. These four probably do summarize all of them. Mr Chen used to say, remember, that every aspiring Mahayana Buddhist ought to make his own vow, and he had various sets of vows that he'd made at various times, and you very often find, in Mahayana tantras, that devout Buddhists make certain vows covering their whole life. For instance, someone would make a vow to publish or to have printed the whole Tripitaka at his own expense and distribute it free. This would be a vow. He'd say 'I'm going to do this,' and he will spend his whole life doing it. Or someone else would vow, 'I will construct one hundred stupas in the course of the rest of my life.' These are all vows. Or that I shall arrange for such and such a great master to deliver a series of lectures on such and such a sutra: that will be vow. Many vows used to take this particular form or the kind or form, just to strengthen oneself, to give oneself a bit of spiritual backbone, something to stick to in-

stead of losing oneself in a sort of mishmash of vague quasi-spiritual aspirations. For instance, I did mention to several people concerned with organizational things, well, make up your minds to stick in your present job for a couple of years. So it was almost as though I was asking them to take a vow to do that particular job for two years. It's almost like that. Any query about all that we've done so far?

Sudatta: Reflecting generally on the paragraph - how rare is the Bodhisattva vow? In your (career) in the East...

S: Well I'm glad you said how rare and not how common! [laughter]

Sudatta: How many people do you think you've met in the East, in the Buddhist world, who you think might meet all the criteria of a Bodhisattva?

S: All the criteria?

Sudatta: Well, the minimum criteria of being a Bodhisattva. [501]

S: I certainly have met many people who are good and kindly and spiritually minded and helpful, and there are quite a few, perhaps ten or twelve, who might be Bodhisattvas. I think I can say there's only one who I was absolutely convinced about from my personal experience, and that was Dhardo Rimpoche. And it was from him that I took my own Bodhisattva ordination, and that was partly why. But I think I can say he was the only one I was absolutely convinced about. The others might have been, and they certainly, in many respects, were very good in their behaviour and their attitude. I'm not saying that *they* weren't, I'm certainly not saying that, but I was absolutely convinced from my personal observations of his behaviour, from day to day almost, over a period of many years, that he was - and seeing him in all sorts of situations. But I couldn't feel that sort of conviction about anybody else. But one is enough.

Devaraja: Is he Gelugpa?

S: He's Gelugpa but...

Devamitra: But..?

S: [whispers] He's Nyingmapa really!

Devaraja: Really?

S: Yes, he's a Nyingmapa tulku, of Nyingmapa lineage, but the good old thirteenth Dalai Lama seized many of these Nyingmapa tulkus by the scruffs of their necks and just had them educated as Gelugpas, and Dhardo Rimpoche's predecessor was one of those. He was in great favour with the thirteenth Dalai Lama and was educated, or re-educated, at, I think it was Drepung, and Dhardo Rimpoche himself was educated there. But he regards himself essentially as Nyingmapa, but outwardly he's the perfect

Gelugpa. He sticks very much to Gelugpa tradition. He's very strict, he's very faithful to the tradition, to the precepts and so on, but his spiritual side, his inner spiritual side, seems to be definitely Nyingmapa, and he has a great sympathy with Padmasambhava and so on. Well more than sympathy, much more. So that's quite interesting, and as I say he was the only one that I could be fully convinced about that he was a Bodhisattva. I can't believe it of the Dalai Lama to be quite frank. He just doesn't impress me like that. Not a real Bodhisattva in the real sense.

Devamitra: Are you talking in terms of someone who is a highly developed Bodhisattva, or of someone in whom is just perhaps the first bhumi, because [502] I get mixed up with all the terminology and so forth. Technically you are a Bodhisattva if the Bodhicitta has arisen.

S: Yes, right.

Devamitra: But presumably you must have had contact with more than just one person in whom ...

S: The Bodhicitta can have arisen in a very germinal form, and it may just not be visible to people outside, just to other people. But I think in Dhardo Rimpoche's case it was, perhaps, well developed. It was quite visible and it really, as it were, shone through everything he did. The way he ran that school for Tibetan refugee children: he wasn't just running a school in a sort of social help sense. And everything he did was of that kind. He was always like that. I never saw any variation. He was always the same and he was always completely mindful, and I had many opportunities of catching him out and seeing him caught out, but he never was, not once, and this is quite remarkable. I think I have told the story of the famous occasion - please stop me if you've all heard it! - when we were on tour together in 1956 visiting the holy places with other Buddhists from the border areas, a party of more than fifty. Our programme was in the hands of the Government of India who sent an official with us on the train - there was a special train - and we arrived at particular holy place and we were told that in the morning we would be going to see something just of archaeological interest, and in the afternoon, after returning back to the train for our meal, we would be taken to the holy place itself. So since we were going to the holy place after lunch [and] we were only going to the archaeological place in the morning, no one bothered to take incense and candles and so on with them for worship, otherwise everybody would have done so. But somehow or other the guide either got things muddled up or deliberately changed them round, [and] we all found ourselves in the holy place in the morning without any candles or incense or anything, and everyone was really upset. You can imagine mostly Tibetan-type Buddhists really upset, without anything to offer, anything to worship with, and there they were in the holy place. So Dhardo Rimpoche with a smile pulls out from under his robe enough candles and incense for everybody. [laughter] You see? And this sort of thing I found happening many times. So I concluded he has this sort of mindfulness and awareness, quite supernaturally, which nobody else seems to have, and some of the other people were quite advanced people too, so one could see, but they were caught napping. He wasn't. I was caught napping; I trusted the guide. Apparently he didn't. [laughter] So this

is just a small example. And he never changed. I never saw him unmindful. I never saw him [503] caught out. I never saw him at a loss for words, at a loss for a reply in any situation. And that is quite remarkable isn't it? He never hesitated. He never stumbled. He always..

[End of tape. Very short break in continuity]

[Tape 11]

A voice: ..on fire with the holy spirit. He was on fire with the spirit of compromise. [laughter]

S: So yes, one mustn't deceive oneself or allow oneself to be carried away by the great guru so-and-so and all that. And people do, and people want to be, but that's got nothing to do with spiritual life. And if there'd been any flaw in Dhardo Rimpoche I would have found it out because I have a critical mind and I see things, but I didn't find any flaw.

Devamitra: On the other hand I sometimes get so kind of overwhelmed because the whole task seems so enormous, and the whole kind of treading the Bodhisattva path seems such a rare thing, it becomes, I quite often feel quite depressed at the thought of it.

Sudatta: In what sense do you say that one Bodhisattva is enough?

S: No, I meant it subjectively. It convinces you that such a thing as Bodhisattvas are possible. You've only got to find one, just like some rare variety of flower that maybe you've heard of, but you go botanizing and you actually find a specimen. Well, even though you only find one specimen you know that the whole species exists. [laughter]

Sudatta: Is there no theory in Buddhism as to how many Bodhisattvas there should be at any particular period of time?

S: Oh, as many as possible [laughter] But no number is given, no. But I think one is enough. If you are in contact with one or even hear about one, genuinely, that is enough.

Sudatta: Do you find subsequently any special relationship you made permanently with him that you were constantly able to draw on him, as it were?

S: I used to see him quite a lot. At one time I was seeing him nearly every day, especially for the few months just before I came to England in sixty-four. We were working on translations together and, always, [504] seeing him was quite inspiring and sort of galvanizing, and he was always positive, and this was quite remarkable. He had terrible difficulties which I knew about and we talked about. There were people who wanted to have him thrown out of Kalimpong, get him imprisoned, murder him, all sorts of things! It

was extraordinary! Mainly Tibetan officials. They're absolutely against him because he would not submit to them and insisted on functioning quite independently outside the Tibetan ecclesiastical framework, as controlled by the lay officials. He just would not have anything to do with this, and they were so much against him, and all sorts of tricks they tried to get him into trouble with the government of India - reporting him as a Communist, and all the rest of it.

Sudatta: What would be the special spin-off one would expect to enjoy from enjoying a relationship directly with a real Bodhisattva as distinct from a relationship with any other level of teacher?

S: Well, to be sure if you were in contact with a real Bodhisattva it would spark off at least a little of the Bodhisattva spirit in you because you would see the real thing there and would experience the real thing in somebody else. Whereas with other teachers you would only be hearing about it. It's like being in contact with someone who really observes the precepts on that level too. It's quite different from being with some clever person who can tell you all about them and explain them philosophically. If you are actually living all the time with someone who is observing them, as some Buddhists in the East *really* do, and it's noticeable.

Sudatta: Does one benefit from some sort of psychic attunement if one has been, say, initiated by them?

S: I think one does. Well you have to be receptive yourself, but Dhardo Rimpoche certainly made a very positive impression on all sorts of people, certainly on the local Indian Government officials. They were always with him and he had a very friendly relationship with them luckily. But some of the Tibetan officials were absolute devils in their relationship with Dhardo Rimpoche and their attitude towards him. It was amazing. One wouldn't have believed it, if I hadn't actually witnessed it.

Mangala: Is he still alive?

S: Oh yes, he's still alive.

A voice: He's not very old. [505]

S: No, he's not at all much older than I am. About eight years older than me. [Dhardo Rimpoche 1917-1990, tr.]

A voice: Is he the person in the picture?

S: No, That's somebody else.[pause] But there are pictures of him. There is a picture of him supplied by me in Anne Bancroft's book. [Probably *Twentieth Century Mystics and Sages*, 1976, tr.]

Mangala: He's also in the slides, isn't he?

S: He's in the slides. There's quite a few of him in the slides. And only once did I see him slightly cast down, very slightly. And it wasn't that he was sort of depressed. He was sad, a little tinged with sadness that some particular person could have behaved so badly. He was really surprised they'd behaved badly towards him, very very badly indeed, and anyway he had no reason to expect this, and when I met him he was just a tiny bit thoughtful about it. Well how could that person have behaved like that; that's quite surprising. But that's the only change I ever saw from his complete cheerful positiveness. He even impressed very favourably Christmas Humphreys whom I took to see him, and he had a very positive impression, and as a result of that he was helping induce the Tibet Society to help Dhardo Rimpoche's school financially.

Devamitra: I must say that when I hear you talk about your teachers like this it tends to, at least for me, inspire me more than, say, reading about the Buddhas and the Bodhisattvas. It's that much more real.

S: Well, then one has actually seen. I have never actually seen a Buddha, certainly not the Buddha or a discarnate Bodhisattva, but I have seen Dhardo Rimpoche, and he might say my teacher was much more than me, he might well say that it may be so. So in that way one has a genuine link with the whole spiritual tradition.

Devamitra: It seems so much more direct.

S: Right. Well it is.

Nagabodhi: To what extent is it a matter of time? Devamitra was saying that the prospect seems awesome to the point of being depressing. I think that I'm at a certain age now [pause] I see things in terms of time. How many years it would take I don't know. Is that a valueless way of looking at it?

S: It can help to spur you on. Not a waste of time. But maybe if you consider [506] in that way unskillfully you just get a bit depressed. And of course traditionally Buddhists believe in rebirth, so they think, well, all their future lives to do it in. But for us it's a bit difficult to really feel like that.

Ratnapani: I think he wrote the opposite way round as a counteraction to feeling too disheartened with my own weakness. I think, well, in just thirty years time when I'll still have, presumably, health and vigour, a fantastic change could take place.

S: Right, well Ratnapani at twenty-two, is it twenty-two? ... twenty-four is pretty bright, but Ratnapani at forty-four should be absolutely brilliant! [laughter] Anyway we had better go on to chapter twelve, but before we do that I'll just mention something more about Dhardo Rimpoche, something which someone wrote about him in quite the early days. It was a visiting German scholar who got quite a bit of information from Dhardo Rimpoche. He wrote about him in his book. He said Dhardo Rimpoche believed that he was a Bodhisattva and acted accordingly. [laughter] So I thought that quite a nice if slightly

back-handed tribute. He believed he was a Bodhisattva and acted accordingly. [laughter]

Gradations in our spiritual life are these bhumis and we will find ourselves getting into really sort of rarefied atmosphere. I think for the most part we'd just better read through the descriptions of the bhumis and try and absorb something and leave it at that. "*Ten Stages of the Bodhisattvahood*". Alright you carry on.

Vajradaka: "Theoretically speaking, as we have seen .. more intensely than others."

S: It is not that the force of karma is more or less strong. It is equally strong in all, but owing to their unskilful actions some utilize it in a more positive action, a more positive manner, and vice-versa.

A voice: "But there is no .. practical life."

S: The arising of the Bodhicitta within the context of the Mahayana is rather like the first glimpse of perfect vision within the context of the Hinayana.

A voice: But the marking of stages as the gradation of the Dasabhumi"

S: Dasabhumi means ten stages. [507]

A voice: "In our spiritual progress .. to pursue."

S: I don't like the expression "spiritual routine", but maybe we shouldn't insist on that too much.

A voice: "The ten stages are.."

S: Yes skip those. That's just a Sanskrit term [laughter]. Let's go on to 1: the pramudita.

A voice: Pramudita means delight or joy and .. pratyekabuddhas."

S: That's rather colourfully expressed but I'm sure it isn't really like that.

A voice: "This spiritual emergence .. joy."

S: Let's forget all about the comparisons with the Hinayana and so on. What is really being said here is that when the Bodhicitta arises in the heart of the Bodhisattva, or when it arises in the heart of a sentient being or human being, thereby making him a Bodhisattva, its first great noticeable manifestation is that of joy. There is a sense of joy, as it were. Something is happening, something of tremendous importance has happened, and the sort of emotional response, as it were, is one of great joy. So the first stage in the Bodhicitta, the first stage in the Bodhisattva's career, is called that of joy - pramudita - and this seems quite feasible in a way. We're still on a relatively low level,

relative compared with enlightenment itself or relatively low, rather, when compared with enlightenment itself, but one can say that whenever there's a bit of spiritual breakthrough, when you really see something or when you really achieve something higher, there is a great sensation of joy, so this is quite understandable.

Nagabodhi: Is that Suzuki's image about the person in a foreign country, or is it taken from the scriptures?

S: There is an expression like that in the scriptures, I don't know whether in this context, but even with regard to one's good deeds one meets with the fruition of one's good deeds on the purely karmic level like meeting with good old friends. And you meet with the fruition of your evil deeds like meeting with enemies. You get this sort of language, certainly, and it may well be that the same language is found in this particular sutra, [508] but I don't know definitely.

Devamitra: It would be rather an inappropriate image in a sense if it was because it assumes that one has known the Bodhicitta before its initial..

S: That's true. Yes, that is true. It's really like meeting a complete stranger, but a stranger who, in some unaccountable way, though you have never met him before, he seems very familiar. Right, let's go on. I think Suzuki's rather going on in his characteristic way here but let's just go through it.

Mangala: "Even in the midst .. by himself."

S: On to number two then.

Sudatta: The Vimala. Vimala means freedom from .. never flatters."

S: That seems quite clear and straightforward doesn't it. Let's not spoil it then with any commentary. Right on to 3: The Prabhakari.

Sulocana: "Prabhakari means brightness, that is ... fire of a volcano."

S: The only [thing] that needs a bit of comment here is intellect. It's spiritual insight. On to four.

Sudatta: Do you think there's any validity - making statements like this: "if he was assured of attaining priceless treasure he would jump into a volcano." Looking at real life, is it ever likely that one would ever be able to convince?...

S: Well, there are people like this. One doesn't meet many of them but one certainly encounters them in history. I'm reminded of the famous story about Dr Johnson in Boswell's life. Boswell one day came to Dr Johnson and said, 'What do you think. I've heard a really good story about you today, ha, ha, ha. You know, something absolutely absurd, you know the sort of story that gets around about you, something you are sup-

posed to have said. Of course you couldn't possibly have said it!' Dr Johnson said, 'Well, what was that sir?' and he said, 'Well some idiot was telling a story that you had said in order to get the powers of the convocation of the Church of England restored you'd stand in front of the mouth of a [509] cannon! What nonsense!' So Dr Johnson went red with fury and he said, 'I would do that, sir! I did say that and I would do it!' Poor Boswell was reduced to silence. He said Dr Johnson really meant it; he felt so strongly about the powers of the convocation of the Church of England. And then he went on to say, 'Shall the Kirk of Scotland have its convocation and not the Church of England?' And apparently he really meant it. He would have stood in front of the mouth of a cannon. So there are people like that, who really will stand by their principles and go through fire through these things.

Sudatta: This is only meant imaginatively, because, I mean, if anyone was worth his salt, if he was going to attain enlightenment, his vow to save all sentient beings. If he's going to destroy himself in the process he's invalidated the whole ...

S: Right, but then he believes in rebirth. I'm a bit reminded of Gandalf in *The Lord of the Rings*, although that is a bit sort of mythical. I mean you can only do this sort of thing if you really believe in rebirth and the effects of karma, the results of karma. If you do, you're quite prepared to sacrifice your life in this existence. You firmly believe that you will re-emerge further along down the line in a new body with even greater merits on account of the sacrifice you have made. You really believe this, and many people in the past have. Even many Christians have believed that by flinging themselves into the volcano, as it were, as sometimes when they were burned at the stake by Christians of slightly different beliefs, they would go to Heaven. They believed and they stood [by] it and they were prepared for this and didn't try to run away even when they got the opportunity.

A voice: This is something even different though isn't it than sacrifice. It's much ...

Sulocana: But even on a political level there have been people. I'm just thinking of ...

S: [There have been] people who are tortured for weeks and weeks who don't give way.

Sulocana: Or do something deliberately to make a point. I was thinking of one of the suffragettes who threw herself in front of the King's horse. [Emily Davison in 1913; whether she actually intended to commit suicide remains unclear, tr.] She obviously didn't do it just for the ..

S: Right. She might not have believed in rebirth or future existence or anything. Just for the sake of the cause. So I think there is a lot in [510] human beings. They're capable of a great deal in the way of heroism and self-sacrifice. These are not popular ideals nowadays [laughter] unfortunately, are they? Not in the least.

Sulocana: Other people like yourself.

Devamitra: But in a more recent context, there's the Vietnamese...

S: Yes, right. That's very true.

Nagabodhi: It is strange but I've seen the - probably from *Time Life* or one of the American magazines - a photograph or one of the photographs of one of the Vietnamese monks burning himself often in people's rooms, or at work there's an office where somebody has got it.

S: I've got one in one of my files. It's, well, isn't the proper picture, it's the cover of a Vietnamese magazine which is in full colour and shows the monk sitting imperturbably in the midst of all the flames. Quite extraordinary. I know in India this made a tremendous impression on people at the time.

A voice: It's obviously quite a...

S: Especially as he was sitting there like that, just as though meditating. This really impressed people.

Devaraja: It goes to the most ridiculous extremes too ... numberless causes because in Korea recently there were people demonstrating and chopping off their fingers in protest outside the Japanese Embassy. That seems to be almost like a national insanity.

S: Yes, right. The monk who committed suicide in this way for the first time was an old man of seventy-two and he left a testament behind him explaining why he had done it. [Thich Quong Duc, he was 67 at the time, tr.]

Vajradaka: Apparently under the pictures in the Sunday papers, just immediately underneath, there was a comment by the President's wife saying, 'All the Buddhists ever did for this country was to provide good barbecue material.'

S: That was Madame Nhu, who is a staunch Catholic. She made several remarks [511] of that sort. If monks want to barbecue themselves what's that to us? It was really terrible. I remember all this very well. My friend Thien Chau - who is now in Paris and will be coming over I hope next year - he was with me in Kalimpong during this period and we talked a lot about it. I also wrote in the *Maha Bodhi Journal* about it. So I think there is quite a lot of heroism in human beings quite apart from anything specifically religious like the Bodhisattva ideal, the Bodhicitta. Human beings will do a lot for what they believe in, or people that they are devoted to. And this is sort of underplayed nowadays, you take it cool. You don't believe anything or get very enthusiastic about anything, you know, it isn't done. You find a lot of this, unfortunately, among the so-called hippies - sort of more liberated people - who don't care about anything - no strong feelings apparently. Therefore sometimes they seem really selfish. Perhaps one shouldn't judge in that way, but sometimes one does feel that. There's no sort of enthusiasm, no fire. Anyway let's go on to arcismati.

Nagabodhi: "Arcismati meaning inflammation.."

S: Inflation! I rendered it in the *Survey* as 'blazing' [laughter]. Blazing the fire.

Nagabodhi: "...is the name given to the fourth stage at which ... virtues consist of seven categories."

S: Just a few words about the bodhipaksikas. These are a list of all the sort of early Buddhist practices. It's a list of lists, but it's a list of practical lists, and if you understand the bodhipaksikadharmas then you'll understand all the main practices of the early Buddhists. Let's just read through them. We can't do much more than that but it's quite easy to find books explaining them. Most of them you probably know [them] anyway.

Devaraja: Is this related to .. I remember in the Tantric series [of lectures] you talking about offerings and you talked about in the Theravada temples offerings of thirty-seven kinds.

S: Yes, that's right. Yes, this is true.

Devaraja: What's it called in Pali?

S: Bodhipakkadhamma. Here bodhipaksikadharmas or bodhipaksyadharmas.

Mangala: But this means early Buddhist practices? [512]

S: Yes, as you'll see as we go along. First.

Mamaki: "First .. four contemplations."

S: The four recollections of mindfulness or the four foundations of mindfulness rather: 1. On the impurity of the body. 2. On the evils of sensuality. 3. On the evanescence of the worldly interests. And this is certainly not the way they are usually given. I think this is Suzuki himself. "On the body," not impurity of the body, just on the body - awareness of the body - awareness of the movements of the body and so on. And then awareness of feelings. It's not the evils of sensuality. He's got it all wrong. It's awareness of feelings. Then three. It's awareness of thoughts. Fourthly it's awareness of dharmas or higher spiritual realities. You'll find these discussed in detail in the *Survey*. Four dimensions of awareness.

A voice: The fourfold mindfulness.

S: That's right yes. Literally the four foundations. It's upastana. He's got upastana here; it's upastana.

Mamaki: "Secondly, the four righteous efforts .. good already in existence."

S: This is the fourfold right effort, as it occurs in fact in the Noble Eightfold Path. I think everyone's familiar with this too.

Mamaki: "Third category: Four Forces of the Will ... Fourth category: Five Powers..."

S: The five spiritual faculties, as we usually translate them, with which we are all familiar.

Mamaki: "From which all moral good is produced: 1. Faith, 2. Energy, 3. circumspection."

S: Circumspection, of course, is mindfulness.

Mamaki: "4. Equilibrium, or tranquillity of mind."

S: In other words, meditation.

Mamaki: "5. Intelligence." [513]

S: What *we* usually call wisdom.

Mamaki: Fifth category: the five functions, same as the above."

S: Raised to a higher degree of power, become actual functions.

Mamaki: Six: seven constituents of the bodhi .. heartedness."

S: I think he's got this quite wrong. I think this is quite a different list. Anyway we'll leave that, but don't take it very literally.

Mamaki: "Seventh category. The Noble Eightfold Path ... Right recollection." Seven seems to be missing.

S: Seven seems to be missing, doesn't it?

Mamaki: "8. Right tranquillization, or contemplation."

S: Which one is missed out? It's mindfulness isn't it? Effort, after livelihood is effort isn't it?

Devamitra: He did actually mention tranquillity as mindfulness before, so maybe he thinks tranquillity...

Nagabodhi: Surely recollection is mindfulness.

S: Yes.

Nagabodhi: It's effort that's missing.

S: It's a bit interesting that Dr Suzuki gets the Eightfold Path not quite straight. This was pointed out in another famous context. Christmas Humphreys in the first edition of his famous book *Buddhism* got the Eightfold Path all mixed up. It had to be corrected in subsequent editions. This is quite interesting. And Suzuki has got .. well at least something has dropped out or something isn't clear. The same as regards the seven constituents of the bodhi. He hasn't got that simple formula quite right. It's not without its meaning, this. Anyway, as regards these thirty-seven wings of enlightenment - as they're called - bodhipaksikadharmas, they do summarize all the main early Buddhist spiritual practices or formulations of the path. So its quite useful to know this list. This list of seven lists. Perhaps this isn't the place to go into that in detail. Whoever compiled *Dasabhumika Sutra* seems to have crammed them all into this bhumi. [514] So the Bodhisattva's got a lot of homework to do while he's in that bhumi. All right, let's go on to number five, fifth bhumi.

Ratnapani: "Sudurjaya means 'very difficult to conquer' .. Tathagataja."

S: Tathagataja? I think there's a syllable missing. I think it should be *Tathagatajana*. Alright let's go straight on and try to get a feeling of progression without going into details.

Vajradaka: "6. The Abhimukhi .. dissolution."

S: Dissolution. [corrects pronunciation]

A voice: "Durangama means 'going far away' ... sentient beings."

S: We should mention that these three, sunyata, voidness literally, animitta, signlessness, [and] apranihita, desirelessness as it's translated here. It really means without bias, without particular direction. These are terms taken over from the Hinayana. They mean, or rather they are, what are known as the three entrances into liberation. The three aspects under which one can approach the Absolute or Nirvana or the transcendental dimension. You can either think of it in terms of emptiness, or you can think of it in terms of being without a sign, that is to say, being ineffable. No word, no concept, no thought is a sign of it. Or you can think of it as a state of complete absence of direction because there is no one thing that you would prefer more than another thing. There's no sort of ground for preference, no basis of preference, so therefore there's no desire. So these are, as it were, the three approaches to the transcendental according to the Hinayana tradition. I think I've gone into this in my *Survey*.

A voice: "He knows that Buddhas are not creatures radically and essentially different from himself, but he does not stop tendering them due homage. He is always contemplating on the nature of the absolute but he does not abandon the practice of accumulating merits. He is no more encumbered with worldly thoughts, yet he does not disdain managing secular affairs."

S: These sentences very well describe the Bodhisattva's middle path. He is no more encumbered with worldly thoughts, yet he does not disdain managing [515] secular affairs. This is a sort of little motto, as it were, for all FWBO administrators. [laughter]

A voice: "He keeps himself perfectly ... ten virtues of perfection."

S: This section so far gives quite a good impression of the Bodhisattva's double life, as it were. His inner attitude as contrasted with his external activities. Inwardly he is immersed, as it were, in the spirit of Enlightenment but outwardly he's just like an ordinary person, and so on.

Devaraja: "That is to say, (1) ... nature of beings."

Sona: "The acala. Acala, 'immovable', is the .. suchness itself."

S: This means in principle, simple receptivity to higher spiritual truths.

Sona: "This knowledge .. demonstrative knowledge."

S: He means non-deliberative and non-deliberate.

Sona: "Strictly speaking .. human magnificence."

S: It's a good description, but one must beware of this analogy between the spontaneity of the Bodhisattva at this stage and purely aesthetic spontaneity in the usual sense. I think we'll have to skip Kant's remarks even though they're suggested because he quotes them in German, [laughter] unless there's any Kantian scholar present who can give us a running translation. If not I think we had better pass them over and go to nine, the Sadhumati.

Sudatta: "Sadhumati, meaning 'good intelligence', is the .. eternal order."

S: This is not the usual explanation. The usual explanation of dharmapratisamvid is the complete and comprehensive knowledge of the Dharma, arthapratisamvid [is] a comprehension of inner meaning, nirukti-pratisamvid is literally comprehension of grammar and etymology, even things like semantics. [516] In other words the bodhisattva wouldn't be likely to reify his concepts. And pratibhanapratisamvid is the comprehension of eloquence and the capacity to speak and preach and explain according to the needs of all sentient beings. These are the usual explanations, but maybe the sutra itself gives these rather special ones.

Sulocana: "Again by the first .. lights of the Dharma."

S: Let's lose ourselves in the Cloud of Dharma now.

Nagabodhi: "The Dharmamegha. Dharmamegha ... avenikas (unique characteristics).."

S: You can look these up in the notes later on when you're making your own notes.

Nagabodhi: "of the Buddha .. inner will."

S: He's a sort of Bodhisattva of the Dharmakaya now.

Sulocana: "He gathers the clouds of .. are being consumed.

Ratnapani: "The above presentation of the Dacabhumi ... and universal misery."

S: Well, that's a sort of very quick bird's eye view of the ten bhumis. There isn't really much we can say about them. The best thing we can do is to try to get a general feeling, a sort of inner spiritual feeling, of their progression and even momentum.

Sona: Are they in fact progressive?

Ratnapani: I get the impression that they can be traversed quickly as presumably Sakyamuni did in his life. Can you also achieve a bhumi of that lifetime...

S: Well the general Mahayana view is that one bhumi per lifetime would be very good going indeed.

[Day 10]

S: Right, this is the twelfth and last chapter: Nirvana. I think we won't [517] find it necessary to discuss as much, just try to take it in, perhaps correcting any mistakes Dr Suzuki might be making. All right.

Nagabodhi: Nirvana, according to Mahayana Buddhism, is not understood in its nihilistic sense."

S: Well, strictly speaking there is no nihilistic sense of Nirvana at all. In the Theravada, Nirvana doesn't have a nihilistic sense, and not in the Hinayana generally. So it isn't, as it were, characteristic of Mahayana Buddhism simply that Nirvana is not understood in its nihilistic sense.

Nagabodhi: "Even with the .. yoke of egoism."

S: Well of course the third of the Four Noble Truths is Nirvana, so this statement doesn't seem to make very much sense.

A voice: "It is mostly due .. worthless."

S: I'm afraid this is something for which non-Buddhist critics aren't responsible. Nirvana is clearly emphasized in the Buddhist texts themselves, especially in the Pali ones, and it's made quite clear that it consists in the annihilation only of unskillful mental states.

Mamaki: "In fact Nirvana literally means .. eternal life."

S: Really, doctor, I haven't really stopped beating my mother, sort of thing(!) I mean what form of Buddhism does say that Buddhism is a religion of death? You certainly don't get the impression that the Theravada, even in its most extreme form, is a religion of death, and that therefore Mahayana is a religion of life or eternal life on the other hand. This seems to me a terrible sort of distortion.

Mamaki: "How to gain an insight into the real nature of things, and how to regulate our conduct in accordance with the highest truth."

S: Well one certainly finds that in the Theravada. The Theravada speaks constantly of developing insight into the real nature of things, seeing things as they really are, and also regulating their conduct in accordance with that insight and understanding that highest truth.

Mamaki: "Therefore Buddhism when rightly understood in the spirit of its founder is something quite different from what it is commonly supposed to be [518] by the general public."

S: It is quite true that in some western circles there is an idea that Nirvana in annihilation, but there is no real foundation for that belief in the literature of any Buddhist school, whether Mahayana or Theravada or any other.

Ratnapani: "I will endeavour in the .. work out your salvation with diligence!"

S: What he actually said of course was 'with mindfulness strive on' - upamadena sam-padata. I don't see how that is inconsistent with the realization of Nirvana. In fact I would have thought that the sum and object of that striving on with mindfulness was the attainment of Nirvana. Suzuki seems to have a really peculiar conception of this nihilistic Nirvana such as never actually been held by any Buddhist. It seems to be not only flogging a dead horse but flogging a horse that never existed at all - a purely mythical beast!

Lokamitra: "This exhortation .. Buddhacarita."

S: I don't see why the realization of Nirvana shouldn't be a strenuous life. The impression one gets from the Pali canon is a very strenuous life indeed. So this all seems very odd and very tendentious. And the last words of Buddha as recorded by Asvaghosa's *Buddhacarita* - these are of course a late literary version - the *Buddhacarita* you can say is on about the same level in this respect with Milton's *Paradise Lost* is as regards scripturally - represents a sort of highly literary polishing up and finishing off of the material -

very beautiful and very artistic, but not to be quoted as historical source. Anyway, let's see what the *Buddhacarita* does say.

A voice: This was about the same time as *The Awakening of Faith* - about the fifth century?

S: No, this was earlier because this was written by the real Asvaghosa, as it were. It was about the first or second century and it was written in Sanskrit.

Devaraja: "Even if I lived a kalpa longer ... I now enter into Nirvana.' In this we find the .. fundamental teaching of Buddhism." [519]

S: He really seems to have this nihilistic Nirvana on the brain. I think if anybody does hold such an idea about Buddhism, that Nirvana is nihilistic, well Suzuki is quite right to refute it, but it suggests that this is the sort of almost typical or standard Hinayana view, which it simply wasn't.

Mangala: "Did then Buddha start ... by the wind. Even fire .. darkness of nescience." (p.336)

Lokamitra: A point about this Hinayana nihilism. If Suzuki was influenced by Chinese and Japanese translations, they would have come across at the time when the reaction to Hinayana was the greatest, and therefore he might have picked up from this.

S: That's true, but even in Mahayana texts, for instance in the Saddharmapundarika Sutra, the position of the Hinayanists is certainly criticized, but it's represented as limited lesser attainment, a sort of halfway house, not as a sort of state of annihilation. This seems to be going much too far. There was one Indian school, the Sautrantikas, who did look upon Nirvana rather nihilistically, but they were only one school and all the other Hinayana schools disagreed with them. They weren't very influential as it were, popularly. They were a much more philosophical school. So it seems more as though this is Suzuki's private bug-bear, I would say.

Devaraja: The first paragraph really indicates that he's not aiming - because it says Nirvana according to Mahayana Buddhism is not understood in its nihilistic sense even by the Sravakas or Hinayanists. So he's not really criticizing the Hinayanists. What he's really criticizing is mostly due, as far as I can see, to the non-Buddhist critics, that the conception of Nirvana has been selected among others, and declaring at the same time that it consists of annihilation of all passions and ...

S: But even then he's rather flogging a dead horse.

Sudatta: "What Enlightenment then ... attribute of Nirvana. Before proceeding further .. thus the world beholds." (p.339)

S: This is in fact the Sutta Nipata, not the Visuddhimagga. Well, on to "Nirvana is Positive".

Sulocana: "It is not my intention to .. [520] practice of the Eightfold Path."

S: It does seem in fact that the Buddha did teach the complete stoppage of existence. Suzuki is really confused here, because he doesn't distinguish, I assume, between conditioned existence and unconditioned existence or nonconditioned existence. I mean as the third noble truth makes it quite clear that Nirvana or the goal of the spiritual life is the complete cessation of all craving or all sanskaras or all ignorance - everything conditioned - and the way to that is the noble Eightfold Path. But when you reach the goal of the Noble Eightfold Path, when you reach Nirvana, then you encounter the unconditioned, and this is certainly the teaching of the Theravada as well as of the other schools. So one can't really, as it were, oppose Nirvana to the practice of the Noble Eightfold Path. The Noble Eightfold Path culminates in Nirvana. And from one point of view it is a complete stoppage of existence - conditioned existence - but once you realize Nirvana the unconditioned, as it were, begins.

Nagabodhi: "This moral practice .. human life."

S: I think here there is a great ambiguity again. What does one mean by this fulfilment or unfolding of human life? Not in a sort of naturalistic evolutionary sense. If one uses that sort of language at all it can only be the language of the Bodhicitta, the manifestation of something higher, manifestation of the unconditioned, as it were, within the conditioned.

Nagabodhi: "The word Nirvana in .. moral character."

S: It's very doubtful whether the word Nirvana was in existence before the Buddha. Originally, in fact, the word nibbana, and we find this in the Pali canon, isn't a noun at all but a verb, nibbuta, which literally means 'to become extinct' as the flame becomes extinct when it is blown out. So this is the literal meaning. But the literal meaning is not to be insisted upon too much, and I remember one particular scholar had gone into the significance of the extinction of flame in Indian thought generally. The general idea was that when physical flame, when physical fire, became extinct, it reverted as it were to a sort of archetypal fire, a sort of archetypal flame. There was a Vedic conception of the three fires: the fire on earth, the fire in heaven, and the as it were archetypal fire. So it has been pointed out that when an ancient Indian spoke of the extinction of a flame, that would not convey to him annihilation but the transformation of the flame or the passing of the flame into a higher and more subtle state. So [521] this word, this verb, nibbuta, does occur very frequently in Pali literature for the goal of the human life - the sort of blowing out of the conditioned, which means that the conditioned, as it were, is, as it were, transformed into the unconditioned: the blowing out of craving, the blowing out of anger, the blowing out of ignorance, the result of which is not annihilation but the attainment of Enlightenment. So though the word Nirvana has a negative form, the connotation is decidedly not positive as opposed to negative but beyond that sort of opposi-

tion. And later on in Sanskrit literature as well of course you get the word Nirvana only as a noun. You don't apparently get it as a verb, or very very rarely anyway.

But Suzuki's historical perspective and criticism of the earlier Hindu schools seems to miss the point, because [unclear] for instance doesn't conceive Nirvana as annihilation. It doesn't use the word Nirvana at all. It conceives of liberation, as he said, in the complete separation of the existent porousha, eternal existence, unchanging porousha, from the transformations of prakrati or nature. There's no question of annihilation.

It seems to me that Suzuki is very concerned that Nirvana doesn't represent the rejection, if you like, of what he would call the yearnings of the human heart. I think this really is the point here. This is what he is feeling: that Nirvana, which he doesn't really clearly and consistently define, might represent the rejection of something which he regards as important, and especially the rejections of the yearning and cravings of the heart. But from a purely spiritual point of view, that's exactly what Nirvana does represent. Not an absolute annihilation but the replacement of those yearnings and cravings by something much higher, something transcendental. So we don't seem to have a very sort of straightforward or objective exposition of what Nirvana is or is not. But we seem to be a bit mixed up with Suzuki's personal reaction even to the very idea of a negative Nirvana and a rejection of ordinary human desires and aspirations.

Mangala: Doesn't Suzuki's position in fact represent ... that you can generalize ... the sort of generalized attitude a lot of people do have.

S: I agree. That is very true.

Mangala: Perhaps that's all he's really trying to put over, that it isn't just a negative self-denying, self-mortifying thing.

S: Well it is self-denying!

Mangala: Well in the sense..

S: But it seems to me, reading his language, that it is just this annihilation [522] of ordinary desires that he is afraid of, and, as it were, doesn't want to accept. That for him Nirvana represents the annihilation of those, but it does. That doesn't mean a purely negative interpretation of Nirvana, but Nirvana *does* represent the annihilation, or the transcending if you like, of everything conditioned. You can't get round that. And Suzuki seems uncomfortable with that fact, and you notice he goes from the extreme of annihilationism to the extreme or eternalism. There's eternal death and eternal life. I mean these are the two extremes. You go from the one to the other. Nirvana is not eternal death, neither is it eternal life. So he seems sort of torn between these two. That he's so afraid of Nirvana being death he wants to make it life. But that life has a sort of conditioned connotation it seems to me. This is what is happening. So if you interpret the Hinayana nihilistically for sort of psychological reasons, you interpret the Mahayana positively but for psychological reasons. It becomes the psychologically positive. It's the

conditioned positive, not the unconditioned positive, to use a sort of contradictory expression. So he seems very much tangled up with this. Alright let's carry on.

Nagabodhi: "All the doctrinal aspects .. how this is."

S: Alright, let's go on now to the Mahayanistic conception of Nirvana.

[End of tape 10] [523]

Ratnapani: "*The Mahayanistic conception of Nirvana*. While the conception of Nirvana seems to have (page 342) ... some special, distinctive character."

S: Well, this isn't really quite correct because in the Hinayana the conception of Nirvana is quite clear. It may be limited but it certainly isn't confused. In all the Hinayana schools, the conception of Nirvana, if you can call it a conception, is that Nirvana represents the cessation of the conditioned and that Nirvana itself is the unconditioned. But the Hinayana schools, especially the Theravada, do not say very much about Nirvana, they are much more concerned with the cessation of the conditioned, because once the conditioned is overcome or transcended, Nirvana will be there. They have that faith, as it were, that Nirvana is there, something unconditioned, something positive. So they don't speak very much about Nirvana, they don't speculate about Nirvana; they devote themselves much more to the path, and they conceive of the path as a path mainly of the cessation of the conditioned, so that when you get to the end of that, well, there is Nirvana, there is the unconditioned as it were, looking you in the face. And they don't feel it necessary to take matters any further than that. But there are positive indications and hints about Nirvana, even in the Hinayana literature. Nirvana is said to be the island, is said to be the cool cave, the supreme abode, the perfect peace. All these expressions come in the Hinayana literature, but they're not dwelt on very much. In fact Nirvana itself is not dwelt on very much, because the Hinayana is much more [523] concerned with the path, and treading that path, which means a waning of the conditioned. So it isn't correct to say that the conception of Nirvana is indefinite and confused, so far as Hinayanism is concerned, even though it is true that the Mahayanists in the end did arrive at a more complete and full and rich statement of the nature of Nirvana, so far as that can be put into speech. But the Hinayana conception was limited or reticent, certainly not confused.

Ratnapani: "When it is used in its most comprehensive metaphysical sense (p.342) it becomes synonymous with suchness or with the Dharmakaya."

S: That is Nirvana as absolute reality.

Ratnapani: "When we speak ... a state of immortality."

S: Not personal immortality, or eternal life of the ego, of course.

Ratnapani: "And in the latter case ... is its negativistic interpretation. (p.343)"

S: You might remember in *The Three Jewels* I've given a fourfold classification of all the different approaches to Nirvana. Anyone remember that? It's quite relevant here. You must have read it, huh? The negative conception is one: Nirvana as a negative state, a privation of something, that is, primarily, Nirvana as the negation of the conditioned, Nirvana as the unconditioned, Nirvana as the cessation of craving, cessation of anger, cessation of ignorance, cessation of the sanskaras, cessation in fact of everything conditioned; this is the negative approach to Nirvana. And then there is the positive approach, that Nirvana is supreme bliss, Nirvana is enlightenment; this is the positive approach. The approach through images: Nirvana is the island of refuge, is the cool cave, and so on and so forth. And then, the paradoxical approach: Nirvana is the limitless limit, and expressions like that.

So if you go through Buddhist literature, Hinayana and Mahayana, I think all the different characterizations of [525] Nirvana can be reduced to these four: there's a negative one, representing the cessation of the conditioned, a positive one which affirms the unconditioned nature of Nirvana, then there's the poetic one, which tries to suggest what Nirvana is non-paradoxically, through images, and then the paradoxical, which makes it clear that all conceptual determinations of Nirvana are quite inapplicable, that in the last analysis nothing really can be said. There are these four.

So it's certainly wrong to give undue weight to any one. In the Theravada, and in the Hinayana generally, the negative characterization is certainly stressed, perhaps even over-stressed. In the Mahayana, certainly in many modern expositions of Mahayana, and for instance in Suzuki, it's the positive that is stressed, sometimes over-stressed, and sometimes presented so crudely it seems almost like a form of the conditioned. I don't think any particular school or any particular group of writers over-stress the poetic, that seems under-stressed by everybody. The metaphorical, the description in terms of images, perhaps only the Pure Land people go in for this at all now. And of course as for the paradoxical approach, this is probably overdone by Zen and neglected by everybody else. You never find a modern Theravadin giving a paradoxical characterization of Nirvana, but you find Zen people doing it and giving in fact paradoxical characterizations of everything, but they go to extremes in everything.

Mangala: Yes, that's almost a Hinayana view, the last one, inasmuch as they generally might say just don't bother with any concepts at all.

S: They do, but they don't express that paradoxically. I mean that is their sort of negative approach, that no concept applies to Nirvana. They would certainly say that, but they don't try to bring that out by a paradoxical statement.

A voice: "(p.343) According to the Vij'anamatra Sastra .. something still remains in them that makes [526] them suffer pain."

S: That's not quite correct. This Upashisesa Nirvana is of course a Hinayana conception or definition of Nirvana which was taken over by the Mahayana and incorporated in its

own tradition. This is the state of Nirvana or Enlightenment as actually realized by a Buddha during his earthly lifetime. And it's called Upashisesa, 'with residue', because the physical body, in fact the whole conditioned psychophysical organism, is still there, as it were. There is the realization of Nirvana, there is the enlightened state, but there is the human body and the ordinary mental apparatus at the same time. So inasmuch as there is the human body, even though one is not creating any fresh karma making for a fresh rebirth, one still may have to suffer the consequences of past karma, one may even have to suffer physical discomforts and upsets, illness, and so on. It is not necessarily the result of karma but simply because one has a physical body, just as the Buddha himself we know, in his old age, suffered from diarrhoea and so on, but the enlightened consciousness, if enlightened, that is not affected, that is not touched.

So this is the state of Upadhisesa Nirvana: Nirvana with residue of the five skandhas, the residue of the psychophysical organism. And at the time of death, or parinirvana as it's called in the case of the Buddha, the psychophysical organism drops off. All that is left is the state of realization of Nirvana. And about that, the Buddha says, in the case of the death or parinirvana of the Buddha, no definite statement can be made that it is either existent or non-existent or both or neither. This was one of the great questions discussed by people during the Buddha's day: whether after bodily death the Buddha, the Tathagata, continues to exist or not. And the Buddha's answer is quite clear and frequently repeated. It is inept to say that he exists, that he does not exist, or both, or neither. He said [527] even during his lifetime the Tathagata is unfathomable, what to speak of after his death. So you can't speak of the Buddha being annihilated, that wouldn't be correct, just because the physical body has gone. On the other hand you mustn't think of the Enlightened consciousness as surviving bodily death like a sort of personal immortal soul, so that the Buddha is still there in that sort of sense. No, that is inept, and neither both nor neither. So this is the original position, as it were, and the second is called Arupadhisesa Nirvana, the state of the Tathagata after death, whatever that may be. It's not to be conceived of as annihilation, it's not to be conceived of in terms of personal immortality, it's an unfathomable mystery, as it were.

A voice: (p.344) "Arupadhisesa Nirvana, or Nirvana that has no residue. This is attained ... a cycle of births and deaths" (p.345)

S: Well this, as we saw earlier on, simply isn't Buddhist teaching, this coming out from the Absolute and going back into it.

A voice: (p.345) "This state of supramundane bliss .. Nirvana that has no abode." (p.346)

S: One may say that these four kinds of Nirvana represent a systematization of the Hinayana and Mahayana traditions. The first, that is to say Nirvana as the Dharmakaya, is distinctively Mahayanistic, the absolute Nirvana as Suzuki calls it. Then Upadhisesa Nirvana and Arupadhisesa Nirvana: these two belong to the Hinayana tradition, although they've been taken over by the Mahayana. And again, number four, the Nirvana that has no abode; this is distinctively a Mahayana conception.

A voice: (p.346) "A commentator on the Vijānamatra Sastra .. in all sentient beings."
(p.347)

S: I think one has to be clear about one thing, that is, to say that [528] Nirvana is spiritually present in all sentient beings doesn't represent a higher point of view than saying all sentient beings can realize Nirvana if they make the effort; it's only another way of putting it. But sometimes Suzuki and even other Mahayana writers almost suggest that it's a higher point of view, somehow more spiritual, but no, it's only a higher degree of conceptualization, and as it were more metaphysical and less psychological. But it's saying really exactly the same thing, but perhaps saying it a bit more misleadingly. Alright, on we go then.

A voice: (p.347) "When Nargarjuna says .. sarva-kalpana-ksaya-rupam."

S: According to the footnote, "that which is characterized by the absence of all characterization". Actually it doesn't say that. Literally, sarva-kalpana means all imaginations, ksaya-rupam, being of the nature of the cessation of all imaginations, one might even say, vain imaginations. Suzuki makes it sort of paradoxical: "characterized by the absence of all characterizations", but the actual term does not say that at all. It's sarva-kalpana, which means all imaginations, ksaya-rupam, of the nature of cessation: that which is of the nature of the cessation of all vain imaginations.

A voice: (p.347) "that which transcends ... with the Dharmakaya'. (p.348)

S: This is the extreme development of what we may call the positive characterization of Nirvana. This took place quite late in the development of the Mahayana and is found only in some Mahayana sutras.

A voice: (p.348) "It is eternal because ... all sufferings."

S: It would be better to say it is eternal because it is non-conditioned. According to Buddhism even higher mental and spiritual levels are non-eternal because they're conditioned. [529]

A voice: "It is self-acting because it knows no compulsion."

S: i.e. it's completely spontaneous.

A voice: "It is pure because .. absorption in abstract meditation."

S: This is again an expression which is used by some of these western missionary scholars that he criticizes. "Abstract meditation"? I've often wondered what abstract meditation is; I've never personally encountered it.

Woman's voice: I think they mean by that, I think to Christians generally meditation means meditating on a theme or an idea, while contemplation is meditating without some idea, in a sense.

S: This could well be, but for Suzuki it seems also that abstract meditation is something that he's not very happy with. Alright, let's go on and leave that.

A voice: (p.349) "The Mahayanistic Nirvana .. hurly-burly or worldliness."

S: Easier said than done.

A voice: (p.346) "He who is in this Nirvana .. eternally drowned in it."

S: Again, that's easier said than done. I'm afraid that reading through this book as a whole, and thinking back and reflecting over things, I can't help feeling that the more sober language of the Theravada and some of the Mahayana texts is much more helpful and much closer to the facts of [530] "plunging into the ever-rushing current of samsara and sacrificing ourselves to save our fellow creatures from being eternally drowned in it." How do we do this? What does it mean? Or is it just rhetoric? I think we have really to guard against this, the sort of rhetorical approach to the spiritual life. I must confess that in my very early days myself I was sometimes guilty of it and there might be little echoes of it in some of my early writings, but I hope with advancing years and increased experience I might have sobered up a bit. [amusement].

Mangala: You're getting onto the path of regular steps. [laughter]

S: It seems like that, doesn't it? [more laughter]. Alright, on we go.

A voice: (p.350) "Though thus the Mahayana Nirvana ... ultimate nature of being."

S: Now, what does this mean? "He that is abiding in Nirvana, even in the whirlpool of egoism and in the darkness of sin." How does one do this? This isn't at all clear. Again this seems to me to be rhetoric. He says, "one abides in Nirvana," presumably one is realizing it, "even though one is in the whirlpool of egoism and the darkness of sin". Well, is it one's own, [or] is it other people's?

Woman's voice: It's other people's, I suppose.

S: Well, I should hope so. [laughter] But that then would seem to be Hinayana. I can't help thinking that he, to the extent that he has thought about it at all, that he means one's own egoism and darkness of sin, but that's very dubious. Anyway, let's go on.

A voice: (p.350) "He is aware of the transitoriness [531] shares not its defilement."

S: But again this is easier said than done. We all know this from our own experience. Even a Buddha doesn't seem able to do this, frankly, as we notice in the Udana. There

was that passage when the Buddha seems to have been a bit affected by the press and the crush of so many people coming to see him, he didn't reflect on the lotus blooming in the mire, [laughter] he just strolled off into the forest for a few months [laughter] and purified himself.[Udana 4.5, tr.] But according to Suzuki, or according to his presentation of the Mahayana, he ought to have stayed there in the midst of the mire and just continued blooming. But apparently even the Buddha couldn't do that. So we have to think things over really seriously. It's very easy to get defiled by this mud, it's not easy to be a lotus.

Woman's voice: I imagine it would be easy to fall into that pretence, though, to *feel* that one was undefiled.

S: Oh yes, right. Also, of course, it must be said that things have got worse since the Buddha's time, probably even since Suzuki's time: there's more mud around. In the Buddha's day, mud meant, you know, just passing through the village in your quest for alms. Even that comparatively was mud, so it may not have been all that difficult for the Mahayana monk just to sort of stay in the village, these quiet, peaceful rural surroundings, and be lotus-like. But to be lotus-like in, say, the Archway area in the twentieth century is much more difficult, because the whole way of life has changed. [The first and only FWBO Buddhist centre was located in the Archway district of London at this time, tr.] So there's that, too, to consider, apart from the intrinsic difficulty of being a lotus in the midst of the mire. The Zen people [532] agree even further. They say you've got to bloom like a lotus in the midst of the fire. Well that's even more difficult. I don't know how one does that, but I think one has to be very careful against endorsing in a rhetorical sort of way these very high-flown sentiments that can't be reduced to anything real and practical, at least not by oneself.

Devaraja: I suppose it's really to kind of, I mean, to encourage an attitude that isn't constantly trying to escape from difficult situations.

S: Oh sure.

Devaraja: But is trying to learn to function in situations with people.

S: Yes, but it doesn't say that. You know, when you put it like that, that's quite clear, that's quite acceptable, but it doesn't say that. It almost suggests that there's no such thing as going into retreat, there's no such thing as withdrawing into meditation, there's no such thing as keeping clear of people for a while. It almost suggests that, as though all that is mistaken.

Nagabodhi: I often hear that in criticism. If I say I'm going on a retreat, or I meditate or whatever, people who know a bit about Eastern mysticism, even, or Buddhism, will say, 'I thought you were meant to be able to just find your peace in yourself, wherever you are.' This sort of thing.

S: Rubbish, isn't it?

Nagabodhi: I think so. For me it is anyway. [laughter]

S: And even in the Mahayana sutras the Bodhisattva is described as going off to the forest and leading a hermit-like life. [533]

Lokamitra: Santideva recommends that one doesn't leave it. [laughter] Keep away from people, he says, and contemplate [unclear].

S: Trees are better company.

Lokamitra: Yes.

A voice: (p.350) "He is also like unto a bird ... samsara and Nirvana."

S: Well surely this does represent a very high degree of spiritual realization, and one that we should certainly aim at. As an ideal it's very beautiful and, you know, very acceptable, but we must be quite honest as to where we actually stand here and now, and not simply go through the pretence of accepting this for ourselves in the present, or even trying to practise it at this stage; it just won't work; it will only result in hypocrisy and self-deception. On we go.

A voice: (p.350) "We read in the Vimalakirti Sutra ... awaken and attain intelligence." (p.351)

S: You notice that this is a conversation between Vimalakirti, a highly advanced Bodhisattva, and Manjusri, who is the Bodhisattva of Wisdom in person, the Bodhisattva of the Dharmakaya ... so I think nothing more need be said. [slight laughter].

A voice: (p.351) "Just as the lotus-flowers ... sprouts of Buddhahood are able to grow".

S: There is an element of truth in this, but I would say it's psychological rather than spiritual, that human energies are not to be repressed. The energies are to be utilized for the sake of something higher, but this is [534] something that has to take place long before you even get on to the spiritual path. You need all your energies locked up, as it were, and get on to the spiritual only with certain other energies. You need all your energies. So this is a very valid point, but it isn't really historically fair to speak of the Sravakas and Pratyekabuddhas, or at least Sravakas - Pratyekabuddhas weren't particularly historical - as sort of repressing something, this just isn't a valid criticism.

Devaraja: I don't remember which sutra it's from, but there's a quotation like that I remember quite vividly, I think the Buddha says, 'a foolish farmer throws away his rubbish and manure and goes to someone else to get rubbish and manure to fertilize his field.'

S: Well one must be very careful about this, otherwise it becomes an excuse and a rationalization for sheer simple self-indulgence, and this is certainly not what the Buddha means.

Lokamitra: But suppression is a valid Buddhist, sort of, conscious suppression..

S: Yes, conscious suppression, not repression in the psychological sense but a conscious holding in check. Well, it's absolutely necessary, there's no spiritual development without it. But this is not repression, a repression would mean that the energy was just wasted or lost.

Lokamitra: Does repression imply unconscious?

S: In the Freudian system, yes. Repression, Freud says, is an unconscious process. It's not anything you consciously do. So what the sutra says here is correct, [535] if we understand it correctly, but we have to be very careful how we apply this ourselves. Otherwise we'd just end up, as even some people have ended up, thinking that the more we indulge our desires and passions the nearer we are to Enlightenment, and that certainly isn't the case.

Woman's voice: The repression doesn't happen without one's knowledge, so to speak, I think once it's repressed then it's shut off from ordinary knowledge, but the beginnings of it are, I think, consciously done, in that there is a diversion, perhaps the bad feelings or whatever they are, consciousness feels that one shouldn't have this, so it really denies its expression, and denying, after a bit, its expression then leads a person to think they've got rid of it, but it comes out in another kind of way. It's not lost but then one has then become..

S: Then one has a symptom.

Woman's voice: Yes, and the ignorance then comes in from where this particular bit has come from.

S: Though according to Freud one never consciously decides to repress, but that happens without one's knowledge, he says. He may be right or he may be wrong, but it is in fact what he says.

Woman's voice: Yes, repression is unconscious, but the steps which lead one to do this are not unconscious, you know. It's not like something that one's quite helpless and has no control about. As a process, it starts with a..

S: I think one is certainly aware of certain experiences [536] which result in that repression, though one may not be actually conscious of it in so many terms as a process of repression. But it does start from conscious experience, yes, surely.

Lokamitra: It seems to be guilt that is the motivating factor there, because if one isn't guilty about these what one thinks are bad feelings, then one just suppresses them without thinking them bad, but I know I think they're really bad and they shouldn't be, and so I find that they're getting more and more pushed down in an unhealthy way.

S: But to recognize within oneself there are certain unskilful mental states, and you do not wish to express those in thought or in action or in word, but you recognize that they are there, you hold them in check. And this is not repression, this is suppression, which is a quite valid psychological process. And then if you suppress in that way then this energy which is in those unskilful thoughts will gradually be, as it were, drained out, and will go into the mainstream of one's being, into one's more skilful thoughts and words and deeds.

So in this way suppression, or checking, or controlling, if you like, is an integral part of the whole spiritual life and the whole higher evolution. You can't get on without it. [pause] Of course one also has to see this sort of statement as we find it in the sutras against the background of popular Indian practice too. There was a great deal of one-sided asceticism in India, especially in Hindu circles, a great deal of self-mortification, and violent suppression of the flesh and even mental activity, and so on. This certainly is not healthy. This [537] might well cause you to end up in a state of blankness, and sort of coma almost. I've seen a few cases like this in India. Well, this has got nothing to do with Nirvana, certainly not with Hinayana Nirvana or with Sravakas and Pratyekabuddhas, though it is a psychological possibility. But we're certainly not in danger of that kind of thing. We know our danger lies in entirely the opposite direction, and sometimes people really seize on passages like this, you know, as a justification for every sort of self-indulgence, [the] same way they seize on the Tantra: these people flocking along to the Tantric Exhibition, well, they're certainly not interested all that much in purely spiritual things. Alright, on we go.

A voice: (p.351) "Oh son of good family! Just as no seeds can grow in the air .. wisdom of Buddha seeds." [end of side 1] [538] [tape 11, side 2]

S: Rightly understood, this is very true, that is to say, it's out of your empirical being *as it is now*, good, bad, or indifferent, that you've got to develop. This is your raw material. But it's only raw material, it's not the finished product.

A voice: (p.351) "Oh son of good family! Just as we cannot obtain priceless pearls ... Buddha-essence?" (p.352)

S: We have to be very careful how we understand this. It doesn't mean that unless we wallow in sins and commit all possible sins we won't get Enlightenment. You could take it to mean that if you weren't careful. So what does it mean?

Lokamitra: It's the experience of suffering, then.

S: It doesn't actually say that. It says passion and sin; it doesn't say the consequences of passion and sin. It says passion and sin themselves.

Devaraja: This just seems to imply working with the material that we have, what we are.

S: Yes, right, working with the material that we have, though it's rather sort of incautiously expressed. Taking ourselves as we find ourselves, and shaping ourselves.

Woman's voice: This is really how one stops being ignorant, how one stops having those repressions, psychological [unclear]. [539]

S: Recognizing what's there, yes. So I think this must be understood psychologically and not metaphysically or even ethically. Alright then.

A voice: (p.352) "Let it therefore be understood .. always something sings."

S: Well, that is quite true, in a high spiritual sense, but you imagine that Emerson was sitting in his beautiful library in Boston quietly penning these lines: he knew very little about the mud and scum of things, had very little personal experience. This would sound much more convincing if it came from someone who was really living down in the midst of all these things. But even so, even though Emerson says it, there is truth in this surely. But we have to be very careful that we really do perceive that truth and experience it, and not just adopting this nice sort of poetic attitude in a superficial way. I mean, if you hate the mud and the scum, and it really pollutes you and doesn't do you any good at all, it's really better to say that, rather than to pretend otherwise.

A voice: (p.352) "The most remarkable feature .. an activity of Nirvana itself". (p.353)

S: Here again, one can say, a very lofty spiritual ideal, but we have to be really sure whether we're in a position immediately to put it into practice. For a very long time to come, all spiritual practice is dualistic. There's your lower state here, there's the higher state there, and you working your way actually up the ladder, as it were. This is the only way in which you possibly can think. If a non-dualistic perspective discloses itself [540] as you make your way actually up the ladder, well fine, and then perhaps you do see that there isn't any ladder, or that the ladder and the goal of the ladder are one, etc, etc. But you're just not in a position to see that at all, now. In fact it's just a nonsensical statement so far as *you* are concerned. It has no meaning at all, really, for you. You just have to leave it aside for the time being, and not try to base your actual spiritual practice on a purely mental understanding of that, because a purely mental understanding is all that one can possibly have at this stage.

Devamitra: How does one need to [about five indistinct words], for instance if one could maintain a state of dhyana all the time, would one be able to remain a certain inner purity within samsara wherever you were, if you were in this meditative state, or is it something even beyond that?

S: Something even beyond that. So it's not anything one need think about at all, you know, this will come of its own accord, as it were, if one just keeps going up the ladder. By the time you get to the end of the ladder you realize that there wasn't any ladder - but only when you get to the end of the ladder, paradoxically. So it isn't anything one need as it were bother about, you know, at present it's just, you know, a phase in the development of Buddhist thought, that some people thought like this or even experienced like that. But the framework of one's actual spiritual life is definitely dualistic. You could *bear in mind* that framework will be transcended one day, but you can do no more than that. [541] All right, on we go then.

A voice: "Nagarjuna repeats the same sentiment .. exists between them." (p.354)

S: One also has to bear in mind that things that are now published, and made available to everybody in these days, were just made available to a small circle of personal disciples who were ready for teachings of this sort. It's only much later that they were broadcast, and copies were multiplied, and of course much later still that anybody that could purchase the volume was entitled to read it. It certainly wasn't the case in the old days.

Lokamitra: It seems generally with Buddhist teachings there's, umm, that at the time of the Buddha a definite one, just one teaching was given to one person and I find it quite confusing at times. You've got all this multitude of teachings and, you know, instead of concentrating on one, one's energies disperse sort of wondering which one to take now, in the present [unclear].

S: Or just sampling, uh?

Lokamitra: Yes.

S: This is something that came up very strongly and very clearly from our study of the Udana, that in a sense there was no such thing as Buddhism. There was the Buddha, and various enlightened disciples, and disciples on the way to enlightenment, and there were enquirers and interested people, or they came in contact with the Buddha and his disciples, enlightened and nearly enlightened, and just a few words were spoken, just a few lines, a few verses, or a short discourse, or a simple practice given, and they just got on with it, and [542] they gained Enlightenment. There was no such thing as study of Buddhism. There was no history of Buddhism then of course, and everything was much simpler and clearer, and less cluttered. But now we've got mountains and mountains of books about Buddhism, about Zen, about Theravada, Mahayana, Tibetan Buddhism, Chinese Buddhism, Sinhalese Buddhism, all sorts of practices, all sorts of methods, all sorts of doctrines, philosophies, interpretations, presentations, texts and commentaries, a great mountain of literature. And we sort of rummage through it, you know, sort of wondering, well, which should I actually concentrate on? So it's a completely different situation.

Mangala: I wonder how necessary do you think it is to sort of perpetuate this, like say, as, for example, teaching classes, etc, you know, to as it were discuss and expound all these various doctrinal formulae and ideas, etc.

S: Well, you can't avoid it, because this is the historical situation in which we find ourselves, that all these things are available, people buy them, people read them, get confused, then you have to sort out the confusion before they can get on with their spiritual practice. You can't just say, 'well, don't read books, put it all aside,' they just won't, that's the last thing that they'll do. Very few people come in as a result of a simple sort of existential situation: they're not satisfied with their ordinary life, and they'd like to reach something more satisfying, and they haven't studied philosophy or religion, they just want some sort of plain, straightforward method. Very few people come in in that sort of [543] way. They usually come in with a bit of intellectual backlog, as it were, having read quite a bit, or browsed through quite a few volumes, not only Buddhist, but Taoist, and Vedantic, and general Tantric, and psychotherapy, so there's a certain amount of intellectual sorting out operation to be done, it seems that one can't avoid this.

Lokamitra: It seems to me the only valid approach for study groups at the centre, and so on, is that we're sorting out people's confusion so they can get on and not bother about that side of things maybe for a while, but I wonder, are the courses valid in this context, because in that way we've sort of..

S: Well, what are you doing in these courses?

Nagabodhi: I'm wondering what you're thinking about the courses.

Lokamitra: But it's a slightly different approach.

Mangala: It's almost like the doctrines become ends in themselves, just because they happen to be part of Buddhist history, or [indistinct] therefore we teach them, I mean almost as if it's just knowledge to be known just for its own sake, but whether it's got in fact any practical application or relevance is another matter.

S: Well, there are two things here. One is, of course, doctrine, which is of historical interest only. This we can well afford to drop from general circulation. There will always be a few scholars and specialists, but not everybody. Not even every practising informed Buddhist needs to know the whole history of Buddhist thought, and even in its obsolete forms. This just isn't necessary at all. But on the other hand, there are quite a few people who do [544] require, at least in outline, a general philosophy of life, and this is contained in broad outline in Buddhism, and Buddhism has this general philosophy of life, and this certainly has to be made known to most people who become interested in Buddhism. They're not satisfied with just a simple practice of metta, they want to know the why and the wherefore, and how it works, and there are certain questions which arise quite naturally in their minds, not just as a result of studying books, and they want to know, they want answers. So here the sort of general Buddhist doctrinal structure comes in, about the nature of conditionality, even the nature of the universe according

to Buddhism, the nature of the mind. You can't exclude these things. It was possible in the old days, but it isn't possible now, not for most people, fortunately or unfortunately.

Lokamitra: But again, here, only one teaching is necessary, like the Noble Eightfold Path or something.

Man's voice: There's certainly different temperaments.

S: Well, I would personally say that very little actually is necessary. A quite simple doctrinal outline is quite enough, and perhaps we should develop that more, but we have to develop it with reference to historical Buddhist thought, even though the end product is quite simple and clear, it must be based upon somebody's acquaintance of the whole history of the development of Buddhist thought. I've done something of this sort to some extent, as in that lecture on 'Mind - reactive and creative' and no doubt there's more work to be done of that kind.

Ratnapani: There are people who come into the Movement who [545] just won't be able to start until they've had an intellectual feast of some sort. They just can't do it. Whether it's nice or nasty from our point of view doesn't matter; they need it.

Devaraja: In a way that's got a very positive aspect, in the sense that the people aren't going to be fobbed off with something that's not really clear and precise. They want a sort of precision and a real intelligence, you know, they're not going to be just fobbed off with a few sort of woolly statements, and I think that's very good, it's very challenging to come across people like that.

S: Though I must say that usually it's the questions that are woolly, huh? Of course, the answers may be too, but I mean people don't usually come in clear-thinking and sharp, they usually come in very confused and woolly themselves.

Ratnapani: I think the teaching that comes over will all be coming reasonably directly from you, it will be your sort of attitude [indistinct word] which will clear the wool.

S: But I happen to know the whole history of Buddhist thought? I think, I mean if one is going to call oneself Buddhist at all, and to present Buddhism for the West, even if I've left out something, I must know that I've left it out.

Ratnapani: I wonder then how do we stand apropos that?

S: I hope that at all times in the Order there will be a few specialists to whom reference can be made. But as we develop our own as it were tradition, we shall become more and more self-contained, in a way, and it'll be necessary to refer just to our own tradition, that'll be quite [546] enough. We might even make our own selection of Buddhist texts, those that we find actually helpful - I mean this has often happened in Mahayana Buddhism - and have our own particular presentations. For instance, the Gelugpas in Tibet, they study very little, apart from the writings of Tsongkhapa. It's all there, in a

beautifully codified form, all very clear, not exactly simple, though there are simplified versions and shortened versions, but it is all there. And even the most unlearned monk, if he goes through the shorter version of 'The Stages of the Path', he's got a complete survey. The more learned monks can go through the lengthy version and study the commentaries, and then refer back to the sutras from which Tsongkhapa quotes frequently, and so on. But the ordinary, less intellectual monk has got it all in one small volume, in outline, at least, and that is sufficient for him, he doesn't need to go into everything else, Tsongkhapa has done that for him, as it were.

Ratnapani: In fact we're doing some of that process here, aren't we, in [about five indistinct words].

S: Yes, right, this is true.

Devaraja: Would the *Survey* [indistinct words] and perhaps the lectures too.

S: Yes, but there's a lot more work to be done, it's hardly been begun, and I mean maybe I won't be able to finish it. I can lay down a few broad principles and a general outline but it'll have to be finished by others. It might take several hundred years, or at least a hundred years, but at least we can make a good start. There's a lot more literary work to be done along these sort of [547] lines. The *Survey* doesn't help very much, it helps to some extent, because the *Survey* in a way deals with Buddhist thought so far, and it stresses certain things that need to be stressed, and it gives explanations of certain doctrines in a way that makes them clear to the western mind, but it isn't at all a recasting or a reshaping, it is very definitely a presentation of existing tradition, or tradition so far, and an attempt as it were to make the best possible use, or to present in the clearest possible light, traditional Buddhism as it does still actually exist. But we have to go even further than that, and reshape and recast. And we're quite entitled to do this because if we look back say to the days of the *Udana*, there was no such thing as Buddhism, there was no Madhyamika, no Yogacara, there was just the enlightened Buddha, the enlightened or nearly enlightened disciples, and a few short simple teachings, a few formulas, a few verses, and these were enough. Look how simple it was.

Periodically we have to cast aside the past. We can't bear the past around with us all the time, we can't carry around with us the whole great load of history. Being a Buddhist doesn't mean carrying round with you the whole great load of Buddhist history from the past, you have to forget - the collective 'you' - and someone like Tsongkhapa in a way tells his disciples what they can forget, what they can leave out, and what needs to be kept in, what is essential. And not every individual can make that selection for himself, not every individual Buddhist can go through the whole mass of Buddhist literature and sort it out and understand it and synthesize it [548] for himself. Who can do this? Very few people can do it. But someone or other within the movement, and within the tradition, that is, our tradition, has to do this. Or it may be it will be a co-operative effort, and it will happen if the tradition really does establish itself, and the movement becomes a real live movement. This will happen, inevitably.

Devaraja: Do you think it's important that the Tipitaka should be translated into English, I mean, say, from Tibetan?

S: Well, this is raw material, sure, I mean the Pali Tipitaka is translated, and I hope that the whole of the Tibetan canon will be translated, and the Chinese too. It's going to be terribly confusing for many people. Instead of having hundreds of texts, you'll have thousands, and it will be an absolutely mammoth sorting-out operation on somebody's part, and maybe no one person will be able to do it, the material accumulating will be too vast. But after all the material does revolve around certain basic themes and certain basic attitudes, so we don't have to wait for all that material to be translated before we can begin to think what is Buddhism? In a sense we've got it already, so we can begin to make our own preliminary synthesis, or preliminary selection. [pause] Anyway, let's carry on.

A voice: (p.354) "Asanga goes a step further ... manifestation of Nirvana." (p.355)

S: Here you get this cosmological thing creeping in again, which seems completely misleading and not really faithful to the central tradition of Buddhist thought at [549] all. It's things like this that our own sort of tradition will have to sort out and make clear once and for all, and I think this sort of language will just have to be avoided, it cannot but mislead.

A voice: (p.355) "The above being ... than Nirvana itself." (p.356)

S: Again, this can be misunderstood. Obviously you've got to start from where you actually stand here and now, and you are *in this world*, so this is where you've got to base yourself, and you've got to seek Nirvana from here, or, if you like, you've got to follow the path to Nirvana here in the world, but it doesn't mean that Nirvana is to be found leading a life of riotous pleasure and self-indulgence, I mean, this is almost what is suggested here, you know, which is ridiculous.

A voice: "Extinguish you life .. flies from you."

S: Well what is one supposed to do? Is one supposed not to meditate, is that the Mahayana teaching? Or not to practise asceticism, or not to engage in ritual, or metaphysics even? Not even metaphysics? Well, you know, what is one to do, what is the practice, what is the path?

A voice: (p.356) "It was the most serious .. and pleasures."

S: It's almost as though he identifies religious feeling with human desires, hopes, pains, ambitions, and pleasures, hum?

A voice: (p.356) "Have your own Bodhi .. divine purity." [550]

S: Well that may well be, but the way to that is a way that leads through transcending of the ego, even self-denial, practice of meditation, even asceticism, and so on. Then in the end maybe you do see that everything is really pure, and a manifestation of something transcendental, but there is a definite path to that which is just the traditional Buddhist path. But it's almost as though Suzuki negates the path.

A voice: (p.356) "It is the same human heart ... magnificence."

S: Well, in what sense is it the same human heart? In a sense it's the same human heart but greatly transformed, so as to be hardly recognizable any more.

A voice: (p.356) "Suppose a torch light ... just as much as the cell." (p.357)

S: Well here the analogy has been pressed too far, because the heart doesn't remain the same. The cell might, in the actual illustration, but the heart doesn't; it's transformed.

A voice: (p.357) "Whose identity was .. of all Buddhas." (p.357)

S: If one speaks in terms of a transformation of the passions into enlightenment, that they're the raw material, as it were, fair enough, but if one identifies them in the same context or on the same level, then endless misunderstandings can ensue.

A voice: (p.358) "The middle course. In one sense ... Pratyekabuddhas is abolished." (p.360)

S: This is a reference, of course, to the twofold non-ego.

A voice: (p.360) "By virtue of Prajā ... toward Intellectualism." (p.362)

S: They must be very sort of undeveloped Bodhisattvas because this [551] sort of psychological balance should take place very early in one's spiritual life. In fact one could say, unless there is a measure of psychological balance as between intellectual and emotion, no real spiritual life can even begin. So I think a Bodhisattva, even a very novice Bodhisattva, is sort of balanced, by very definition right from the beginning. So I very much question whether you can have intellectual Bodhisattvas and emotional Bodhisattvas, and so on.

A voice: (p.362) "Thus, as a matter of course ... and feeling."

S: It's as though there has to be this balance all the way up the spiritual path, on every level, higher and higher, right from the beginning.

A voice: (p.362) "Love Awakens Intelligence. But if we ... all embracing love."

S: If we're in a position to choose, we should just refuse to choose. If we're not in a position to choose when we start, we're already lop-sided one way or the other, well, we just

have to proceed from there. But if we can choose, well let's just choose to be balanced, in this respect.

Devaraja: He's very confused there, because really it wouldn't be love if it didn't have the wisdom.

S: It wouldn't really, no. It would be a sort of blind passion, or sentimentalism.

A voice: (p.362) "For it is love that awakens ... transmigration".

S: Well intelligence must be there to some extent to understand that they are suffering, and that they're not having a good time as appears to be the case, and that there is such a thing as transmigration, and that there is a way out. All this requires wisdom to understand.

A voice: "The intellect will now .. and [552] Bodhisattvas." (p.363)

S: The texts actually say that prajña or wisdom is the mother of all Buddhas or Bodhisattvas. I don't think it's anywhere said that karuna is the mother of all Buddhas and Bodhisattvas. Anyway, straight on.

A voice: (p.363) "The sacred motive that induces them to renounce ... paradisiacal happiness." (p.364)

S: They want to give others what they don't want for themselves, apparently. [laughter].

A voice: (p.364) "Love therefore [End of side 2, tape 11] [553] [Tape 12, side 1] .. of other's misfortune and suffering." (p.365)

S: Quite a few people, of course, commit sins out of kind-heartedness, through lack of wisdom or understanding. I often quote that little saying, 'It takes all the wisdom of the wise to undo all the harm done by the merely good.'

Devamitra: Where actually is that quoted from?

S: I don't know, I wish I could remember. It's not original, I'm afraid, I read it somewhere years and years ago. [possibly Adam Wildavsky: 'It is up to the wise to undo the harm done by the merely good,' tr.]

Lokamitra: You should be able to find it in a book of quotations.

S: Yes, I've got that great fat book which Sudatta gave me years ago. It's been very useful ever since, it should be there somewhere, I didn't get it from there, though.

Ratnapani: Bhante, it's got here 'those who are only capable of feeling their own selfish sufferings may enter into Nirvana'. That sounds like Suzuki. Could it be the translation, do you think?

S: Well, it's very difficult to say. It's translated from the Chinese, and I think he is a bit free in his translations, certainly at this stage. So one has to be a bit wary about accepting it. Alright, on we go.

A voice: (p.365) "When all beings are tortured .. from a Mahayana sutra." (p.366)

S: The Bodhisattva is not "*annoyed* by one thing" but *concerned* by one thing. In Tennyson there's a very good line which gives the spirit of this sort of thing. Tennyson speaks of a 'painless sympathy with pain', [In Memoriam, LXXXV, tr.] and it is very much like that. It's almost like 'the Bodhisattva's trouble-free concern', for other living [554] beings.

A voice: (p.366) "When Vimalakirti was asked .. all embracing love."

S: So without sentimentalizing, without sort of engaging in any undue metaphysics, one can say that the spiritually developed person *is* sensitive to the sufferings of others, isn't overwhelmed by them as sometimes the parent is overwhelmed when the child is sick, but there is a sort of sensitivity, without any detriment to his own inner spiritual Enlightenment and stability. He does feel, he doesn't just see coldly and objectively, like a surgeon, and then go and perform the operation, as it were. He really does feel, in a sense, but not with any sort of attachment and not with any inner disturbance. This 'painless sympathy with pain', as Tennyson calls it: there is sympathy, and he is concerned.

A voice: (p.366) "This gospel of universal love .. of the Dharmakaya". (p.367)

S: I'm not quite sure what meaning is to be attached to "destined to conquer the world". But perhaps we should leave that. It's just a flourish.

A voice: (p.367) "*Conclusion*. We now conclude [laughter] ... an ennoblement."

S: One could say as much of the Hinayana too.

A voice: (p.367) "This world ... buddhanu sasana" (p.368)

S: 'Etam buddhana' it should be, not 'buddhanu'. That's Pali, of course. It's the famous little verse, they give a verse translation at the end, but it means simply, 'not performing any evil, developing all good, purifying the heart, this is the teaching of all the Buddhas', a famous Theravada verse. It's rather interesting he quotes a Theravada verse, a Hinayana verse, to illustrate the conduct of the Bodhisattva, so this rather undermines his criticism of the [555] Hinayana.

A voice: "His aspirations .. Nirvana." (p.368)

S: That's a rather unfortunate expression, after all he's said! He really is going to the extreme of eternalism from that of annihilationism: "the heaven of the Buddhists."

A voice: "which is not a state .. rounds for meals." (p.368)

S: Well, just a minute, well, who finds the reciting of the sutras monotonous? [laughter]

A voice: "Far from that .. in the cloister." (p.369)

S: It seems he's being a bit anti-monastic. This seems a bit a tendency of Japanese Buddhism, which is Japanese rather than Buddhist.

Devamitra: Anti-monastic? But surely the whole emphasis in the whole Zen tradition is monastic, isn't it?

S: Well, it may have been once upon a time, but you end up with married Zen monks living at home with their families, and going off at weekends to conduct sesshins and things like that, don't you?

Devamitra: I didn't realize that.

S: Yes, it is a very common pattern. You have your period in the monastery, which has become a sort of seminary. When you've finished there you go off and get married, and you're appointed to a temple and to a parish and you run that. This is a sort of general pattern, though there are exceptions, surely, but this is what often happens. And you get very few non-married Zen monks, priests, or whatever you choose to call them. They're mostly involved in family life. And in both China and Japan, most of the married monks, if you can call them that, became involved principally with after-death ceremonies, which are very elaborate and very important in those traditions, and that became their principal source of income, and to a great extent Japanese Buddhism keeps this up too. Also the whole situation was rather [556] complicated by the intervention of the government for many hundreds of years, and every Buddhist had to belong to a temple, and he couldn't change: he was registered there, as a means of government control. And the priest was appointed to administer the temple and serve the needs of those parishoners, which usually meant performing their after-death ceremonies and so on and so forth. So he became a bit like a Church of England priest. This was a quite common sort of pattern. I've got a book on Japanese Buddhism by a scholar which is quite good, which gives an up-to-date account of what is actually the position now, in this decade.

Devamitra: It's interesting, that. I remember you remarked earlier in the week that one shouldn't talk of Buddhists in terms of priests and [several indistinct words]. I read some time ago an article written by June Kennett in which she sort of said in order to establish the Dharma here you need a Buddhist priesthood.

S: Well she's not only got priests; she's got abbots, abbesses, priors, sacristans, and what-nots! And I think this is a complete mistake, the Catholic model, you know. If people want that sort of thing, as Mr Humphreys quite correctly says, well they'll go into the Catholic Church, they won't spend time with Buddhism.

Devamitra: It's not even Catholic, because they get married.

S: That's true, that's true too. That's blending Protestant and Catholic.

Devamitra: It's an old compromise.

S: Yes, right, it seems really odd.

Devamitra: But she said in this article that she, in spite of something to the effect that certain other teachers have sort of, in their ignorance, said that it wasn't necessary to have a priesthood, and she put in little brackets, 'and including some who should know better!' I can't remember how she finishes, but that was the [557] point she was making.

S: But I don't think anybody has ever said there should be a priesthood or not a priesthood. I mean Mr Humphreys has discussed the whole question quite correctly in terms of sangha, or order, in his article in *The Middle Way*. But when you say priesthood, you give the whole thing such an unBuddhistic slant. You hardly know whether to say we should have a sangha, but you don't want a priesthood in a Christian sense.

Devamitra: But if you use that terminology you're bound to create this impression.

S: You're bound to, you're bound to. But she seems to have deliberately adopted Catholic terminology, and I'm just not happy about that, you know, just from a strictly Buddhist point of view.

Devaraja: Well, even the robes they wear are a wedding of the kimono and the Catholic priest's robes. In a sense they really are quite an abomination to look at. They seem to be a compromise between two things which are not compromisable.

S: Yes, right.

Mangala: I think it gives a completely different feel to the whole thing, you know, whether you talk about a priest or, you know, a sangha.

S: Yes, right.

Mangala: It certainly sounds religious.

S: Even 'monk' isn't suitable, you know, 'monk' is used to translate bhikkhu or bhiksu, but even that isn't really correct. There isn't a category in the Christian tradition corresponding to the Buddhist bhiksu.

Devaraja: Bhiksu means something like beggar.

S: A medicant, that's the literal meaning.

Devaraja: And implies celibacy. [558]

S: Yes, it implies celibacy but, I mean, the priest is celibate in the Catholic church, so that even is not very important from this point of view, as regards comparison. It's the function of the person, only he may perform mass on behalf of all the faithful. They may not perform it for themselves. But the Buddhist bhikshu doesn't do anything that you can't do for yourself. If you want you can observe those precepts, if you want you can meditate just as he does, etc, etc. He doesn't do anything for you which you intrinsically cannot do for yourself. He is following the same path. All that can be said is that he is advanced, he is taking it more seriously, and he is doing what you are trying to do better and more wholeheartedly. And therefore, because of that, he is in a position to give you some guidance. That's quite a different thing.

You can say that the monk is someone who practises the spiritual path and practises it to such an extent that he becomes able to act as a teacher, a spiritual teacher for others who are not practising it as monks, or as bhiksus, what are usually called the laity. This is all that a bhikshu is, well I say all that he is, but it's a great deal. But he isn't the sort of celebrant of a mystery which you couldn't possibly celebrate however developed you were just because you hadn't got that ordination. So there isn't really anything like that. For instance, you could say 'friar', you know, the Dominican friar, or the Franciscan friar, well they are mendicants and they do teach, and so on and so forth, but they are not priests, and in the Catholic context that means they are subordinate, they are dependent on the [559] priest to perform the mass for them, if they don't happen to be priests themselves, as sometimes happens now.

But there is no one to whom the bhiksu is subordinate, except someone, as it were, further up the line, someone who is still more developed than he is, his own teacher, or a very senior bhikshu. So there's the difference. So a bhiksu is not a priest, and he's not a monk in the western sense either because (1) the monk again is subordinate to the priest and (2) the monk takes life-long vows. The bhiksu does not take life-long vows, he can retract them at any time, and return to lay life.

Devaraja: Though in the Chinese tradition that's considered, I've read somewhere that the Chinese tradition is much tighter, people expect to take those vows for life when they take them.

S: Well, I think everybody does, except in those countries, you know, where they've developed a tradition of short-term ordination, but everybody intends to take for life when

they do take, and that is their wish and their aspiration. But if you fall by the wayside, there is nothing in the monastic law itself that prevents you from giving up the rule. Whereas in the Catholic tradition, it requires a Papal absolution, or something of that sort, if you want to retire from the priesthood. Well, they say, you never become not a priest in technical terms, the marks of priesthood are indelible, once a priest always a priest. You may have a dispensation whereby you suspend your actual function of a priest, but you remain a priest, if you remain a Catholic at all. If you leave the Catholic Church that's another matter, you don't ask permission, but in medieval times you could not leave the Catholic Church, you could not leave the priesthood. If you tried, to you could be shut up and imprisoned. If you left your monastery or convent, not wanting to be a monk or nun any more, you could be imprisoned; your superior, your abbot or abbess had the right to imprison you, to shut you up. They had [560] legal powers, because a religious person did not come under the lay authority, the lay magistrate, they same under the, as it were, ecclesiastical magistrates, who were the dignitaries of the Church. So you can't really compare the freelance bhikshu, who is simply a more advanced practitioner of the same path that everybody else is following, with either a priest or a monk. The nearest equivalent perhaps is the minister in some of the free churches, who is simply the man who devotes himself full-time to the study and teaching of religion, but even he is married usually, whereas traditionally the bhikshu is not married, nor the bhikshuni.

So we can't really compare, and if we start calling ourselves priests and monks, we distort what we are, we misrepresent what we are, and we condition ourselves into something other than we should be, if we start thinking of ourselves as priests. And I'm sorry to see this quite a bit in Jack Austin: he calls himself a Soto Zen priest, and he thinks of himself as a priest; to him being a Buddhist priest means celebrating lots of Buddhist weddings and funerals, and christenings and what not. He's very into that side of things, he likes to function in that sort of way. But that's a complete distortion and betrayal. So I would say away with all this sort of terminology, of priests and nuns, and abbot and abbess, and prior and sacristan, and all the rest of it. It creates absolutely the wrong sort of atmosphere, it gives absolutely the wrong sort of impression. It's pseudo-Catholic Buddhism! A contradiction in terms! Anyway, enough of that. Need a bit strong(?)..

A voice: (p.369) "Theoretically speaking .. to the [561] altar."

S: That is, 'the other'. Talking of altar, this is also part of the old Catholic terminology, or Christian terminology, or at least non-buddhist terminology, as I pointed out yesterday.

A voice: (p.369) "in other words ... love for others".

S: I must say, just sort of going off at a bit of a tangent, there's a really good sermon, preached by an Anglican bishop a couple of hundred years ago called Bishop Butler, who also wrote the famous analogy of religion, called 'On Self-love', and it considers self-love in positive terms. It's a very instructive and very interesting piece of writing and comes very close to the Buddhist idea of beginning with yourself, and loving yourself, and as it were enlightened self-interest. And only if you help yourself and make yourself

positive can you be of any use to other people. I have a copy of it somewhere or other. That just reminds me it's not among the books I've brought to Castle Acre, so I'll have to track it down, it probably is lurking in some corner at Muswell Hill. [Sangharakshita's residence at this time, tr.]

A voice: (p.369) "But this love for others .. Happy and joyous." (p.371: The End)

S: So we end on a slightly symbolic note, with the image of the sun, the sun being of course the Buddha or the Bodhisattva. It does actually look as though it's becoming a bit more sunny today, maybe that's a good note on which to end, having made our way through all 371 pages of Suzuki's *Outlines of Mahayana Buddhism*. Any general point [562] all through these ten days?

Devaraja: I was a bit kind of confused at one point, I must say I felt quite a sense of loss almost, I mean I don't know whether it's a micchaditthi that I've lost, but potentiality of positivity, having sort of positive equivalents, but it's a potential [several indistinct words]. [End of side 1, tape 12] [563]

[Tape 12, side 2]

S: Well, it's not so much a positive view of one's failings, which might be a bit misleading, but a positive view of oneself despite the failings. And that whatever energy went into those failings could go into something much more constructive and creative. I think we have to be careful not to even *seem* to glorify or justify the failings *as failings*.

Devaraja: No, I don't mean that.

S: But that could be easily misunderstood, couldn't it? You know, if you were to express yourself rather freely, not to say loosely, somebody else could misunderstand that, even though you yourself might find it quite helpful to think in that way. I think it is a very fine dividing line, isn't it?

Devaraja: Well it's the theme or analogy of jewels in a cave, which I find quite a helpful way of looking at myself, and that what the sort of things I'm terrified of, they're really jewels, they really are, [indistinct].

S: Well, if they can be transformed.

Devaraja: Yes, to just help you to develop a very positive attitude towards yourself.

S: Well, perhaps that's what one needs, a positive attitude towards *oneself*. It's not a question of almost pretending, as sometimes might be the case, that one's failings are not really failings, because they've got a potentiality in them or something more than that.

Lokamitra: The idea of a seed, the seed [several indistinct words]. [564]

S: It's a question of to what extent one is essentially adopting a certain attitude, and to what extent one is, in fact, as it were, reifying concepts and building up micchaditthis, which ultimately get in the way of one's development.

Mangala: Could you just say something about that, I mean how that process might happen. Could you give an example?

S: Well, we've been seeing that all during these ten days. For instance, 'everything's one', there's such a thing as 'one-ness', it's only the oneness that's important and, you know, mentally occupy yourself with the idea of oneness and speculate about it. And because everything is one there's no need to practise, there's nowhere to go, nothing further to achieve, it's all one, you've got it already, etc, etc.

Devaraja: But is it valid to say then in terms of developing a positive attitude towards oneself, that deep down I'm really OK, I'm...

S: Well, I don't know, I'm becoming a bit uneasy about this, as a practical proposition. I would say the metta bhavana would seem to be quite sufficient, you learn to love yourself. But if you say, well, I'm really OK, deep down I'm alright, you're not really experiencing that, or loving yourself, even. I think you're just trying to reassure yourself. When I say you, I mean, you know, in general. It's as though you don't really believe it when you say that, otherwise why not just get on with practising metta bhavana? And you can perhaps go on saying that and be convinced of that, that deep down you are enlightened, etc, etc, and be unable to feel metta towards yourself. [565]

Devaraja: I must say that I find that adopting that approach sometimes does help a warmer and more positive feeling towards myself.

S: Well, if it does, well fair enough, then.

Vajradaka: It can also be alienation, as well. You get maybe self-satisfied, thinking, 'well, I'm OK, you know, I really am,' but not feeling it or really experiencing that.

S: Well, I mean, even if you were to *feel* that you were OK, that would be something, but I'm concerned lest it doesn't just become a *thinking* that you're OK, or a *thinking* that you're all right deep down, [but] that you *are* Enlightened, and not feeling very much, maybe not feeling anything at all. But in the case of the metta bhavana you are actually feeling towards yourself, or not as the case may be, and if you're not, well then you know that you're not, you can't kid yourself then.

Vajradaka: It's just that you can if you have the idea that you're all right.

S: Yes, you can. Yes.

Ratnapani: If one wants words, the words that are usually used in explaining the metta bhavana, you know, one sees what a heap one is, or heap of heaps...

S: Or what a creep one is. [laughter]

Ratnapani: Even that, and then just bearing that in mind, 'may I be well, may I be not a creep, may I be Buddha..' It's safer ground.

S: Yes, right.

Lokamitra: In *Cutting Through Spiritual Materialism*, [Chogyam] Trungpa says something like, you're not as bad as you think; you're worse! [laughter] [566]

S: Well that's true, too! That's very well put. But it's much better to say, 'I'm really bad, I'm much worse than I think, so what, I'm going to get on with this.' And you could say this in all sorts of ways: the economic situation of the country isn't nearly as bad as you think it is, it's much worse!..

Lokamitra: You're always trying to kid yourself that it's better than it is.

Vajradaka: I'd like to hear a politician say that!

S: Well, Mr Powell does, doesn't he? [Enoch Powell, an outspoken member of Parliament, tr.]

Ratnapani: Yes, the ones in opposition say that (until they get into power).

Man's voice: Wouldn't a good start to that metta process be, first of all, recollecting your own blessing, in other words, you get yourself glowing, because most of us have got vastly more in the way of treasure than we imagine and we always tend to look on the negative side of life, instead of recollecting the good things we've got.

S: Do you mean one's own virtues, or advantages?

Man's voice: Well, all the things one's been best (blessed?) with.

S: Sure.

Man's voice: One has aches and pains, but nothing like what one will have in years to come. One may feel old, but not as old as one's going to be. [laughter].

S: One does feel young, but one did feel younger.

Man's voice: The fact that we're born in this century, in an enlightened country, where there is peace and stability, and think of all those poor beings around the world that have to live under terrible regimes... [567]

S: Right. That's true too. Well one *is* very lucky.

Man's voice: And that one has had access to the Dharma, and how many beings have been deprived of this, and you recollect these and you feel yourself sort of glowing. Then you can start spinning off to other people.

S: Well you might not be *glowing*, but you might be feeling in a quite positive sort of mood, and that would be very good. And grateful, that would be good, any positive emotion helps, they all link up together. [pause] I think we should be a bit careful of invoking a sort of essentially sort of philosophical or metaphysical statement, instead of getting on with, as it were, psychological practice. I think this is the great danger. Sometimes, of course, the sort of metaphysical principle attitude can spark off something psychological, but it must never remain just a sort of statement, that you merely think.

Vajradaka: It seems so relevant to most people, that thing you were stating, psychological practice for metaphysical things.

S: As if to say, 'it doesn't matter what I *feel*, it's compensated by what I think,' you know, which is nonsense.

Devaraja: Personally I find that helps me to identify with my good qualities, rather than constantly being preoccupied with negative characteristics, and then that sort of helps to give a foundation from which to work.

S: Well, I'm not saying it won't work in any given individual case, well certainly it will, or may, but, generally speaking, I think we have to be cautious, especially in sort of, you know, talking to other [people], and [568] not make sort of blanket statements, you know, to groups: 'You're OK, you're all Buddhas,' and that sort of thing. 'Look on the positive side and think of yourself as a Buddha.' Well maybe they think of themselves as Buddha, but even if they could do that, it wouldn't be any more than thinking, and might very likely discourage them from practising, rather than the other way round.

Devaraja: When I first came across that sort of approach to it, it seemed to me like a very positive way of looking at the human situation, it seemed to start from a totally different point of view.

S: Well, it *can* be positive, but it can be very negative, too, you know, if it just inhibits practice. If you find it positive, you know, practically, well then fair enough, as I say, but I think most people, just approaching Buddhism or spiritual life, would find - or in fact it would have - a negative effect, in the sense of an effect that inhibited actual practice.

Lokamitra: I think it demands a great deal of effort to get through it in practice, otherwise one remains halfway, in a state of alienation.

S: Yes.

Woman's voice: I suppose if one could, er, thinking not so much of thinking but the use of imagination, if one could imagine oneself as Buddha, then what one did that was wrong, so to speak, would *feel* very wrong.

S: Right, yes, this is true. Well of course, in the Vajrayana visualization, you do have the visualization, though visualization isn't quite the word, of *oneself* as the Bodhisattva or Buddha concerned. And it isn't [569] just a thinking, obviously; it's a feeling, too, or an imagination, in the full, creative, Blakean sense of the term. And then, as you say, things that are wrong or negative, they don't feel right, you feel that you shouldn't be doing them, and you stop doing them, eventually, just because in your inner being you feel something quite different from all that, or someone quite different from all that. That's an actual practice.

Ratnapani: You are describing something that was in a meditation room, not something you could do at any old time.

S: No, right. You might be able to carry something of that over into one's daily life, which would be excellent, but one wouldn't be thinking it, merely. One would be feeling and experiencing it to some extent, at least.

Ratnapani: I've actually found, just to change that a bit, I've found that sort of thing happening, ostensibly doing the visualization, as you've described, and I've gone deliberately away from it. So you think it's best to stay with the beginning?

S: Well, if you're actually experiencing it, well, fair enough, let it continue and let it grow, the dangerous thing is merely to think it, because then, if you merely think it, it becomes attributed to the ego. This is another consequence, which is quite terrible, and this you do see in India with some Vedantic statements.

Ratnapani: I think that's why I went away from it. I think that tended to happen.

S: Or if you felt that you were tending to think it, well, just drop it. If you just find you're really feeling and experiencing more and more, well then, go ahead with it. [570] [pause]. I think this is one of the things we've learned from this whole study, that there's much with which the mind can occupy itself and think about, in the way of Buddhist and Mahayanist philosophy and speculation, but even though in a sense some of those things may be valid, they may be quite harmful in their effect, you know, they can divert us from practice and just confuse the whole issue. And sometimes, of course, I mean even the speculations themselves lose their validity and become intrinsically confused, and they become almost micchaditthis.

Sulocana: How would you translate 'micchaditthi'?

S: A false view, that's the literal translation. I've sometimes pointed out that when the Theravada school came to arrange its canon, the Digha Nikaya came first, the long dis-

courses. And which was the first long discourse? The Brahmajala Sutta, in which the Buddha deals with, or at least enumerates, the sixty-two false views, as if to say, well, get those out of the way first, and then you can get on with the teaching, and the practice.

Ratnapani: Doesn't the word 'michadasera' have connotations of concerning the nature of Reality, 'false views concerning the nature of Reality'?

S: Well it certainly includes those. False views about the self, and so on, false views about the efficacy of certain practices, or non-efficacy of certain practices, or the non-need of certain practices. For instance, according to the [indistinct word] that one could, in fact gain Enlightenment without eradicating the defilements. This was a false view. [pause] All right, well, maybe we'd better leave it there.

[End of side 2, Tape 12]

[End of Seminar]