

The Sigalovada Sutta

The Venerable Sangharakshita in Seminar

Held at Padmaloka, January 1983

Present: The Venerable Sangharakshita, Atula, Devapriya, Dhammarati, Padmapani, Padmavajra, Prasannasiddhi, Ratnapala, Ratnapani, Tejamati, Tejananda; [Padmaraja for one session?]

Day 1 Tape 1, Side A

Sangharakshita: We're going to be studying the Sigalovada Sutta, using mainly Narada Thera's translation. So we'll do, first of all, his short introduction which incorporates a few salient points. Could someone read that first paragraph, and then we'll discuss anything that needs to be discussed?

"Sigala was the son of a Buddhist family residing at Rajagaha. His parents were devout followers of the Buddha, but the son was indifferent to religion. The pious father and mother could not by any means persuade their son to accompany them to visit the Buddha or his disciples and hear the Noble Doctrine. The son thought it practically useless to pay visits to the Sangha, as such visits might entail material loss. He was only concerned with material prosperity; to him spiritual progress was of no avail. Constantly he would say to his father: 'I will have nothing to do with monks. Paying homage to them would make my back ache and my knees stiff. I should have to sit on the ground, and soil and wear out my clothes. And when, at the conversations with them, after so sitting, one gets to know them, one has to invite them and give them offerings, and so one only loses by it.'"

S: This information, by the way, comes from the commentary. The Sutta itself launches straight into the subject. It doesn't give us any actual background. That is supplied, as I said, from the commentary on which Narada Thera is drawing.

Padmavajra: Whose is the commentary?

S: It's one of those attributed to Buddhaghosa - the commentary on the Digha Nikaya. This Sutta is of course from the Digha Nikaya.

Atula: Where would Buddhaghosa get such information from?

S: Buddhaghosa lived in the seventh century, as far as I remember, maybe the sixth - that is to say, about 1000 years after the time of the Buddha.[2] Buddhaghosa was an Indian brahmin who became a bhikkhu in India, and then went to Ceylon. In Ceylon he learned Sinhalese, it would seem, and he found that Sinhalese commentaries had been preserved in commentaries on the Pali Tipitaka. The Tipitaka was, of course, introduced, according to tradition, when Asoka's son Mahindra introduced Buddhism there in the third century BC, and since that time there'd been an oral tradition of exposition of the Tipitaka which was embodied in Sinhalese commentaries. So it would seem, according to Buddhaghosa's Life, that he became acquainted with these commentaries on the Pali texts which were in Sinhalese, and he - as far as we know - translated or recast or rewrote these Sinhalese commentaries in Pali; and it's

those which we now have, and which we know as the Pali commentaries on the Tipitaka. The Sinhalese originals have not survived, so we don't know to what extent Buddhaghosa just translated from Sinhalese into Pali or to what extent he just condensed or recast or even incorporated materials of his own. But we have these Pali commentaries which contain quite a lot of information, some of which no doubt was handed down from very early times.

Atula: Where are those commentaries of Buddhaghosa's found? Have they been translated into English?

S: Some have been translated, yes. I think we have a few here. But quite a few have not been translated. The word that we translate as commentary is *atakatha* in Pali. *Ata* is 'meaning' and *katha* is 'discourse' - discourse on the meaning or, if you like, exposition.

So, as I've said, Narada Thera's information set forth in this little introduction, giving the background to the Sutta, is drawn from the commentary. The Sutta itself doesn't give us this information.

So is there anything in that first paragraph that requires any comment or any discussion? Or is the situation clear? Is it, in a way, a typical situation?

Dhammarati: I'll be quite interested to see how the Buddha tackles it, because it seems that this ... is not interested in the Dharma.

Ratnapani: It's usually the other way round now: the son is interested and the father isn't.

S: 'The son thought it practically useless to pay visits to the Sangha, as such visits might entail material loss. He was only concerned with material prosperity; to him spiritual progress was of no avail. Constantly he would say to his father: 'I will have nothing to do with [3] monks. Paying homage to them' - that is to say by bowing down - 'would make my back ache and my knees stiff. I should have to sit on the ground,' - one couldn't sit on a raised seat in front of monks - 'and soil and wear out my clothes. And when, at the conversations with them, after so sitting, one gets to know them, one has to invite them and give them offerings' - that is to say invite them to the house, give them food and so on - 'and so one only loses by it.' He takes an exclusively material view of religion, it would seem. It's not that he doesn't exactly believe in it but he doesn't see any material profit in it; in fact, he sees material loss.

Atula: He takes it further, in the sense that he couldn't have made many friends either, in that way.

S: That's true, if he was concerned not to spend money. One does in fact encounter this sort of attitude still in India; I think I have commented on this before. It is still the custom that, if you go to see any holy man, whether Buddhist or Hindu, you sit on the ground; and quite a few young men nowadays, that is to say modern, Westernized young men, won't go along because it'll spoil their trousers sitting on the ground. They're quite particular about their clothes, some of them. So they still do say this very same kind of thing - that they would have to sit on the ground and it would spoil their new trousers. So they won't go along.

This suggests to some extent that in dealing with people, especially perhaps dealing with young people, one needs a certain amount of adaptability. If you're going to insist that they sit

on the ground etc. you may not get very many of them coming along. Nowadays in Buddhist countries quite a few of the monks don't expect this sort of behaviour and don't even particularly want it from young people, but often one finds the older generation among the lay people insist on this sort of behaviour, and they reprimand young people for being 'disrespectful' to monks etc. So they tend not to go along, rather than have to conform to these sorts of customs.

Atula: It's really terrible - not allowing people to have a positive experience of Buddhism because they're stopped by customs in the first place.

S: On the other hand, one has to understand the basis of the customs. If one does go along to a monk, you should go along with a reasonable amount of receptivity, and the different customs, different ways of behaving, are meant originally to encourage that. On the one hand one mustn't insist on people behaving in a certain way, but on the other hand people should be sufficiently sensitive to know that a certain mode of [4] behaviour is appropriate, even though they may not strictly follow the traditional customs.

Dhammarati: I suppose one of the reasons for that kind of custom breaking down was where receptivity has been exploited.

S: Yes. It's interesting that already, apparently, during the lifetime of the Buddha, one finds people expressing this kind of attitude - finds a young man (I'm assuming he's young, he's merely younger than his father; he could be 40 or he could be 60) - but it's interesting to find him expressing this sort of attitude even during the lifetime of the Buddha.

Atula: We get quite a lot of people who actually come along on retreat and taking part that are quite into materialism. I don't know quite why they come along, but it's as though they're wavering somewhere, but they seem to be putting forward materialist views all the time, trying to cut through what we're trying to do. It's always an interesting experience. It's happened two or three times.

S: Well, of course, then the question arises, why have they come at all? And sometimes their critical attitude masks a defensiveness. Sometimes perhaps they're afraid of being taken in. Perhaps they've been taken in before. Perhaps they've been with the Scientologists for two or three years, or the Hare Krishna people for a year or two, so that hasn't completely extinguished any sort of spiritual interest that they've had but has made them rather cautious about joining some other movement or some other tradition.

Atula: I think there's a great number of people round us at the moment that have had their fingers burned, and are a bit wary, but still pursuing.

S: Well, if one considers how well known the Scientologists are, how well known the Moonies are, how well known the Hare Krishna people are, or have been; if one considers that tens of thousands of people, if not hundreds of thousands, have passed through these organizations and come out the other end, then there must be a lot of people in circulation who have burned their fingers, as you say, but who nonetheless are still, many of them, searching, searching for some kind of spiritual path or some kind of meaningful way of life. We have perhaps to bear that in mind, that their experience of spiritual groups hitherto may not have been entirely fortunate.

Atula: I think you've got to really be able to talk to those people and allow all those objections to come out.

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Ratnapala: I think apart from people who have had their fingers burned there does seem to be a general scepticism in Western society; they are being more scientific in their approach. Anything that doesn't express itself in scientific terms is viewed with great scepticism.

S: Well, in a sense everybody has had their fingers burned. The whole culture, the whole civilization has had its fingers burned through contact with Christianity, one might say, or at least certain aspects of Christianity. So it isn't surprising that people, if they do break free from Christianity to any extent at all, should be a little cautious in many cases about transferring their allegiance to some other tradition.

Prasannasiddhi: What we're doing in the Friends does seem quite radical, quite different from the normal modes of behaviour within society. And it also seems to go quite deep into a person's psyche in a way, these various things, so that it's not something quite superficial that you're asking people to accept, it's something that has the implications to go quite far.

S: Well, you're asking them to give their whole lives as it were, so you mustn't be surprised if they want time to think it all over, and they want to have a good look at what you're doing and what it is that they're being asked to give their whole lives to. It would be strange if they didn't. In fact, it would be suspicious if they didn't. If they surrendered immediately, you might think it was simply your personal charisma or good looks or something of that sort that they'd fallen for, not the Dharma.

Tejamati: I think nowadays we'd be tempted to stop that sort of thing happening - people just surrendering themselves.

S: Well, after all there are lots of people around, as you know, who want to be ordained but haven't been ordained yet. So we certainly don't snatch at people. We certainly don't fail to give them proper time for consideration before committing themselves.

Atula: It seems as though sometimes it's good to see it beforehand. I think some people get a very good experience on retreat, and then sort of come back and give everything up, and a reaction sets in much later, and usually, when it happens in those extreme cases, people take off ... in such a way that you lose contact with them, which is a real ...

S: It does seem as though no problem is entirely new. Anyway, let's pass on to paragraph two.

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"Finally as the father was about to die, he called his son to his deathbed and inquired whether he would at least listen to his parting advice. 'Most assuredly, dear father, I shall carry out any order you may be pleased to enjoin on me,' he replied. 'Well, then, dear son, after your morning bath, worship the six quarters.' The father asked him to do so hoping that one day or other, while the son was so engaged, the Buddha or his disciples would see him and make it an occasion to preach an appropriate discourse to him. And since deathbed wishes are to be remembered, Sigala carried out his father's wish, not however knowing its true significance."

S: This is all still from the commentary. 'Finally as the father was about to die' - we don't know how many years passed by; we are simply told 'finally,' after 10 years, 15 years, 20 years, 30 years, all this could have been going on. But 'Finally as the father was about to die, he called his son to his deathbed and inquired whether he would at least listen to his parting advice. 'Most assuredly, dear father, I shall carry out any order you may be pleased to enjoin on me,' he replied. 'Well, then, dear son, after your morning bath, worship the six quarters.'

A few points needing comment here. This used, apparently, to be quite common in the West as well - your father's or your mother's or some other relation's, or even a friend's, deathbed wish. I don't know whether it is so common nowadays. Perhaps we don't have deathbeds in the old sense. But a person's last wishes were usually taken very seriously, I think in all traditions, in all cultures. So what do you think that is, what's the psychological reason for that - that you take very seriously something that someone tells you on their deathbed or asks you to do on their deathbed? One thinks in this connection of the Buddha. I mean, there's a whole sutta, the Mahaparinibbana Sutta, describing the Buddha's last days and giving his last injunctions to the monks, and these are usually considered to have a specially solemn character because the Buddha was on his deathbed, he was about to pass away. So why do you think this is generally so?

Atula: I should think when you're dying you think of the most important things to you. Also I should think, regarding the wish of the dead, that you would set the mind of the person about to die at peace to die.

S: Yes. There may be something on the dying person's mind, something he's very concerned about, something he wishes he could have done himself, but which he's not been able to do, which he'd like his heirs perhaps to carry out.

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Dhammarati: So you're down to the very quintessence of the relationship [at the moment of death], where all the extraneous details are gone.

S: Yes, and the relations or the friends are anxious no doubt at such a moment to set the mind of the dying person at rest. Whatever disagreements there might have been up to that point are just all put aside. Here we find the son saying, 'Most assuredly, dear father, I shall carry out any order you may be pleased to enjoin on me.' They may have disagreed very strongly about religion all those years. The son may have consistently refused to go along with his father to the Buddha, to the monks, but when it comes to the point where his father is on his deathbed, he so to speak forgets all that. He's willing to do anything the father may ask.

So it is as though the time of death is, as we know in any case, a sort of existential moment. But here the existential moment is sort of placed within the context of, one might say, human communication, of human relationships, because you very often don't die alone, people are gathered round you, maybe your closest relations, your closest friends, people that you've lived with for years and years in one way or another, and at that moment the dying person thinks of something that is of great importance to him or her, something that perhaps is on their mind or something they want carried out. So they give expression to that, under those conditions, in those circumstances. The people round about, those who are near and dear, are only too willing to satisfy that person. Perhaps they are even regretting that they hadn't carried out that person's wishes before. We don't know. In this case, we don't know.

Padmapani: It seems to be a sort of amnesty period, if there has been any strife in the family; a period where the wishes of the dying person are respected even though there has been trouble. It's like an area where, if there is anything that has been unsettled but has been put off during the life, because the person is not going to be around that last wish is respected. I don't know if amnesty is the right word. It's a sort of truce.

: `No go'.

Dhammarati: There's a shift in perspective, isn't there, from ... death into the much more ... ?

S: It's as though one has got to settle it. One has got to sort it out now or never, otherwise it will be unfinished business for ever. There's a verse in the Dhammapada where the Buddha says words to this effect - what is it, in the first chapter of the Dhammapada? What he says, in [8] effect - I can't quote the exact words - is that we don't know when we are going to die, so we should settle our quarrels. It would be a great pity to die with them unsettled. You may have had a quarrel. You may have had a misunderstanding with someone of whom you are quite fond. But supposing there was to be an accident. Supposing you were to have an accident, or they were to have an accident, and one of you was to die, or even both of you died, before that could be settled, before that could be sorted out. If you were the survivor you'd feel quite unhappy about that, that for ever and ever that would be the situation, at least as far as this life is concerned - that you'd died unreconciled.

There's an incident of this sort, I was reading recently, in the life of Dickens to the effect that there was a quite serious quarrel between Dickens and Thackeray, and neither spoke to the other for years, even though they were going to the same club. But, for some reason or other, Thackeray, I think it was, decided that he should bring that quarrel to an end. So the next time he saw Dickens he just went up to him and put out his hand and said: `It's time we just finished this foolish quarrel.' So Dickens said: `I'm very glad to do so,' and they shook hands; and only a week later, I think it was, Thackeray heard that Dickens had died. So he was very pleased that he had taken that action. Otherwise it would have been an unresolved quarrel for ever and ever, so to speak.

Ratnapala: Would that have karmic [consequences]?

S: Well, any unskilful action has karmic consequences, but in a way you would make it worse because you couldn't help brooding over it, perhaps, and regretting that you hadn't resolved the quarrel before the other person's death - no doubt even regretting in that way could be unskilful.

Ratnapala: Are you talking about the regrets taking place after the death?

S: Yes. I mean, it's not much use regretting then. Well, you can sincerely regret and resolve that in the case of other friends you won't behave in that way. In that way it could be skilful. But you could just indulge in quite fruitless, quite futile regret.

Ratnapala: So one continues to regret and mourn after death about previous life?

S: No. What I'm saying is that, if somebody dies with whom you've had a quarrel and they die before you've resolved it, then you are going to feel quite sorry about that. You are going to

regret it. So you can [9] regret it skilfully or you can regret it unskilfully. You can regret it skilfully if it incites you or if it motivates you to behave differently in future with other friends with whom you've had misunderstandings - but you could regret unskilfully if you just felt sorry, and started blaming yourself and feeling guilty but didn't actually do anything about it with regard to other friends.

So the death bit does seem to be a sort of existential situation. And your communication with other people is reduced to its essentials - that what is uppermost, really, in your mind comes out. What has really been in your mind, you give expression to it then. And also, by their willingness to fulfil or not fulfil your dying wishes, they give expression to where they stand really with regard to you. So the whole relationship is exposed. So in this case it would seem that, despite their disagreement, there was still a lot of mutual good will between father and son. That's the impression that one gets here. Their disagreement over whether to go to the monks or not had not disrupted their basic relationship. That remained quite positive still. Also you notice the father doesn't ask the son to promise to visit the monks or the Buddha. Why do you think he doesn't do that?

Atula: Because he's tried it once before.

S: But on his deathbed?

: ...coercion...

: It seems to me he's not prepared to be pushy, and to allow him a bit of space.

Tejamati: Would that be another example of a kind of *fait accompli*, where the father's dying and so he knows that because of his predicament that would force his son into doing what he wanted ...?

S: But the son does say: 'Most assuredly, dear father, I shall carry out any order you may be pleased to enjoin on me.' The father knows he can't take that too literally, presumably. He knows, after all, that his son is deeply affected by the fact that his father is dying. But he also knows that moods can change. So he knows he can't ask him too much. He can't ask him to go too directly against his own convictions. The father apparently is a wise man. He's got some sense of skilful means.

Padmapani: Does that also mean that, although the son would carry out the father's wish, he might have quite a wrong attitude if he had to go out to meet the Buddha or the monks, and therefore that would affect his receptivity to the Buddha or the monks?

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S: Yes, he might just carry out his father's wishes in a purely mechanical fashion which wouldn't be very much good.

Devapriya: Some ritual in this way would actually prepare him to, when the Buddha did come along.

S: When he says: 'Well, then, dear son, after your morning bath worship the six quarters,' the son can accept that because there's in a way no meaning in it, so far as he is concerned. He

just does what his father has asked him to do. Nothing to do with Buddhism, nothing to do with monks. It's just his father's whim, he thinks, that he'd like him to do this every morning. All right, no harm satisfying the old chap. You see? It's something sort of quite neutral. The fact that it doesn't have much meaning is useful here, almost.

: What are the six quarters?

S: Ah, well, we will go into that in a minute.

Dhammarati: It did strike me as a bit far-fetched when I read it, because I read through the sutta first. It seemed to be quite big - the meeting there between the Buddha's universal religion and an ethnic religion - whereas here, when it becomes like a dying man is keeping a check on his son, it almost makes it a bit less profound.

S: Well, we'll see. Let's take it step by step. So he asks him to do something to which the son can't offer any psychological resistance. And we're told the reason. It says: 'The father asked him to do so hoping that one day or other, while the son was so engaged, the Buddha or his disciples would see him, and make it an occasion to preach an appropriate discourse to him.' It is significant, perhaps, that the father is asking him to do something - he wasn't asking him to believe anything, but was asking him to do something, something which was, as it were, public. 'After your morning bath worship the six quarters.' We mustn't forget the conditions of ancient Indian life, or conditions of Indian life even today. The morning bath would not be in a bathroom, it would probably be in the river. And he'd probably worship the six quarters on the river bank too. So it's a quite open public thing. A lot of people would see him doing this. Whereas, if he asked him just to believe something, or something of that sort, no one would have seen, no one would have known, perhaps. But he's asking him to do something, and do it in such a way that it will be something public, a lot of people are going to see it in due course and therefore there's a possibility that the Buddha or one of his disciples will see it.

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Prasannasiddhi: Also the act of worshipping the six quarters, you could almost say it's like a ritual, it could have some effects.

S: The Sutta itself doesn't give us any information, or very little information, about how he worships the various quarters. We'll go into that in a minute. But, yes, it could be that - the fact that the worship does have a positive effect: he's showing reverence to something or other - perhaps he hardly knows what - and perhaps that is helping to put him into a rather receptive frame of mind for when he eventually does meet the Buddha or one of his disciples. Because worship is worship, howsoever directed.

Tejamati: Do you think it's very likely that the father would have spoken to the Buddha about his son?

S: Well, it does say: 'The father asked him to do so hoping that one day or other ...' I doubt very much whether the father had actually spoken to the Buddha, but it's as though he had a lot of confidence in the Buddha and his disciples. He knew that they were around. He knew, presumably, that they took notice of what people were doing. He knew that they cared for people; that they would take any opportunity of teaching the Dharma. So he felt that if he

could get his son to do something public, something which a lot of people would see in the course of years perhaps, then there was a possibility of the Buddha seeing, or at least one of his disciples, and some contact being established, some conversation got going, some communication got going, and then there would be the possibility of his son coming into contact with the Dharma. The father seems to have reflected in this sort of way.

And then: `...since deathbed wishes are to be remembered, Sigala carried out his father's wish, not however knowing its true significance' - perhaps not understanding what was meant by worshipping the six quarters, and not understanding, of course, why his father had asked him to do that. Had he known, perhaps he wouldn't have done it. But it seems to him a fairly innocuous sort of thing to do. It's a customary thing, a respectable sort of thing. It's what respectable pious people do. It's a religious practice by himself. It doesn't bring him into contact with any monks. So he sees, apparently, no reason for not doing it.

It also seems from this that Sigala doesn't have any objection, so to speak, to religion as such. I mean, clearly what his father has asked him to do - that is to say, worship the six quarters after his morning bath - is some kind of religious observance. He doesn't mind doing it. But you notice that it's an observance that doesn't cost him anything. He's just worshipping the six quarters, saluting the six quarters, after his morning bath. Well, he's going to have his morning bath anyway, that being a [12] universal Indian custom. And, of course, worshipping the six quarters doesn't involve contact with any monks, with any other religious - as it were professionally religious - or holy people. So one could perhaps go into this a little bit, and say that there are quite a lot of people who don't object to a certain amount of religious observance provided it doesn't cost them anything and it doesn't bring them into contact with people who might become their spiritual friends!

Ratnapani: You almost offer [the] skilful possibility that people can learn the meditation. They don't have to join anything, but they can practise it at home. Almost offering that to reassure, initially.

S: Yes, indeed.

Tejamati: But do you think that's not very good?

S: Well, I did say `as a skilful means', and whether it is a skilful means you can only tell by looking at the actual person with whom you're dealing. You can't generalize. It may be a skilful means with some people, with others it may not. Only the person on the spot, in actual contact, can really decide. Obviously we mustn't seem to make it too easy. But on the other hand we mustn't seem to water down what we actually have to offer.

Ratnapani: Different people seem to have different prejudices. Quite a few seem to walk in and say, first, `Is this a weird religious group that's going to brainwash me?' Secondly, `How much does it cost?' and `When do you demand that I give you everything?' And then there's the whole business that they begin to see the implications for the people who are very involved, and, as you've mentioned before, perhaps a bit worried about it involving their whole life. [Those are] three very common things which we are dealing with, but in different degrees in different people, and in a different order. They seem to occur again and again.

Padmapani: Do you think, Bhante, ... this idea of people wearing kesas more? One should

wear one's kesa, but not everybody wears a kesa. I know sometimes I don't because I've found that it's better sometimes to go incognito. If there are other people wearing kesas, then sometimes I will wear a kesa. I mean, do you feel Order Members should wear a kesa when taking classes? When you have got people coming ...

S: Well, just taking classes, the person who is taking the class should certainly wear his kesa, and probably the person supporting him.

Padmapani: I didn't actually mean -

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S: But I wouldn't like to lay down any hard and fast rule about every other Order Member who is present. If you're participating in a Puja in the Shrine Room, well then, yes, you should wear your kesa, because if you don't wear your kesa in the shrine with the Buddha image and the incense and the flowers etc., well then, you can say, in the words of the Zen saying: 'The cow goes through the door but the tail gets stuck.' When you're laying on everything else but you're just not wearing your kesa, that would seem to be rather ridiculous. But certainly in the classes or some other occasion, there could well be supernumerary Order Members who might consider it skilful, for the sake of contact with people, not to wear their kesas. Though, of course, Mitras might be expected to perform that sort of function; some of them do, I know.

Padmapani: I suppose one has to take into [account] the local conditions.

S: Whatever those may be. Well, not even local conditions - conditions that you encounter at the time, on the spot; the person you are actually dealing with. You mustn't have fixed ideas about the locality, or think 'This is Bethnal Green, therefore I've got to behave in such and such a way,' or 'This is Glasgow, therefore I've got to behave in such and such a way.' No. That may be an entirely wrong approach. You just have to see who you are landed with. It might be Bethnal Green, but the chap might have come from Preston! Or he might have come from Southend, or from Paris.

Tejamati: Or from Mayfair.

S: He might have come from anywhere - or from Mayfair, yes. So see...

Tape 1, Side B

...presuppositions.

Do you think that deathbed wishes should always be carried out? Here it says 'Deathbed wishes are to be remembered'; presumably this implies carried out. Do you think deathbed wishes should always be carried out? Sometimes you can be placed in a quandary, surely. Supposing a dying person asks you to do something which you feel is unskilful or which is against your convictions, what should you do then? You may be placed in a very awkward, a very difficult situation.

Devapriya: You would just have to weigh it up. Maybe it's best to tell them that you will do it, knowing that you won't (laughter). But I don't know.

Padmapani: That's quite a loaded situation.

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S: But supposing - let's put a very crude and very difficult example - supposing somebody who was quite near and dear to you was dying and they were to say to you: 'There's just one thing I want you to promise me before I die, and then I can die in peace: that you'll give up this foolish involvement with Buddhism.' Well, what could you say? What could you say? I mean, they've no right to ask you that, even on their deathbed. So what could one say?

Tejamati: Well, you could reply in a very roundabout way by saying, 'Well, I'll do the very best for me.' Something like that.

S: Well, people on their deathbeds are not usually satisfied with roundabout replies. They will know it's roundabout. But anyway, we can only hope that, if we do find ourselves ever in that sort of situation, the very fact that it is an existential situation will sharpen our wits to such an extent that we shall say the right thing. And often this can happen. (Laughter.) You don't know in advance but, if the situation is such, your sort of inner reserves do emerge. You can't think, on an occasion like this, in advance what you would say. You don't know. But on the actual occasion itself, and if you really were at all into your practice, if you really were into your Going for Refuge and so on, you would find the right thing to say which did not betray your own convictions and which at the same time did not entirely disappoint the dying person.

Dhammarati: You're not obliged to humour and placate the person on the deathbed? ...

S: No. Perhaps that is the very moment when they should face the truth - that they might have lived with illusion but let them not die with illusion, even though it may be, perhaps, a little painful. Perhaps the moment of truth has come for them. Perhaps for years they've clung on to the idea that you were just foolishly involved with Buddhism. Maybe now it's time for them to face the truth that your involvement is a serious one. It's not just a whim, it's your individual choice that as an individual you have a right to make. Perhaps it's time they faced up to that.

Ratnapala: Bhante, when you think that the state in which a person dies, you know, death-proximate karma - apparently quite weighty and very important - shouldn't you bear that in mind as well to sort of help them die in the most positive state possible, rather than just drop something in their lap that you've been smouldering on for 20 years?

S: But, on the other hand, as I said, if they've lived with illusion for all their lives, it's not going to be very easy for them to experience a moment of truth for the first time.

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: You might be breaking through to them, bringing about a change in them.

Padmapani: Again they'll be breaking through into something when they die, anyway. You could actually prepare them for the shock to come.

S: The shock to come, yes.

Prasannasiddhi: Perhaps you've got to be honest, but you've also got to be sensitive.

S: Well, that is a thing which a lot of people find very difficult to combine - these two, to be honest but to be sensitive. Anyone can be honest and blunt, but it takes a much more experienced person to be honest and sensitive, sensitive and honest.

Has anybody ever had this experience of someone asking them something on their deathbed? Perhaps you haven't attended many deathbeds.

: Have you?

S: Not many, no.

Atula: ... I attended my father's three or four (weeks? years?) ago... It wasn't very clear what he was really asking. He was asking me to live a more settled life...

S: What did he mean by settled?

Atula: I think he was asking because he had been worried about me by my mother... I said more or less I believed in what I was doing...

S: Anyway, let's pass on; perhaps we've explored that sufficiently. Next paragraph.

Now it was the custom of the Buddha to rise from his sleep at four o'clock, and after experiencing Nibbanic Bliss for an hour to pervade the whole world with his boundless thoughts of loving-kindness. It is at this hour that he surveys the world with his great compassion to find out to what fellow-being he could be of service on that day. One morning Sigala was caught in the net of the Buddha's compassion; and with his vision the Buddha, seeing that Sigala could be shown a better channel for his acts of worship, decided: 'This day will I discourse to Sigala on the layman's Vinaya (code of discipline). That discourse will be of benefit to [16] many folk. There must I go.' The Buddha thereon came up to him on his way for alms to Rajagaha; and seeing him engaged in his worship of the six quarters, delivered this great discourse which contains in brief the whole domestic and social duty of the layman.

S: This material is still drawn from the commentary. 'Now it was the custom of the Buddha to rise from his sleep at four o'clock.' It says 'from his sleep,' but some traditions maintain that the Buddha didn't sleep in the ordinary sense, but that he rested, was in a sort of not exactly reflective state, but sort of twilight state rather than in the complete darkness of unconsciousness, and that he did not dream - which is what some traditions say.

Padmavajra: Is that maybe some Hinayana schools?

S: Yes. 'And after experiencing Nibbanic Bliss for an hour to pervade the whole world with his boundless thoughts of loving-kindness.' I think we shouldn't take this too literally, as it were. Perhaps we can imagine, so to speak, the Buddha 'waking up' - that is to say, he has completed his period of rest. He is physically refreshed and even mentally refreshed - if a Buddha requires mental refreshment, which is something that is difficult to know. What would one imagine happened then? Supposing one has a Buddha, an Enlightened being; he's

rested, he's physically rested, he's mentally rested, he doesn't have anything in particular to do. What would be his experience then?

Padmapani: Objective?

S: No, I was thinking in much more general terms.

Devapriya: Dhyanic?

S: Well, it says 'nibbanic bliss', which suggests something transcending the dhyanas. It seems to me that it's rather analogous to the ordinary person's after-death experience, experiencing the clear light of the Void. Here is the Buddha. He's Enlightened. He is rested, physically and mentally. He has nothing to do. He is quiet. He is undisturbed. So what would be his experience? Presumably his experience would be one of undiluted Reality - Reality not 'obscured' by any particular train of thought, relating to any particular person or situation. He doesn't have to answer questions. He doesn't have to consider people's problems. So presumably, for an hour or whatever the period might have been, he would have been in an uninterrupted experience of undiluted Reality. And then, having had that experience, for what seems to have been a suitable period, he then directs his attention to, so to speak, his day's work; and he does that by way of developing compassion. After his experience of undiluted Reality springs his compassion. It's as [17]though his experience of undiluted Reality, his renewed - again, so to speak, experience of that, because he doesn't actually lose it - but his renewed experience at least, his renewed experience of undiluted and unobscured Reality renews his compassion. That flows forth again.

So 'after experiencing Nibbanic Bliss for an hour to pervade the whole world with his boundless thoughts of loving-kindness.' We mustn't imagine the Buddha as sitting down and doing his morning meditation and then after that an hour's metta bhavana. We mustn't think in those terms at all.

Ratnapani: ...doing the Mindfulness!

S: We mustn't think in those terms at all. It's the Buddha rising as it were from sleep, or what is the equivalent of sleep for a Buddha, having that enjoyment of unobscured Reality and from that quite naturally and spontaneously flows compassion. And in the light of that compassion he considers how he can make himself most useful on that particular day; whom he can help. And then he sees, in this case, Sigala.

: ...

S: Well, as I said here, we mustn't take this too literally. We can only imagine the way a Buddha operates by analogy with the way in which ordinary people operate.

Dhammarati: There's the idea that there is an obscured experiencing of Reality, that the devas have an obscured experience...

S: Well, that's the way I put the word, so to speak - in inverted commas. The Buddha is always a Buddha, but Narada does say here, drawing on the commentary, 'after experiencing Nibbanic Bliss for an hour.' The suggestion here is that he does not experience nibbanic bliss the other 23 hours; [that is the] clear implication. But does that mean he's a Buddha for that

hour and not a Buddha for 23 hours? Surely not. Do you see what I mean? So what can happen? What can be the difference between his hour's experience of nibbanic bliss in the morning and his experience during the rest of the day? So, to indicate that difference, to try to give some explanation of that difference, I speak of his experience of undiluted Reality being, as it were, obscured. When I say obscured I don't mean that he lost it, but I mean - and again one is speaking analogically - that over that experience there is put a very thin veil, a very fine veil which is made up of his dealings with other people, his thoughts and his words as he deals with other people, as he deals with so-called objective situations.

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Padmapani: It reminds me of the Buddha's parinirvana. He goes through these different stages, when he's leaving his body. He goes through the first stage of watching the night and up to the second stage, and the third stage. It implies leaving the soil of the world behind.

Padmavajra: It would be a thin veil, but a thin veil which would be concerned with other people's development.

S: Yes. One speaks of it as a veil. One is using, so to speak, the language of the Hinayana. The Mahayana might not speak of it in terms of a veil.

But 'It is at this hour that he surveys the world with his great compassion' - here one is reminded of Avalokitesvara, or the very name of Avalokitesvara - 'to find out to what fellow-being he could be of service on that day. One morning Sigala was caught in the net of the Buddha's compassion, and with his vision the Buddha, seeing that Sigala could be shown a better channel for his acts of worship, decided: 'This day will I discourse to Sigala on the layman's Vinaya (code of discipline). That discourse will be of benefit to many folk. There must I go.' Again, we can't take this too literally.

Padmapani: You get the impression, although you say not taking it too literally, that he is aware of getting the maximum impact in the amount of time that he is in the world, so to speak.

S: Yes. The Buddha doesn't want to waste his energy. He wants to make the best use that he possibly can of the day. It may be that people should take a hint from this. You get up in the morning. You have your morning meditation, then you should be in a positive frame of mind and consider how best to use the day while you are in that positive frame of mind, and use it accordingly. Maybe when you wake up you're not in a very good mood. You might even be a bit grumpy. So don't plan your day then. Get your meditation over, as it [19] were, get yourself into a reasonably positive frame of mind, maybe a slightly illumined frame of mind. Get yourself into a positive state and then, in the light of that positive state, just decide what you are going to do, how you are going to spend the day; or just remind yourself of duties or engagements which you have already entered, and just reflect how you are going to fulfil them, what would be the best way of doing that, whether there is anything useful to do in addition: anyone you could see, anyone you could talk to, anyone who needed kalyana mitrata.

In other words, don't let the situation get on top of you. Don't let the world get on top of you. Don't feel as though you're at the mercy of external forces, [as though] you're just like a football being kicked about all over the field by these hefty great players. Take the initiative,

as it were. Take your life into your own hands. This is what the Buddha was doing on the very highest level.

You notice that the Buddha is represented as saying "This day will I discourse to Sigala on the layman's Vinaya." It is called the Ghihi(?) Vinaya. The Sigalovada Sutta is said in the Theravada tradition to embody the layman's Vinaya, the Ghihi Vinaya or the householder's Vinaya. The analogy, of course, is with that of the monk. The monk has his Vinaya which is regarded by the Theravada as being a Vinaya, a code of discipline, for the layman in much the same way that the patimokkha and the rest of the monastic code is regarded as Vinaya for the monks.

Tejamati: Why do you think the Buddha spoke to Sigala on a code of discipline? Why do you think he didn't speak about some profound doctrine?

S: Well, there is a clue to that here in what the Buddha reflects. 'One morning Sigala was caught in the net of the Buddha's compassion; and with his vision the Buddha, seeing that Sigala could be shown a better channel for his acts of worship' - Sigala was already engaging in acts of worship, so he probably wanted to take him, as it were, from where he already was. So he showed him 'a better channel for his acts of worship.' In other words, the type of discourse the Buddha delivers is determined, at least as regards his starting point, by what the person he is addressing is actually already doing.

But again, you mustn't forget this is not the Sutta. This is the commentary, the commentary reflecting the Buddha's reflecting in this way. You mustn't take it too literally. What was important in the Buddha's eyes, in any case, was to establish a connection; establish a connection with what the person is already doing. You lead him step by step from that; you don't abruptly introduce some entirely new topic - unless, of course, you are very skilful. You may do that. The Zen masters sometimes did that. But if you did that, it would only apparently be an abrupt introduction of a new topic because, if you were a skilled meditation master or an Enlightened teacher, you would see what that person's basic preoccupation was. You would see very deeply. So you might address yourself to that, ignoring what seemed to be the state of affairs on the surface, what seemed to be the occupation on the surface. You had to address yourself directly to what you saw he was really ... concerned with, and you would be appearing to speak abruptly or to introduce a new topic only to someone who couldn't see the person to whom you were speaking as clearly as you could see yourself.

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But normally in the Pali Canon the Buddha is represented as leading people, step by step, from where they already are. That is his usual approach, his usual procedure, the safe one, so to speak. I mean, if someone comes down to the Centre and wants to talk about computers, all right, talk about computers for a while. Sooner or later you'll get on to something else. Don't insist on stopping him from speaking about computers and getting in what you want to say about Buddhism. No, go along with him, talk about computers, and later you'll come around to talking about the Dharma. Even if you don't, well, be content with having for the time being just established a friendly contact, so that he recognizes you next time and he comes up and speaks to you, or at least says hello to you.

You see, Sigala's father was concerned mainly that he should establish a contact with the Buddha. He was confident that, if that was done, the rest would follow. So with people

generally, one might say, the main thing is to establish a friendly contact, a personal individual contact. It doesn't matter how you do it. You can do that talking about almost anything. And, after all, if it is at the Centre, the person to whom you are speaking has come along to the Centre knowing it's a Buddhist Centre, and expecting to talk about Buddhism sooner or later. He just may not know how to approach it. He may be afraid of making a fool of himself. He may be thinking: does one ask about Nirvana or what is one supposed to do? He doesn't know, so he talks about some ordinary thing for a while, to get his bearings or to sound you out, or to develop some confidence in you. On the other hand, of course, if someone has talked about computers for three or four weeks running, you may feel 'It's time I gently shifted the conversation round' - but gently. Or you may perceive that what he really wants to talk about is Buddhism but he just doesn't know how to go about it. You've got to make a start. You've got to introduce the subject. He's not going to do it, though he would like to. And all this requires is sensitivity and a little finesse - or quite a lot of finesse.

So 'The Buddha thereon came up to him on his way for alms to Rajagaha; and, seeing him engaged in his worship of the six quarters, delivered this great discourse which contains in brief the whole domestic and social duty of the layman.' Whether it does, in fact, contain it - that is to say the whole domestic and social duty of the layman - we shall see, perhaps, when we have considered the Sutta.

Would someone like to read the final paragraph of the preface, and then we can pause for a cup of tea?

Commenting on the Sutta, the Venerable Buddhaghosa says, 'Nothing in the duties of a householder is left unmentioned. This Sutta is called the Vinaya of the [21] householder. Hence in one who practises what he has been taught in it, growth is to be looked for, not decay.' And Mrs Rhys Davids adds: 'The Buddha's doctrine of love and good will between man and man is here set forth in a domestic and social ethics with more comprehensive detail than elsewhere. And truly we may say even now of this Vinaya or code of discipline, so fundamental are the human interests involved, so sane and wide is the Wisdom that envisages them, that the utterances are as fresh and practically as binding today and here as they were then at Rajagaha. Happy would have been the village or the clan on the banks of the Ganges where the people were full of the kindly spirit of fellow feeling, the noble spirit of justice which breathes through these naive and simple sayings. Not less happy would be the village or the family at the banks of the Thames today, of which this could be said.'

S: Or the banks of the River Yare! That doesn't really require much in the way of comment, does it? The quotation within the quotation is taken from Rhys Davids' introduction to his [her?] translation of the Sigalovada Sutta in the Sacred Books of the Buddhists series, which I also have, as well as the Pali text.

Ratnapani: You get the feeling with this commentary, Bhante, that somebody between the Buddha's time and the Ceylonese time, Buddhaghosa and that - I get the feeling that someone said: 'This is how it could well have been,' and wrote accordingly. Is that quite likely?

S: I think it does sometimes happen, but at the same time no doubt some ... traditions were handed down. It is probably quite impossible for us to sort out now which is which.

Ratnapani: So people would remember the Sutta itself and would be reciting it, and then, as a

sort of separate memory process going along with it, a verbal commentary, perhaps telling a story...

S: Well, it is interesting, and anyway we are assured that the commentary has not been incorporated with the text. The text has been kept quite separate, the commentary has been kept quite separate, even though they were at one time, presumably, both oral traditions. But one has not been mixed up with the other, so therefore we can have a fair amount of confidence in the oral tradition that ... is the Tipitaka, ... at least as going back to India; perhaps you can't say anything more than that, but at least it goes back to India, it was not produced in Ceylon.

Tejananda: Did Buddhaghosa actually write down his commentaries in the first place?

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S: They seem to have been written down. It would seem also that the Sinhalese commentaries have been written down when ... He seems to have been working with ...

(TEA BREAK)

S: Would someone like to read these first paragraphs?

(Text) Sigalovada Sutta

S: Just one or two comments here. Some manuscripts apparently have Sigala, others Singala. The meaning of the word is actually 'jackal'. I suppose in India, just as in England, people did sometimes have animal names. But in using the name, one didn't actually think ... 'Mr Lyon' in English, but we don't actually think that he was a lion, in fact it is even spelled differently from the modern spelling of lion. Sigala means jackal, but that doesn't seem to have any special significance.

Padmavajra: What does vada mean?

S: Sigala Ovada - ovada means advice. The Sutta of Advice to Sigala.

Thus have I heard...

S: Perhaps I should remind you - you really should know this - that it's supposed to be Ananda speaking after the Buddha's parinirvana and rehearsing, that is to say repeating or reciting, all the discourses that he has ever heard the Buddha give. Some scholars say - because in the original Pali don't forget there's no punctuation - some scholars now say that the introductory words should be read as 'Thus have I heard on one occasion', not 'Thus have I heard: On one occasion - '. I think many scholars would now accept that it would be 'Thus have I heard on one occasion.' Anyway, carry on.

Thus have I heard, on one occasion the Exalted One was dwelling in the Bamboo Grove, the Squirrels' Sanctuary, near Rajagaha.

S: Yes. The term translated as 'the Exalted One' is Bhagava, often translated as 'Lord', with a capital L. I've gone into the meaning of this term in the seminar on the Ti Ratana Vandana, so

we need not go into it again. ` - was dwelling in the Bamboo Grove' - the Veluvana(?), `the Squirrels' Sanctuary', sometimes translated as `the squirrels' feeding ground' - `near Rajagaha.' Rajagaha is, of course, the modern Rajgir in Bihar. It's not very far from Nalanda. One is still shown the site of the Bamboo Grove just outside the main gate of Rajagaha, which in the Buddha's time was a walled city inside a ring of hills. One can still see [23] quite extensive ruins. So this is one of the Buddha's as it were favourite spots, one of the places where he very often stayed and where he gave a number of teachings.

Tejamati: So it's obviously not still a grove? It is just ...?

S: I'm afraid - I think there are a few bamboos around, it's sort of waste ground now. When I went there in 1950, there were a few bamboos. It's been greatly changed since those days. It's been improved - but I don't know whether really improved - by the government... various ... tions and additions. But it would seem that outside the main gate, or one of the main gates, of the old walled city of Rajagaha, which of course was the capital of Magadha in the Buddha's day, there was this grove. One imagines a quite dense grove, even a whole forest - vana can mean forest ... grove - of predominantly bamboos, and the Buddha had a little old hut where he might stay, or a summer house, or, yes, one could say vihara, but not monastery in the later fully developed sense, in that spot. There people used to visit him, and from there he used to go up into Rajagaha each day for alms.

Tejananda: Did he have any particular people with him at Rajagaha?

S: No, he had quite a lot of followers, it would seem, in Rajagaha. Among them, apparently, was the father of Sigala. Even the king himself was one of his followers, Bimbisara. There were many others.

Prasannasiddhi: One gets the impression that India was much more lush in those days - the vegetation was more ...

S: Well, the population was very much smaller. We don't know what the population was, but we do know that, I think it was in the reign of Jahangir in the Mogul period, that is to say about 2000 years later, the population of India was estimated as having been 30 million. In the Buddha's day it must have been considerably less. It's quite impossible, perhaps, to form an estimate, but nothing like what it is today. We know from the Pali Canon alone, from the Pali record, that vast stretches of the country that are now under cultivation were simply covered with forests. And the Buddha and his disciples used to wander from one village to another, one little town to another, along forest paths. And they could easily turn aside and spend a few hours just sitting under a tree. As in Europe, even, until not very many hundreds of years ago, the forest, the jungle, came right up to the city walls, apart from a few fields made in clearings in the jungle. The whole earth was covered by vegetation at that time, by forests - or much of the earth was covered by forests, to an extent we can hardly imagine now. The last of the forest is still going. I was reading an article not so many weeks ago to the effect [24] that in the course of the last 20 years two thirds of the Himalayan forest has been cut down. Two thirds! And we know that the last of the really big areas of tropical rain forest in South America, mainly I think in Brazil, is being attacked all the time - in the Amazon basin, I think it is.

So much of certainly northern India, where the Buddha operated, was covered by forest.

There are references in the Pali texts to what is called the Maha Vana, the Great Forest, which seems to have stretched across the greater part of what is now Bihar and UP, which is now almost entirely under cultivation. It's almost entirely rice fields. It wasn't like that in the Buddha's day. As I said, the Buddha and his disciples made their way from one village to another along forest paths. It was quite easy to live in the forest then, to live off fruits, as some of the Indian sages did even before the time of the Buddha.

Prasannasiddhi: So would it have been [due to] the fact that there were so many people using the resources of the earth that things changed?

S: Yes, more and more forests were just cut down and [the earth] cultivated. In some places there is what they call the 'slash and burn' method of cultivation, [where] you just cut down the trees, you burn them, reduce them to ashes, and you dig that in, and then you cultivate that as long as you can, and then when it starts getting exhausted you just move on. You cut down another bit of forest and you burn that in the same way.

Prasannasiddhi: Is that in India or - ?

S: In some parts of India and in many parts of the world. In Africa I think it is the custom... Because it wasn't the feeding of the soil - you know, after cultivation, you have to have more. So in that way a wide area would tend to be devastated.

Ratnapani: It's all right as a system if you've got very few people doing it, because it grows up in 20, 50 or whatever years, behind you.

S: Yes. But certainly the forest was being eroded in the Buddha's time, and was steadily eroded for the next 2000 years, right down to the present day. And it is certainly being eroded in our day, quite drastically, probably at a greater rate than ever before. The last remaining pockets of forest are disappearing quite rapidly even in India. But in the Buddha's day it was very different. Perhaps we have to bear this in mind. It was very lush vegetation.

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Padmapani: I think probably the nearest that you can get to it is the National Park in Nepal. It must have been like that in the Buddha's time.

S: Yes.

Prasannasiddhi: Do you think that in modern times anyone has their eye on the world forest situation? It's appalling, when you think that ...

S: Well, some people do have, but national governments have got complete power and they are interested in what they consider the development of a country, and they are quite blind to broader ecological conservation.

Atula: ... so many trees on the surface of the earth. People don't seem to take that much notice it gets in the way of making money.

Ratnapala: If they plant forests they plant pines because they grow very quickly. That doesn't make for very balanced ecology.

S: In England, wherever you go, the Forestry [Commission] have planted a lot of pine, but there certain kinds of wildlife that don't live in pine ...

Tape 2, Side A

Devapriya: ... an ecological environment needs a really thorough kind of looking after.

S: It has to be done nowadays on a global scale. If there's any international organization, it's only the United Nations, but they don't give such concentrated attention to these sort of issues, unfortunately. And even if they do, they don't have really any power of enforcement, and national governments simply ignore those considerations anyway, if it suits their narrow national interests - well, not even the national interest - the interest of a particular government at a particular time.

Anyway, it wasn't like that in the Buddha's day, therefore we find the Buddha dwelling in the Bamboo Grove, which I'm sure wasn't just half a dozen bamboos round his hut. It probably meant that the forest came right up almost to the city gate, and the Buddha was living just within that forest. So he was quite quiet, quite secluded; at the same time he had access to the city. People could come and visit him.

Anyway, next paragraph.

[26]

Now at that time, young Sigala, a householder's son, rising early in the morning, departing from Rajagaha, with wet clothes and wet hair, worshipped with joined hands the various quarters - namely the east, the south, the west, the north, the nadir, and the zenith.

S: `Now at that time, young Sigala' - ah, Sigalaka, I mean there is a suffix which is a sort of diminutive, it's more like `little Sigala'. `Young Sigala,' gahapati putto(?), the son of a house - what does it say? `Householder' - literally it's `housefather', it's the head, it's the paterfamilias, it's the head of the family. The gahapati is a sort of substantial citizen, someone with his own house, his own property, wife, family, children, servants, employees.

So `young Sigala, a householder's son, rising early in the morning' - Indians usually get up very early in the morning - `departing from Rajagaha, with wet clothes and wet hair, worshipped with joined hands the various quarters.' Indians, you probably know - that is to say, Hindus, as we would say now - are quite concerned with ritual purity. The morning bath is not so much, or not only, for the sake of cleanliness, it's for the sake of ritual purity. You have at least to pour water over yourself, preferably standing in the river, or best of all just to have a dip in the river, and you come out all wet. The climate in India is such that you don't have to bother about drying yourself straight away. So sometimes people just have their bath and come out of the river and they just let it dry off afterwards. They don't bother to dry themselves particularly. We would have to in this country, with this climate.

So, with his clothes and hair still wet, he worships the quarters. We are not told whether he had a bath in a river or a stream or a tank. Very likely it was in a tank, because we can still see those tanks, hot and cold tanks - bathing tanks, that is to say - in Rajagaha. They're still there. They are still in use. And they were in use in the Buddha's day. So he would have just had a dip, come out all wet and just gone somewhere, to some open place perhaps, to an open space, to salute the six quarters as requested by his father on his deathbed.

Tejamati: I'm always a bit confused about this word...

Ratnapala: I thought it was part of the ritual, the clothes and the wet hair.

Tejamati: Yes. Having never been to India I'm always a bit confused about this word tank. It's not literally a tank, is it? It's a sort of dug-out?

S: A tank means, what should one say? - it's -

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Ratnapani: It's like a small reservoir, isn't it?

S: It's like a small reservoir - it's an excavated area. It's more like a swimming pool, but somebody's cut steps going down to it and people bathe there. Sometimes even they take water from it if it's very big. So in South India, especially, every temple has a tank attached to it so that people can take a ceremonial dip and therefore be in a state of ritual purity before going into the temple to worship.

Tejamati: I see. And it's fed by a river or a stream, is it?

S: Yes. At Rajgir, the tanks aren't so very big. They're not much bigger than this room, I think, or some of them may be twice as big, and Rajgir is also famous for its hot springs. So some of them are hot water tanks, not cold water tanks, so it's quite possible that Sigala took his morning bath in one of these. We know that they were in use in the Buddha's time. There are references to them.

Ratnapala: Would they keep their toilet facilities very far away from the tank - thinking of people taking it for drinking water?

S: Well, in those days they weren't aware of the existence of things like germs and the possibility of infection; but also in Rajagaha the water in some of the tanks is impregnated with sulphur. It's yellow, yellow-green. That is supposed to be good for all sorts of skin complaints.

So one imagines him getting up and having his morning bath, and then he apparently goes outside the city, with his clothes and hair still wet; and outside the city, maybe on some patch of open land, or some convenient place, he just joins his hands in salutation. One imagines it's - we're not given any details of the ceremony, if it is a ceremony. He just salutes with joined hands, to the east, to the south, to the west and to the north - you notice he goes round in clockwise direction, doesn't he? - and then the nadir, which is the point below, and then the zenith, which is the point above.

Now Rhys Davids has something to say about this in his introduction to his translation of the Sutta. I'll just read you the relevant portion. `The object of young Sigala's open-air matins will seem unfamiliar to readers who are more accustomed to the names of Vedic deities surviving in the allusions scattered throughout the ...: Prajapati, Indra and Soma, Varuna and Issana. He was probably no Brahmin, or we might have found him tending Agni's perpetual fire or bathing his conscience clean in some stream of symbolical efficacy. The commentary does not help us. The historical sense had not developed when the great commentators wrote, and

they are incurious as to beliefs and rites that were possibly no longer alive, at least in their own environment.'

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The rest isn't very relevant - but then he goes on to say, a little bit later: 'But we, more curious than the commentators, may find evidence in Brahmanic literature' (Brahmanic literature means the pre-Buddhist - as we would say now, Hindu - literature of India) 'that the quarters or regions of the external world, desa(?)... or mighty spirits inhabiting them, were invoked for protection generally, and especially in battle, for luck and against snakes etc. In the Atharva(?) Veda are two of such raksha mantras, guarding runes or paritas as they are called by Buddhists - see the following Suttanta. Here we have the same six regions, viz. the four cardinal points, the fixed and the upward regions.' Then there's a quotation from the Atharva Veda: 'Ye gods that are in the Eastern quarter, missiles by name. Do you there bear the arrows of yew, bear the arrows of fire. Do ye be gracious to us. Do ye bless us. To you be their homage, to you their hail', etc. So then, No. 27 - that is a sutra of the Digha Nikaya - 'identifies a god with each region: not the four kings of Buddhist cosmology but Agni, Indra, Vanina(?), Soma, Vishnu, Vihaspati. To their jaws the invoker consigns his enemies. In the Satakathabrahmana' - that's a pre-Buddhist book - 'five and also seven dissas(?) as well as four are mentioned in rites. In the Griha Sutras' - these are Hindu works dealing with the duties of the householder - 'the four quarters are to be worshipped in connection with certain rites, and so much self-anointing or contact with water is enjoined that the lay celebrant may well have had both hair and garments wet as Sigala had.'

But apart from that, Indians generally do bathe early in the morning, and in any case they take a bath before any sort of religious or ceremonial activity. A lot of Indians, a lot of Hindus even today, would consider it proper to take a bath before meditating in the morning. They would consider it quite improper, almost, not to take a bath before meditating. On our retreats in India, some of our ex-Untouchable Buddhist Friends prefer to have a bath before the morning meditation, and they feel a bit uneasy if they don't.

Anyway, that gives one a bit of background. It shows that there was a sort of pre-Buddhist Brahmanical practice of worshipping or saluting the quarters, and/or certain Vedic deities associated with those quarters; saluting, worshipping them, for various purposes. But the Sutta, and even the commentary here, give us no details. It may have been a simple salutation in six different directions on Sigala's part, or there may have been a little bit of ritual along with it. We don't really know. All that we're told by the Sutta - and the commentary doesn't add anything to that - is that [Sigala], 'rising early in the morning, departing from Rajagaha with wet clothes and wet hair, worshipped with joined hands the various quarters - namely the East, the South, the West, the North, the Nadir and the Zenith.'

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This he did, apparently, every day. We are not told how long he was doing this after his father's death, whether for weeks, months or years, even - even decades - before he met the Buddha.

Prasannasiddhi: So did he actually worship the gods of the six quarters?

S: It's not made clear by the text. He may have done. Because, as Rhys Davids explains, there was this practice of associating these six directions with six important Vedic gods. So he may

have worshipped them at that time. The text, the Sutta, doesn't go into that sort of detail.

All right, read the next paragraph.

"Then the Exalted One, having robed himself in the forenoon, took bowl and robe, and entered Rajagaha for alms. Now he saw young Sigala worshipping thus and spoke to him as follows:."

S: 'Then the Exalted One' - that is to say, the Buddha - 'having robed himself in the forenoon, took bowl and robe.' Perhaps this requires a little explanation. Bhikkhus usually have three 'robes', as we call them now - three, well, *ticivara* was the Pali expression, three garments, because 'robes' has certain almost ceremonial connotations. You think of something rich and gorgeous when you mention robes. But the bhikkhu's *ticivara* certainly weren't rich and gorgeous, anything but rich and gorgeous; so perhaps one could say three garments. The garment was just three pieces of cloth, and these three pieces of cloth were made up from smaller pieces stitched together. So the bhikkhu had three robes, and the Buddha seems to have had three robes, or three garments. One was worn just round the waist, like the modern sarong or lungi; you wrapped it round the waist. According to the Vinaya, which is the monastic rule or monastic code [which] came a bit later, it had to cover the navel and the knees and it was belted or girdled. Usually when the bhikkhu was in the vihara he would just go about wearing this. Do you get the idea? In south India, even today, ordinary people, householders at home - men, that is to say - just wear this lungi. They don't wear anything else. So that seems to have been the custom in the Buddha's day: that the bhikkhus - at home, as it were, in the vihara, with no visitors around - would just wear the cloth round the waist. Even in, I believe, Ceylon and Thailand, wherever the Theravada Buddhist world is a bit warm, that's all the monks wear when they are by themselves in the vihara. But when they go out they have to dress, as it were. So that consists in putting on an upper robe. They put on a second robe, the one that goes under one arm and over the opposite shoulder. And then they take their third robe, which is folded, and sling that over their shoulder. That's sometimes called the blanket robe, [30] because that's what they cover themselves with at night if it's a bit cold. So they add the second robe, put on the second robe, sling the third one over their shoulder, take their bowl and then they go into the city for alms. So this is what the Buddha is represented as doing.

'Then the Exalted One, having robed himself in the forenoon, took bowl and robe' - the robe which he takes together with the bowl is, of course, the extra third robe, the so-called blanket robe - 'and entered Rajagaha for alms.' He goes 'in the forenoon', which actually means fairly early in the morning, perhaps nine o'clock. Because, again, to explain something about Indian customs, even today most people, especially people living in the country, eat twice a day: once in the early morning before going out to work in the fields, and a second time when they get back from the fields. That means, roughly, they eat about eight o'clock in the morning and they eat about five o'clock or even six o'clock in the afternoon. But no sandwiches or anything like that in the middle of the day. Maybe a handful of parched rice, something of that sort. So the housewife would be cooking quite early in the morning to give the menfolk their meal before they went out, so you had to go at a convenient time if you were a monk, while there was still something left, while the housewife was still busy in the kitchen; not when she'd stopped working in the kitchen and was doing something else. So that meant going fairly early.

Padmavajra: In the bhikkhu sangha, weren't they going around at all times of day?

S: No, not all times of day, but in the very early days they sometimes went out in the evening to collect a second meal or second dole, but that the Buddha subsequently prohibited. So usually the Buddha himself and bhikkhus are represented as going for alms in this way quite early in the morning. I think the idea was - and one can appreciate this, having actually done it oneself - that you go, you walk into the city or the town or the village for alms while it is still quite cool, and you get back and even have your meal before it gets really hot. That's the general idea.

Tejananda: And they literally only had one meal a day?

S: It was not the custom throughout the Buddha's life that the bhikkhus had only one meal a day, but it subsequently seems to have become the custom, yes.

: Don't bhikkhus now have two meals?

S: Two, they have sometimes three. The present understanding of the rule among Theravada bhikkhus is any number of meals provided you don't eat after 12 o'clock (laughter). That's the current interpretation.

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Padmapani: Could you say they stuff themselves, then, before 12?

S: Well, that perhaps wouldn't be quite kind. Sometimes even those who are not bhikkhus stuff themselves. I can see that, too, sometimes.

Anyway, I'm not going to be drawn on this question because we've recently discussed it quite thoroughly in connection with the Bhaddali Sutta which we studied a little while ago, which is, of course, all on tape.

So 'the Exalted One, having robed himself in the forenoon, took bowl and robe and entered Rajagaha for alms.' The Bamboo Grove where he was staying was at a convenient distance. I think it's something like a quarter of a mile from the city gate. So it wouldn't be very long before he could be inside the city and among the houses, and going for alms from house to house, all the way down the street until he'd got enough for his one meal of the day and could then return to the Bamboo Grove and quietly have his meal.

Prasannasiddhi: Would the cities have been very large in those days, or were they only like villages?

S: No, there were some quite big - well, towns at least, because the city of Rajagaha, as I've said, in the Buddha's day was quite a large city, was quite an ancient city even then, at least some hundreds of years old; and much of it, or at least part of it, has been excavated in modern times, so we can see that it was quite extensive, and also that the walls which surrounded it are quite extensive. So it must have enclosed quite a large number of people. The commentaries do give us numbers but they are quite fantastic: they speak, even of hundreds of millions, which is a bit of an exaggeration. But I think we can - well, it's probably quite impossible to give an estimate but there were at least some tens of thousands of people

living in Rajagaha. One can infer that from just the size of the remains. And the area enclosed by these walls, which are what are called cyclopean walls, rather like you find in some parts of ancient Greece, are titanic(?); they are absolutely gigantic. They're massive, as though they are the work of giants. And they go all the way round, and there's a lot of them still left. They enclose quite a big space, and the city was obviously within those walls. So there were clearly at least quite a few tens of thousands of people living there. And that was the capital of the kingdom of Magadha. Certain buildings mentioned in the Pali scriptures have been at least tentatively identified; for instance, the building within which Bimbisara was himself imprisoned by his son in his old age - that has been at least provisionally identified. And, of course, overlooking the city of Rajgir was the Vulture's Peak, where the Buddha sometimes stayed. One can even now climb up there. I'm sorry to say there's a funicular to take you up, but you can climb up [32] there and just look down on the whole city or where the city was, just as the Buddha must have done. If you visit that area you do feel really close to some of the actual scenes of the Buddha's life. You can very well imagine the Buddha living there.

Tejananda: How did the city come to die down?

S: Well, the capital was moved from Rajagaha to Pataliputra, and Rajagaha gradually lost its importance.

Tejananda: And there's not even a village there?

S: There is nowadays a village, quite a large - well, a very large - village, outside the city gates; outside I think it's the west gate - I won't be certain of that. Anyway, that village is outside that gate which the Bamboo Grove is also outside, not very far away. There is a whole ring of mountains, and within that ring of mountains, which is further provided with walls, was the old city. And then outside the walls - well, outside one of the main gates - was the Bamboo Grove to one side, and to the other side is the modern village, which is still, of course, quite ancient. Even now, much of the area within the old city walls is jungle, and there are even leopards living there. Well, it's not so much jungle - scrub; and the leopards live in there. And there are five hills around. There was access to the old city through its gates in between these hills.

Prasannasiddhi: So would this have meant that [there was] a strong demarcation between a person who was living inside the city or inside the village and someone who was living outside in the forest?

S: One would imagine so, yes. Because, as in Europe until comparatively recently, the cities were walled cities. Most citizens would make a point of being inside before nightfall. The gates would be closed, they'd be guarded. It was just the same in Europe. Norwich has a city wall. Most medieval cities had them; in some cases still have. So there was, one could say, quite a distinction between those who regularly lived inside the city and those, a very small minority no doubt, who lived outside - mainly wanderers or monks and people of that sort. Or nomads or aborigines; tribal people.

Prasannasiddhi: And the Bamboo Grove - was it outside the city?

S: Yes, outside the wall. About a quarter of a mile from one of the main gates. But, as I say, not just a little clump of bamboos, as it might be today. I imagine that the forest probably

went right up to the wall. A sort of arm of it went right up to the wall. The Buddha just lived there, in a little hut, no doubt; not a fully-fledged monastery.

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Prasannasiddhi: Could you also say, perhaps, that inside the city you'd be quite subject to the laws of [those] who governed the city?

S: Oh, yes. I mean the king exercised jurisdiction over the whole countryside, but no doubt his jurisdiction would be much more enforceable within the city walls. So life there would no doubt be much more controlled than it was outside the city walls. Outside the city walls, you'd be comparatively free. Well, there was such a thing as an army, the king did have his men - even police; even spies - but there wasn't that degree of supervision that there is today. But even in Britain in medieval times, bands of outlaws like Robin Hood and his merry men would live in the forest and get away with it.

Anyway, let's carry on. Next paragraph.

"Wherefore do you, young householder, rising early in the morning, departing from Rajagaha, with wet clothes and wet hair, worship with joined hands these various quarters - the East, the South, the West, the North, the Nadir and the Zenith?"

S: Mm. So what does the Buddha do? What is he concerned to do? Perhaps, what is he trying to do here?

Padmavajra: To make contact.

S: Make contact, yes, enter into discussion. The rule or principle here seems to be, get the other person talking. Let him talk. Give him an opportunity to talk, to enter into communication. So the Buddha asks: 'Wherefore do you, young householder, rising early in the morning, departing from Rajagaha, with wet clothes and wet hair, worship with joined hands the various quarters?' It's as though the Buddha sort of met Sigala on the way. Sigala was coming out from Rajagaha and the Buddha was going into Rajagaha, presumably through the city gates.

Tejamati: Do you think Sigala was on his own, or do you think there were other people doing the same - ?

S: There's no indication that there were any people with him. The Buddha enters into conversation only with him. So presumably he's just doing it by himself.

Devapriya: Would that not be unusual for the monk, or the Buddha, to speak on the alms round, because I remember somewhere there was a principle - ?

S: That's true. There is a sort of Vinaya rule, if you like, that a bhikkhu doesn't speak while he's actually begging, going from house to house. [34] He doesn't enter into conversation with the people from whom he's begging. At most he just gives a blessing, or recites a verse of blessing, and then passes on. Well, one could say that here, technically, perhaps, the Buddha hadn't started his alms round. But then again the Buddha surely wouldn't be concerned with technicalities.

Padmapani: He had a preconceived vision anyway that this is...

S: Well, according to the commentary. The Sutta doesn't actually say so.

Ratnapani: I imagine the business about not talking in the alms round [was] so that one shouldn't be tempted to sort of wheedle a bit of something nice out of the lady of the house, or whatever.

S: Well, not just get involved...

Ratnapani: - in the domestic situation.

S: Well, in discussion unnecessarily; retain their mindfulness. They've gone for alms, primarily, so they should remember that, and not get involved in discussion or just chit-chat. But if one was asked a question about the Dharma, especially if one was asked a third time, well, presumably one could reply. The Buddha certainly did upon occasion; we know that.

So it's interesting that the Buddha asks him what he's doing. Do you think there is any significance in this? Do you think there is a bit more than meets the eye - I mean, in very general terms?

Padmavajra: One thing that struck me about it was that the Buddha actually takes the initiative in the situation. He's not waiting for anybody to come to him. He's actually taking the initiative ...

S: Presumably Sigala would not address him - would perhaps not even salute him, because he didn't like monks. Well, that's what the commentary tells us. But, yes, the Buddha does take the initiative. But, you know, do you notice he asks him what he is doing? Do you think there is any broader, any general significance in this?

Tejamati: Is he giving him a chance to explain himself?

S: He's giving him a chance to explain himself, but I mean, this is what I'm getting at, why does he give him a chance to explain himself?

Ratnapani: To illustrate how empty what he's doing is, to himself.

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S: Mm; that's part of it.

Ratnapala: To define the framework.

S: But I think generally people like to be given an opportunity to explain themselves. Because they don't like to think, they don't like to feel, that people don't understand what they are doing. I mean, if you are engaged in some occupation or some activity the meaning of which is not immediately obvious and someone asks 'What are you doing?', usually you're quite pleased to explain, to tell them what you are doing. Why do you think that is? This is the point I'm getting at, the more general point. Why do we welcome, normally, an opportunity to explain to another person what we are actually doing? - because this is so, isn't it?

Dhammarati: Presumably we think what we do is important. It's important enough to...

S: Well, it's not only that, but it's as though we don't like to think that somebody else is not understanding what we are doing; or even, perhaps, misunderstanding, or thinking we're doing something foolish or ridiculous. So it suggests that there is almost an innate desire to be in communication with the other person. We don't want the other person to misunderstand, otherwise why should we bother? Let him think anything he likes. But usually - maybe this is an aspect of group feelings - we don't like to be misunderstood by other people. We prefer that they understood what we were doing, that they knew our reasons for doing what we are doing. That means, if they understand what we are doing - even if it's after we've explained to them - there's a certain degree of communication established.

For instance, supposing, even, you are on a building site and you're doing something the meaning of which, or the significance or reason for which, is not immediately obvious, something that is really quite odd. The chances are someone will sort of stop and watch and look: 'What is he doing that for?' And he might even ask you: 'What are you doing that for?' Do you see what I mean? On the one hand, people don't like not to be able to understand what another person is doing, and that person, for his part, very often doesn't like to think that the other person doesn't understand what he is doing (laughs), because that will suggest a sort of hiatus between them, a sort of gap in communication, even if the communication is only passive, only sort of assumed.

Ratnapani: There is a very positive element -

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S: So, therefore, it's as though if you want to enter into conversation with somebody - and maybe Sigala's father understood this - well, do something, start doing something, the meaning of which is not immediately obvious. There are certain examples of this sort not only among Zen masters but the sages of Greece. Diogenes, it is said, used to go about in broad daylight with a lighted lantern. So someone, in the end, came and said: 'What are you doing that for? Why are you going about with a lighted lantern in broad daylight? What are you looking for?' He said: 'I'm looking for an honest man.' (Laughter.) So to do something the meaning of which is not immediately obvious is to invite a question.

Padmapani: I remember Buddhadasa coming into the shrine at Aryatara with about a hundred malas round his neck, which he was trying to sell. 'What are you doing?' 'I'm trying to sell my beads.'

S: You see, so it isn't always necessary to have recourse to words. You can have recourse to actions. The Zen masters did this kind of thing too.

Dhammarati: I think it certainly works, you know, if you want to be understood, but I'm not so sure it actually works if you're trying to understand other people. If you see somebody doing something odd I think if there are enough of you you can just decide to dismiss them. (Laughter.)

S: That's why I said if you're in a reasonably positive frame of mind, it's natural; you'd like to understand what the other person is doing, what the significance of it is.

Padmapani: But it has to be in the context of positivity, otherwise you can get eccentrics, you know, doing things, because they want attention. I mean, I'm talking in the context...

S: Oh yes, you can get people doing things in a quite neurotic way just to attract attention for the sake of attention. Not that they have anything actually to communicate.

Dhammarati: For instance, the Hare Krishnas I think arouse quite a bit of hostility...

S: Well, you mustn't do things which are relatively unintelligible in an aggressive way, because people will certainly pick up on the aggressiveness. I think the Hare Krishna people sometimes can be aggressive in their attitude. But if you are, as it were, quite innocently doing something the meaning of which isn't immediately obvious, someone in a reasonably positive frame of mind passes by, the chances are he'll stop [37] and watch for a while trying to understand what it is you are doing and why you are doing it. If he doesn't succeed in understanding, if he doesn't succeed in working it out, and you seem reasonably friendly and he's in a friendly way, he may just ask you. It is quite likely.

So this does suggest that a normal, a healthy, a positive human being would prefer to be in communication with another human being and understand what he is doing, understand the reason for his doing what he is doing rather than otherwise. If you have any doubts about that, that suggests that the society in which we live isn't a very positive one, I would say, where we are used to ignoring people or dismissing people.

Prasannasiddhi: Why would that be? How did that come about if that is the case? Why isn't it so that we do feel positive?

S: That we do or don't?

Prasannasiddhi: Why isn't it that we do feel positive, and feel this natural kind of urge to...

S: Well, one reason may be that we don't have time. Another may be that we feel that our curiosity may be resented. We don't feel confident of the positiveness or friendliness of the other person. You may feel that he'll rebuff an inquiry. In other words, we may have made up our minds in advance. We may be the sort of person who does decide rather hastily, jump to conclusions. You think you know it all already; you've understood, you know why. You might come to the conclusion, well, he's just crazy, just eccentric, it's not worth while asking him what he's doing.

Padmapani: I noticed when I was out in India for six months, Bhante, that if you looked at an Indian across the table - say, when you were having a meal - he'd end up smiling. But if you looked across at a person in England having a meal, they'll end up being aggressive, generally. (Murmurs of doubt.) No, this is a very general thing. It's generally true.

S: I would say this: in England you have to be quite cautious about looking at someone and smiling at them if they are of the same sex. People can feel quite threatened by this, and I've even known people to say 'Who are you looking at?' or 'What are you looking at?' in a quite aggressive, reactive way. They don't like it.

Devapriya: It's like 'What do you want?'

S: 'What do you want?', yes.

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Padmapani: I think it's true.

S: It certainly happens on occasion.

Atula: In some circles, I think in a working culture, it's very difficult even to smile at someone, or touch them, but I'm not so sure it's so general.

S: But working people are in the majority.

Atula: Well, I'm thinking of a particular kind.

S: Even under present conditions of unemployment!

Padmavajra: I've got the feeling you're suggesting there's an innate kind of desire for communication between...

S: Yes, maybe. I'm not putting it as strongly as that. I used the word preference - that I think a normal human being will prefer to be in communication with other human beings rather than otherwise (murmurs of agreement), and would, therefore, prefer to understand why someone is doing something rather than not understand. A sort of natural human curiosity.

Dhammarati: It's like getting this sort of rider, bearing in mind the commentary, that it doesn't cost any effort or expense on your part.

S: Yes. Because what I think is that natural human tendency is somewhat stifled in England by certain conventions that have grown up, that is to say that you shouldn't look at another person, you shouldn't stare at them. One is told this when one is young: 'Oh, don't stare, that's [rude] ...'

Tape 2, Side B

Ratnapani: If you don't have a sort of open and healthy urge to communicate which you can follow through, all you are left with is like attention-seeking, which is what being neurotic and so on will be like.

S: It does occur to me that children will very often just stop and look and see what you're doing. If they don't understand, they'll say: 'What are you doing that for?' quite spontaneously. They'll want to know. They want to understand why you're doing it. They're curious. So, if the adult doesn't have that - well, no doubt he has less of it because he knows and understands more than the child - if he doesn't have that same readiness to ask 'What are you doing?' when he doesn't understand what you are doing, it's because he's been comparatively stifled [39] by the way in which he's been brought up, by the conventions of his society.

Padmavajra: I've been quite surprised working in Hockney's about how much people do want to talk to you if you go and serve them and you just ask them about themselves - ask if they enjoyed the meal or something - about how ready they are to talk and how much they want to

know about how the place is run. I've been quite surprised.

S: Well, I have heard that there are quite a few people in Bethnal Green who like to go along to the Wholefood Shop because the young men behind the counter always have time to talk to them, at least to the extent of a few words, and they like that, they appreciate that.

Padmavajra: I wonder if perhaps it's easier than we think in certain situations like that that we've set up, which looks quite positive, to cut through those conventions. It's easier than we think.

S: Also there is a sort of tradition in many parts of London at least that you do have a bit of a chat, if you are a housewife or an old lady, with the young man behind the counter.

Dhammarati: You'd have trouble getting over some shops in Bethnal Green.

: Yes!

S: Anyway, this all arises out of the fact that Sigala's father almost set up a situation which would ensure that someone, whether the Buddha himself or one of his disciples, seeing Sigala doing these things, would almost be bound to ask why, and in that way get into conversation, so that at last the young Sigala was actually in contact with a monk. So the Buddha asks him what he is doing. This is a very natural approach. 'What are you doing?' It gives him the opportunity to explain himself. It gives him an opportunity to talk, to communicate; then the Buddha can reply. In that way they are in communication.

Dhammarati: It's on Sigala's own home ground as well.

S: Yes. You could even take a slightly cynical, though not necessarily cynical, view, that everybody likes to be in the position of explaining to other people. It puts you in a way in a position of superiority. You are the one who knows more, at least with regard to that particular matter. You're the one who is doing the explaining. So the Buddha was as it were putting Sigala in that position by saying 'I don't understand the [40] meaning of what you are doing. Please tell me. Please explain to me.' No doubt Sigala was only too happy to oblige.

Atula: It's, in a way, allowing a conversation, allowing Sigala to feel that he is important; and that, perhaps, encourages him to feel receptivity to the Buddha when he does actually start to explain.

Padmavajra: I think people also like to talk about themselves, don't they? - get talking about themselves. Generally the conversation gets quite busy.

S: There's a saying of a modern psychologist - I forget who it was, unfortunately - that I came across recently which I have quoted several times, to the effect that self-disclosure is a psychological necessity. That does seem to be the case. I think he even went to far as to say [that] self-disclosure is necessary for psychological health, or mental health.

Padmavajra: Do you know who that was?

S: No, I can't remember.

Devapriya: Do you feel that's true?

S: I've observed that people are happier if they have an opportunity of self-disclosure.

Devapriya: There's this thing now, the word that comes to mind all the time is 'interest'. There's always an interest. The Buddha is asking, he's interested in Sigala, and Sigala is interested in telling the Buddha.

S: I think self-disclosure goes somewhat deeper than that. It means that you are happy to allow what is normally part of your subjectivity to become part of the objective world. You're willing or you're ready to be known by another person, instead of only known to yourself. It's as though if you're only turned in on yourself and you know your own thoughts, but it's only you who know your own thoughts or experience yourself. That isn't entirely satisfactory. You want also that somebody else, some person other than yourself, should know what you are thinking, know what you are feeling, should know you. It's not enough that you know you. It's as though you need in a way even to know yourself through another person.

Padmapani: This could be connected with, like, a creative outlet, couldn't it?

S: Well, creative outlet, perhaps, comes on a somewhat higher level; though perhaps even self-disclosure itself, one might say, is creative, but [41] no doubt not creative necessarily in the fullest and highest sense. But it's also a sort of relief. It's as though you can be almost imprisoned within your own subjectivity. If you communicate with another person you break free from, you break out of, that prison. Because we mustn't forget that there's not only subjectivity, there's objectivity in the world, and beyond both, so to speak, there is what Buddhism would regard as Reality, which is neither subjectivity nor objectivity. So, as long as you are experiencing only subjectivity, so long as you're only wrapped up in the experience of your own self, you're one-sided. You need to be in contact with another person. Your subjectivity needs to be exposed to another subjectivity which of course you experience as an objectivity; so, in that way, to some extent at least, you break out of your limitations. You are not just shut up within your subjectivity. You have exposed yourself to another person. You are known by another person.

Ratnapala: It seems in a sense that we don't trust our own subjective view of ourselves. I remember, I think it was Robin Knox-Johnston who went round the world single-handed, and he met a Korean tanker in the middle of the ocean - he'd been out for months by this time - and he found someone who spoke English. He said, 'Am I sane? Do I sound sane?' He wanted that confirmation because he'd had none for months. That was the first question he really wanted to ask.

S: Well, some people might say, 'Do I exist? Am I still in existence?'

Ratnapala: Yes. (Murmurs of agreement.)

Dhammarati: You haven't really got something, a very strong subjective experience, until it's clarified.

Atula: And sometimes, I suppose, if you miss that, you're not sensitive towards something they are trying to start saying to you, you can really upset people because they are trying to

disclose themselves and you cut them off.

S: Yes, and sometimes they don't have much experience of that sort of thing. Maybe they don't have the right words. They don't have much power of expression, so you have to listen very carefully. I notice this listening to the tapes of seminars. What some people say, the comments they make or the questions they ask, need a lot of sorting out when it comes to editing, because if one just has the words, one transcribes the words from the tape, which means minus the intonations and pauses, of course, they just don't make any sense at all. You have to study them quite carefully and listen to those for a bit, and a glimmering of meaning seems to emerge: yes, they are asking something, there is a point, but it isn't coming across very well; so you have to edit their words in such [42] a way, by [putting in] punctuation and so on, or words in brackets, to bring out what they are actually trying to say or trying to ask. It's quite an interesting experience from this point of view, editing these tapes.

Sometimes people rely on gesture or expression or look. So if it doesn't all come out just in the words, if you've only got the words - because that's what you are now dealing with once the tape is transcribed - you've got to edit that in such a way to bring out the meaning that they were trying to express, which they weren't expressing exclusively through the words that you've got on tape. You really need a videotape.

Atula: This seems to have been one of the things running through Lawrence's Rainbow - the struggle to bring the subjective experience into articulated consciousness ...

S: Well, it's difficult enough in principle, and it is made more difficult by the fact that only too many people haven't succeeded in acquiring an adequate command of their own language. There is room for improvement even there.

Atula: Part of the process of growing is to enable you to articulate your subjective experience.

S: In the first place, becoming aware of your own experience, and in the second place, developing the capacity to communicate it, to express it.

Devapriya: I know I went through a quite difficult period when - as Ratnapala mentioned, it's like you come out with 'Am I sane?' - and I got quite a lot of feedback that I wasn't! It's quite undermining.

S: I suppose then one has to consider the possibility that you may not be sane. You have to consider what is sanity? I mean, sometimes sanity has been defined as the madness of the majority and insanity as the sanity of the minority. One has to consider whether that is not the case. I mean they say you are insane, or you're not sane - well, that tells you what you are, in a sense, but even that doesn't help you to resolve the matter.

Devapriya: No. Well, it took me many years to realize that, well, as long as I was happy! I was always happy with my own insanity.

S: Well, as long as you're happy with your own insanity you're happy with your own insanity. It doesn't really prove anything!

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Padmapani: Because you're happy with how other people see you, as well. I mean, presumably the Buddha was happy with his own insanity, in the sense that he's actually a Buddha, but everybody else was mad.

S: Yes, eventually a few other people, no doubt - or perhaps a lot of people - gained Enlightenment, but to begin with the Buddha was entirely on his own. We're not told that he doubted his own sanity. He seems to have been quite clear that it was everybody else that was mad! He seems to have been quite clear about that. In fact he afterwards said that all those who are worldlings, all putthujana...s(?) are mad. He went so far as that.

Padmapani: So we're travelling the road to insanity as far as the world is concerned.

S: Well, I don't know whether the world would any longer be so confident as to make that sort of statement. They might have had that sort of confidence a few generations ago, but I think people nowadays are very unsure as to what is sanity, what is insanity; and probably, in many cases if not most, would be very careful whom they labelled as what. It's only people like Mary Whitehouse, if the lady is still around, that have the sort of certainty that a lot of people used to have.

Ratnapani: The courage of her prejudices.

S: Yes.

Padmapani: But it does give you a sort of stability.

S: A sort of stability, yes. The qualification should be perhaps insisted upon: a sort of stability.

Prasannasiddhi: What does the word sanity actually mean?

S: I think it means simply 'healthy'.

Anyway, we've, I won't say wandered but we've got away from the point. We'll get to the end of the first section, at least. So what does Sigala say in reply? Would someone like to read that?

"My father, Lord, while dying, said to me: 'The six quarters, dear son, you shall worship.' And I, Lord, respecting, revering, reverencing and honouring my father's word, rise early in the morning, and leaving Rajagaha, with wet clothes and wet hair, worship with joined hands these six quarters."

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S: Yes, there's something a little unusual, at least worthy of comment in what Sigala says to the Buddha or even in the way in which he addresses him, so if you want to consider that I'll - (long pause while consults text). Sigala addresses the Buddha as Bhante, which Narada Thera translated as 'Lord'. 'Lord' is perhaps a little overdoing it. It's usually translated as 'Reverend Sir' or 'Venerable Sir'. In other words, Sigala addresses the Buddha very politely, as a Buddhist would do. Do you see what I mean? He doesn't say 'Gotama' or 'O Gotama'. He says 'Bhante'. He uses a quite respectful mode of address. So what can one infer from this, if

anything?

: Well, he knows who he is.

S: But according to the commentary he didn't like monks. But one can say, well, he considers himself a Buddhist, as we might say. He does regard the Buddha with respect.

Dhammarati: That wouldn't be a term that he would use for any holy man he came across?

S: No. We do find in Indian society generally, even today, and certainly in the Buddha's day, people were very particular, as in fact I think they are in all ancient, in all traditional civilizations and cultures, about modes of address. This was the case in this country until very recently. For instance, reading, say, the life of Shelley, one writer on Shelley makes the point that in his dealings with Byron, though they were very good friends, Shelley was always quite punctilious about addressing Byron as 'my Lord Byron' or 'my lord'. He always observed that sort of formality, and addressed him in the correct way, which was the polite usage in his day. And in ancient cultures and civilizations in general, great importance is attached to addressing people in the right way, with the right degree of respect. Not only addressing them verbally but showing the right degree of respect in all sorts of other ways.

So it has been pointed out that, if we look at the Pali Canon, we can tell quite easily what someone's attitude towards the Buddha was from the mode of address. Brahmins, unconverted brahmins, usually simply addressed the Buddha as Gotama. They addressed him by his personal name without any ceremony at all. But after their conversion, if they're converted in the course of the Buddha's teaching, the mode of address changes. Instead of addressing him as Gotama they address him as Bhagava.

Dhammarati: Over the page there's a line - Sigala says: 'Tis well, Lord that the Exalted One should teach the doctrine.' I must say I wondered [45] if that was a certain conventional form being brought into the way the story is told.

S: This very often happens. And sometimes the sort of standard formulas are clearly a bit inappropriate. But that does happen quite a lot, yes.

Devapriya: So would that suggest that Sigala actually recognized the Buddha as the Buddha, rather than just a monk?

S: No; he might well address a monk as Bhante. This is ... the custom.

Atula: Someone worthy of...

S: But certainly he's addressing him in a reverential way, a very polite and respectful way, which suggests a certain amount, perhaps, of receptivity at least. And then another point is that he says: 'I, Lord, respecting, revering, reverencing and honouring my father's word'. That's quite strong in a way, isn't it? I don't know, again, how literally one is to take that. It may be that that string of verbs is usually associated, but it's - (consults text) sakkaronto, garukaronto, manento, pujento (??) - all these words, all expressions of different aspects of honouring and revering. This draws attention to the fact that in - what shall I say? - one can't say primitive, but certainly in traditional cultures and civilizations, parents are respected. The

father especially, perhaps, is respected and honoured and revered. That is the natural, that is the right and proper thing to do, the right and proper state of affairs.

Padmapani: The pattern matches - the Buddha obviously had an influence on people that he came into contact with. He was Enlightened, therefore it must have had an effect on [Sigala].

S: There is that factor, also, to be taken into consideration. Sigala might well have perceived immediately that he was no ordinary monk. He must have heard about the Buddha from his father. He must have known roughly what the Buddha looked like. He may even have known the Buddha by sight, even though, according to the commentary, he'd not been willing to go along and actually meet him.

Ratnapani: The Buddha went into the city as [Sigala] was coming out every morning about the same time.

S: Yes, a well-known sight, a well-known figure. That is the impression that we get from the Pali Canon - that he was well known and easily recognized, certainly in a city like Rajagaha, where he often went for alms, and outside the gates of which he frequently dwelt.

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Ratnapani: Especially with the king being one of his followers.

S: Yes, indeed. So he says: 'My father, Lord, while dying said to me: 'The six quarters, dear son, you shall worship.' And I, Lord, respecting, revering, reverencing and honouring my father's word, rise early in the morning, and leaving Rajagaha, with wet clothes and wet hair, worship with joined hands these six quarters.' So then what does the Buddha say?

"'Tis not thus, young householder, the six quarters should be worshipped in the discipline of the noble.'"

S: Let's go into that a little. You notice what the Buddha says. He doesn't say: 'You shouldn't worship the six quarters.' He says: 'The six quarters should not be worshipped in that way.' You could say that that is a skilful means. The Buddha is not saying don't worship the six quarters. He's merely saying that you're not worshipping them in the right way, not worshipping them as they are 'worshipped in the discipline of the noble'. What is that? - ariyasavinaye. Vinaya is clearly here used in a very broad sense. And ariya is - well, ariya originally had a sort of ethnic meaning that eventually developed a more ethical connotation and ended up meaning spiritual or even Transcendental. So the discipline of the Ariyas is in a way, almost, the discipline of those who are on the Path to Enlightenment, on the Transcendental Path.

So the Buddha is in fact saying that it is not in that way that the six quarters should be worshipped, in the discipline of those who want to progress on the Transcendental Path. In other words, if you want to be an Ariya, if you want to be truly noble, if you want to be a spiritual person, if you want to make spiritual progress, then you should not worship the six quarters in that way; you should worship them in some other way.

Prasannasiddhi: It seems to imply that the Buddha probably has passed him quite a few times and he's seen - there has been some communication - they are aware of each other before they

actually [speak]. It's not as if it all happened quite suddenly. It seems as if the Buddha has given some forethought - it seems as if he's sort of prepared, almost, the way in which the six quarters should be worshipped. It sort of implies that he has been thinking about it.

S: Though, again, the orthodox tradition doesn't represent the Buddha as needing to think about things in advance, in this way. The commentary represents him as having a sort of fully blown sutra already in his mind to teach, but I don't think that can be taken literally either. No doubt there was a great deal of improvisation on the Buddha's part, [47] according to circumstances, according to the nature of the people he met. Though no doubt he said much the same sort of thing to much the same sort of people many times, so there was, we do know, a sort of broad framework of discourse which he had ready to hand: like the Noble Eightfold Path or the Four Noble Truths. He'd spoken about those things many a time. But perhaps they took him a while to work out. Perhaps he didn't always think in those terms from the beginning, but his framework probably grew up. Once they'd grown up they were, so to speak, ready to hand, and he could put what he had to say, on many occasions, in terms of that particular framework.

I think we've got to allow for a certain amount of spontaneity on the Buddha's part: that he didn't need to think things out or plan things in the way that very often ordinary people do.

Anyway, so what does Sigala say in response to that?

"How then, Lord, should the six quarters be worshipped in the discipline of the noble? 'Tis well, Lord, if the Exalted One would teach the doctrine to me, showing how the six quarters should be worshipped in the discipline of the noble."

S: He's now addressing the Buddha as 'Bhante' [Bhagava?]: 'Sadhu me Bhante Bhagava.' He says: 'It would be well, Lord, if the Exalted One were to teach me the Dhamma.' It is not necessarily the doctrine in the fully formulated sense. It's more like 'the truth of the matter; the principle involved here'. It's more like that.

Dhammarati: This is quite a change, Bhante, from the young man in the introduction, isn't it?

S: Yes, yes. Assuming they are, in fact, the same and that the commentary is based on some historical source, some historical tradition and isn't just a sort of ancillary elaboration. But, yes, it is certainly possible for the young man - if he was a young man; we don't even know that - to change in that way.

Devapriya: He's only asking about the doctrine in regard to the six quarters, at this point, anyway.

S: Yes. But again, he's asking the Buddha to explain to him how the six quarters are worshipped in the discipline of the Ariyas, and that gives the Buddha the freedom to say almost anything.

Tejananda: Could it be that his increased respect is the result of his having done this practice continually for a long time? He'd get an interest in -

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S: It could be. We are not given any clues to how he did it, whether with his whole heart or mechanically or whatever. We only know that he did it every morning.

Devapriya: He does do it respecting, revering and reverencing his father, so obviously that's present.

S: But perhaps he's doing it for his father's sake and not for the sake of the deities of the six quarters, if there are even any deities. We are not even sure of that.

Tejamati: But he's probably curious as to why he's doing it, and why his father asked him to do it.

S: That could be. That could be. He may not understand that at all. He may welcome some light on the subject.

So what does the Buddha say? Let's conclude with that paragraph. That brings us to the end of the introduction of the Sutta, so to speak.

"Well, young householder, listen and bear it well in mind; I shall speak.' `Very good, Lord,' responded young Sigala."

S: So: `Listen and bear it well in mind.' That's quite significant, isn't it? (Repeats phrase in Pali.) `Listen well. Bear it in mind.' Also, yes, `reflect upon it, ponder it, turn it over in your mind.' In other words, don't just listen; think about it, remember it, bear it in mind, ponder it, reflect on it.

Tejamati: Maybe if he hadn't said that, Sigala would just have listened to it and maybe not ...

S: This is a stock phrase in the Pali Canon. The Buddha is often represented as addressing people in this way before he gives, so to speak, a discourse.

Anyway, that is as far as we're going this morning. Tomorrow we shall get the discourse proper. This was just the introduction or exordium of the discourse. Is that clear? Do you get a definite picture of the scene and of the personalities involved?

Padmavajra: There's another point that you've mentioned before. The Buddha influenced people as much, if not more, by what he was than by what he said, so maybe -

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S: Yes, and that is left out all the time. The text rarely conveys any hint of that. That's why, again, it's quite interesting listening to tapes. It must be, also, listening to and seeing videotapes. When you've just got the words typed out on a piece of paper you've got only a fraction of the person's total communication. And it's just like that in the case of the Buddha, surely. We've just got the words - if we've got the words. There's a whole missing dimension. We don't have the sound of the Buddha's voice, the tone, the Buddha's look. We don't have those things at all. They are not even hinted at, usually.

Padmapani: Of course, you wouldn't have the Buddha's actual presence, [as] if you were actually there.

S: No, that least of all you have ...

So one might say the Buddha's teaching of the Dharma is a multidimensional thing, a multidimensional event. In the Scriptures we have only one of the dimensions available. It's well to remember that.

Padmapani: I must admit I did find going out to India added a certain dimension. Being out there in the climate and being there in the surroundings did create the atmosphere which is - I find it a lot easier to study, especially the old texts, the Pali texts - a lot easier.

S: Yes, it's not so relevant in the case of Mahayana sutras, where the scene is rather different, let us say. Even in India you don't come across jewel trees.

Padmapani: You can make almost a connection, dare I say, through things like sci-fi - you know, science fiction; but, like in the Pali, being out in India does actually help the situation.

Padmavajra: It is interesting, occasionally you do get just a few lines where the Buddha is described. I think the Bahiya Sutta describes the Buddha just walking around, and when you get that it's like a kind of light going on or something like that.

S: Yes, you do get these little glimpses, these little illuminations, and they are quite helpful.

All right, then, let's carry on tomorrow.

Day 2 Tape 3, Side A

S: All right, then, how far did we get yesterday? We finished the introductory portion and we've come on to the discourse proper.

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And the Exalted One spoke as follows:

"Inasmuch, young householder, as the noble disciple (1) has eradicated the four vices in conduct, (2) inasmuch as he commits no evil action in four ways, (3) inasmuch as he pursues not the six channels for dissipating wealth, he thus, avoiding these fourteen evil things, covers the six quarters, and enters the path leading to victory in both worlds: he is favoured in this world and in the world beyond. Upon the dissolution of the body after death, he is born in a happy, heavenly realm."

S: So here the Buddha gives the various headings, so to speak, of the first part of his discourse. He's going to elaborate or he's going to have more to say on each of these topics: that is to say, the four ways of evil action, six channels for dissipating wealth, and so on. So 'avoiding these fourteen evil things' which he is going to speak about in greater detail later, one 'covers,' he says, 'the six quarters, and enters the path leading to victory in both worlds: he is favoured in this world and in the world beyond. Upon the dissolution of the body after death, he is born in a happy, heavenly realm.'

Devapriya: It seems to back up the idea that the layman goes for a heavenly rebirth rather than Enlightenment itself.

S: The Buddha is, of course, speaking about covering the six quarters. Covering means covering oneself, presumably, as regards vengeance or evils coming from those six quarters by saluting them or worshipping them.

One might say that he begins by meeting Sigala half way. According to the commentary, at least, Sigala was interested only in material things. He was only interested in worldly things, mundane things. So, presumably, if saluting the six quarters has any significance for him - if he was doing it for any other reason than that it was his father's dying wish - he would have done it for as it were worldly or mundane reasons. Do you see what I mean? He would have wanted to ward off harm, ward off danger, in the purely mundane sense. Or, on the positive side, he would have wanted to gain prosperity, wealth and so on. In other words, he would have wanted happiness in this life and, possibly also afterwards, happiness after death. The Buddha is speaking to him in these sort of terms, therefore. He is not speaking to him in terms of the higher spiritual path.

Tejananda: Could it be this sort of passage which has influenced the attitudes of the lay people in this country with regard to their highest aspirations - only gaining heaven rather than -

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S: No doubt this passage - well, this whole Sutta - has had that sort of influence. The introduction tells us it's regarded - Buddhaghosa refers to it as Gihi(?) Vinaya, suggesting there is a Vinaya for the lay person just as there is a Vinaya for the monk; suggesting, almost, not only that there are two disciplines but there are two paths, and so by implication that there are two goals. But, in other words, it's not as though there are two alternative goals, because the higher spiritual path carries straight on from what one may regard as the lower spiritual path. It is not a true alternative. Even if you are, to speak in those terms, a monk, you can't neglect the as it were lower spiritual path. You can't neglect the ethical teachings or ethical training.

But certainly this discourse itself says nothing about the ... higher spiritual path - it says nothing about meditation. It says nothing about Insight. But we shall hear at the end that Sigala does Go for Refuge, and he is credited with the stock statement about 'It is as if a man were to set up that which was overturned' etc. etc., which suggests something more than just having heaven as one's goal. But nonetheless, the text as a whole, the Sutta as a whole, does deal with quite basic, as it were, ethical matters, rather than with meditation and wisdom.

Ratnapani: It's a bit different for us, isn't it? We're neither monk nor lay, really, and people who come along to the Movement start off, perhaps, very lay, coming along once a week and just being interested, but if they get involved they end up so much, so much more than that. So we don't really fit into any easy category ...

S: That's why we've decided, or Order Members have decided, that they want to be known as Dharmacharis rather than Upasakas.

Ratnapani: That's definitely a lay term, isn't it?

S: Upasaka is definitely a lay term, or a term for someone involved with worldly life, having some feeling for ..., perhaps, but with a more or less nominal connection with it, with regard

to ...

: Where does dharmacarya fit in with the - ?

S: Ah, we've gone into that quite recently. You'll have to listen to the tape of the study group we had only a week or so ago on the Last Vandana. That's a word which comes in there, in a verse taken from the Dhammapada.

So the Buddha seems to be presenting here the sort of ideal conduct for one who remains in the world, so to speak, but not, so far as this Sutta [52] at least is concerned, taking the Dharma in the higher sense very seriously. Of course Sigala may have done so; we don't know. He may even have become a monk eventually.

Devapriya: How valid do you think it is for us to teach in this sort of way?

S: When you say teach, what do you mean?

Devapriya: Well, something that I've always been taught by the Order, if you like, is that any lesser goal than Enlightenment isn't really Buddhist.

S: Well, one must recognize - even the Theravada would say - that the goal for everybody is Enlightenment. I mean, if you pressed a Theravada Buddhist he would say that the goal is Enlightenment for everybody, eventually. But he would see Enlightenment for the layman, the person who in this life was a layman, as a very, very distant goal indeed, in some other immeasurably remote existence. His immediate goal, he would say, would just be happiness in this life and a rebirth in a heavenly world after death. But he would also, he would say, aspire to be reborn in a ... world period when Metteya attains Enlightenment and, perhaps, gain Enlightenment as his disciple. So even the Theravada does not say that, ultimately, Enlightenment is not the ultimate goal even of the layman or a person who in this life is a layman. Even the Theravadin would not deny that.

The difference between the Theravada and the Mahayana would be that the Mahayana insists much more on an effort in the direction of Enlightenment for everybody in this life. Even if they don't hope to attain Enlightenment in this life, at least even in this life they should make it their conscious aspiration. Do you see what I mean? In other words, in the Mahayana one might say the ultimate goal is kept much more before people's eyes, is kept much more in view. Whereas in the Theravada there is this distinction between the path and the life of the layman on the one hand and the monk on the other. The monk is explicitly aiming at Enlightenment, even though in many Theravada countries they don't believe that arhantship is possible nowadays; whereas the layman is aiming at no more than heaven. But nonetheless, even the Theravada, as I say, would say that Enlightenment is the ultimate goal for all.

Dhammarati: Could you see Centres as being in an analogous position with the Buddha here? Really he's addressing an audience that is not very interested in Enlightenment, and it's more practical, in a way, to set your sights more on - ?

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S: But the Buddha would clearly have had in mind Enlightenment as the ultimate goal for someone like Sigala; but the question is how much he is able to accept at present. It's

probably just a question of one's approach and how much one is able to communicate at that particular time.

To someone, say, in Sigala's position, or someone in the position of so many of the people coming along to a Centre, does the word Enlightenment have any meaning at all? Can it have any meaning at all? Most people who came along to Centres, to begin with, would be quite satisfied if they just felt a little more emotionally positive, a little more happy, a little more anguish-free, perhaps. So one has to approach them, so to speak, and speak to them to begin with, simply in those terms. If you start talking about Enlightenment too soon, they may feel that you are talking about something that has no possible relation to them or to their life; but it may be at the back of your mind all the time. After all, there is the image of the Buddha in the shrine as a sort of constant reminder - not just of the source of the Teaching but also of the goal of the Teaching. The Buddha comes at the beginning and also at the end.

Dhammarati: Something that comes to mind: the Centres' repertoire of teaching methods I think sometimes [has] become a bit inflexible. We've adopted a system that everybody who comes has to more or less go through - the meditation, study group system. It's not terribly flexible.

S: Well, [having] classes is a way of dealing with a number of people at the same time. If you had a very large number of Order Members, no doubt every time someone came along you could as it were pair off an Order Member with each new person. But you can't do that. You've got to have classes, inasmuch as the Order Members have got to deal with 10 or 12 or 20 people at a time. So that means a certain structure has to be set up. Perhaps this is where the inflexibility has to come in. But you can keep an eye on the recent people in small groups. I think the important thing is that people are encouraged at every stage to go further if they possibly can, or as soon as they can.

But with regard to suttas like this, it's as though we have to go through the suttas, comb through them even, especially those in the Pali Canon, and as it were try to extract those moral and spiritual principles which apply to everybody in all circumstances, and as it were put aside those particular matters which pertain more to the lifestyle of the people that the Buddha was addressing, whether the so-called upasakas or the so-called bhikkhus; simply try to extract the moral and spiritual substance of what he was saying and apply it directly to our own needs and our own conditions and circumstances, here and now. Do you see what [54] I mean? Perhaps we will come down to some more specific instances quite quickly.

Anyway, let's go on, and maybe we will do that straight away. The Buddha has said that 'Inasmuch, young householder, as the noble disciple (1) has eradicated the four vices in conduct, (2) inasmuch as he commits no evil action in four ways, (3) inasmuch as he pursues not the six channels for dissipating wealth, he thus, avoiding these fourteen evil things, covers the six quarters,' etc. So he goes now into each of these three things, or groups, he has mentioned. So we can go on to the first of these. But before that there are one or two points to be gone into. He says, 'Inasmuch, young householder, as the noble disciple'. Where is 'noble disciple'? - let's see: ariya savaka. So do you see any significance in this? He addresses him as 'young householder,' literally son of a householder, gahapatiputta(?), and he says 'Inasmuch as the noble disciple', the ariya savaka - so what does that suggest?

Padmavajra: Ariya pertains to the Transcendental.

S: Yes, perhaps one shouldn't here take it too literally or too technically, but nonetheless ariya savaka does suggest some higher spiritual dimension. So perhaps this term is used to indicate that even though the Buddha is speaking about, or going on to speak about, quite basic ethical methods, he's really concerned with the ariya savaka. It is the ariya savaka who is practising these basic ethical principles as a preparation, presumably, for a higher spiritual life - even perhaps a spiritual life that goes beyond any of the topics or principles that the Buddha actually mentions in this Sutta.

Devapriya: And also it seems that he is picking up what he has already said earlier: 'the six quarters should be worshipped in the discipline of the noble.'

S: Yes.

Atula: So there is no distinction in the Buddha's mind between the two - between the householder and the noble disciple?

S: Well, the Buddha is saying here that the householder can be or can become a noble disciple. I mean at present Sigala is just a young householder, but he is suggesting that he can be a noble disciple, and presumably the first step is that he should practise the ethical principles that the Buddha is now going to outline. In other words, the Sutta does deal with, at least, a step on the path of the noble disciple, the ariya savaka, which eventually does go beyond happiness in this life and then heaven after death.

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Prasannasiddhi: This ariya savaka, those actual words, are they used often in the Pali Canon in the context of the noble disciple?

S: Ariya savaka is used quite often. Savaka is used, of course, quite often, and if one takes ariya savaka in the full technical sense it means the Stream Entrant and so on, up to the arhant - members of the Ariya Sangha. Ah, no, I correct that. It means - yes, you could say ariya, even including the arhant; I was going to say the arhant is considered aseka or one who has nothing further to learn, but even he, yes, could still be called a savaka. He hears, even though he has nothing further to learn. Or he learns, even though he has nothing further to learn. So there is a definitely sort of higher spiritual, even Transcendental, connotation here in this term - a noble disciple. He's addressing Sigala as potentially a noble disciple, explaining to him what are the first things he must do, the first steps he must take, in order to become eventually a noble disciple.

'Inasmuch, young householder, as the noble disciple (1) has eradicated the four vices,' and so on. He's explaining to him how he can become, or how he can prepare himself to become, a noble disciple starting from where he is, as a young householder. 'If you want to become a noble disciple, or if you want to become a noble disciple situated as you are, living as you are, this is what you must do. This is how you must behave. These are the first steps.' Because we know even from the Pali Canon that there were some people who became Stream Entrants whilst still living at home.

: Is savaka the Pali of sravaka?

S: Yes, one who hears, one who listens. In other words, a disciple.

All right, let's go on and see what these four vices of conduct are in detail.

"(1) What are the four vices in conduct that he has eradicated? The destruction of life, householder, is a vice, and so are stealing, sexual misconduct and lying.

These are the four vices that he has eradicated.

Thus spoke the Exalted One, and when the Master had thus spoken he spoke yet again: Killing, stealing, lying, adultery, these four evils the wise never praise."

Atula: The first four precepts.

[56]

S: Yes. There are one or two general points here. You notice the Buddha as it were repeats himself, once in prose and once in verse. Why do you think this is? He does it several times during this Sutta.

: To help people to remember what he said?

S: It could be that.

Padmavajra: Were there two oral traditions - one that as it were came down in prose and one that came down in verse?

S: That's something a bit different. I have spoken of that in connection with the White Lotus Sutra. Well, what impression do you get - the Buddha speaking first in prose and then in verse. In other words, how does verse differ from prose?

Ratnapani: There is more emotional content in verse.

S: Much more emotional, yes. When the Buddha speaks in verse it seems to come from another level - if you like, a higher level. It's as though, having spoken in prose, the Buddha's - if one can speak in this way of the Buddha, of course - the Buddha's feelings are aroused, and he emphasizes the point. He puts it even more forcibly by expressing it in verse. And, of course, there is also the mnemonic value of verse, the fact that one can remember verse more easily than prose. Of course, in English you don't get any rhythm. Let's see what it says in Pali. I'll read it; listen carefully while I read this bit in Pali. You'll understand some of the words because you repeat them often enough. (Reads part of passage in Pali.) Then he says: (reads in Pali) - 'Thus the Buddha spoke.' Then: (again in Pali): having spoken in that way he speaks now in verse, and the verse goes: (reads verse in Pali) - which sounds a bit different, doesn't it? There is a rhythm and there is a force, a flow which you don't get with the prose, even though this is not poetry in the highest sense by any means. It is just rhythm, it is just metre.

Anyway. The four - what the first(?) translates as 'four vices'; also 'the four vices of conduct'. And the note down here says 'kamma kilesa'. Kamma, of course, is action; kilesa is defilement, but it also means affliction, something from which you suffer, something which causes you to suffer.

One will also notice here there is a slight difference between the four vices of conduct, the four kamma kilesas, as given in prose and as given in verse.

[57]

As already has been pointed out, these four are the first four precepts. One often finds this group of four in the Pali Canon. One doesn't often find the fifth one added; the fifth one seems to have been added later.

Atula: The fifth one seems to be a restatement of the previous four.

S: In what way?

Atula: Not to sort of neutralize one's sensibility or awareness in any way. Was the fifth one always there?

S: Well, these four occur quite frequently in the Pali Canon without the fifth. It is more usual that one has the four than that one has the fifth. If you take, for instance, the ten kusala-dhammas, the so-called fifth precept doesn't occur there at all. It hasn't been dropped; it hasn't yet been added. But it would seem that, later on, perhaps even after the Buddha's death, when the lists of precepts were being drawn up - these for the lay people, these for the monks - then the fifth one was added to the original set of four. As, for instance, in the Khuddaka-vatthu, which is a very late book, as a book of the Khuddaka Nikaya.

So let's go into these. The translation here says, in the first [instance], says 'destruction of life', in effect killing. Actually it is, of course, panatipata. I've pointed out, I think, many times before, that panatipata doesn't literally mean killing or destruction of life; it means, rather, injury, of which killing or destruction of life is the most extreme form. But it covers much more than simply killing. It's violence, one might say - bodily violence, physical violence, killing; the injuring of people physically, even short of killing them.

Dhammarati: It's physical violence or emotional and psychological violence?

S: Well, that would come more through speech, through wrong speech. But if you - I mean gesture is usually included as a part of speech - if you included gesture under action, you could certainly do people violence. You could harm them psychologically just by a gesture.

Prasannasiddhi: So any injury whatsoever to another person comes under the first precept?

S: Yes. Well, except that, as I've said, any injury inflicted through the body - because if one thinks in terms of what I've called the three avenues of action, whether skilful or unskilful, there's body, speech and mind; so one can commit unskilful actions with the body, with the speech and with the mind. So here, in the case of this first precept, one [58] is concerned with the avenue of bodily action. So the first precept is concerned with your injury of people physically; that is to say, injuring them by, or with, or by means of, your physical body, whether by means of a direct assault or even, perhaps, by a bodily gesture.

So even here, one might say, one is really going beyond the layman/monk distinction, because here panatipata is required of the householder. There is no qualification given. Do you see this? Not that, well, you are only a householder, you can practise it just up to a point. No; you have to practise panatipata - non-violence, let us call it. So if you pursue the implications of that single precept far enough, well, you'll be, one might say, much more than a monk, even. You'll be very well advanced on the spiritual path. So already this single precept, this first

precept, is breaking through that sort of dichotomy of monk and lay, because the abstention from panatipata is expected of the gahapatiputta, apparently, already.

So if you really take this principle of abstention from injuring living beings - breathing beings, literally - if you take that at all seriously, you'll soon cease to be a layman in the ordinary sense, or accepted sense. Do you see what I mean? You may not actually become a monk in the full technical sense, but you certainly won't be a layman in the ordinary sense, either. For instance, you might well consider that observing this precept obliges you to be a vegetarian.

Ratnapala: Bhante, a question I wanted to ask on this precept is, if one were attacked, should one defend oneself? How far does one take pacifism, as it were? What do you think?

S: If one is attacked?

Ratnapala: Or if one sees someone hitting someone else. If you were to see...

S: Well, the precept here is quite clearly that one should not commit any injury, and if one applies that in the strictest possible way it means one shouldn't commit, or inflict, any injury so as to prevent injury being inflicted on oneself. But that does not mean that one cannot resist short of actually injuring the other person. You can incapacitate the other person sometimes without injuring them ...

Ratnapala: It requires a bit of skill.

S: And as far as I understand the matter, one wouldn't be prevented from immobilising the other person or putting him out of action, without actually injuring him - or perhaps inflicting a very minor injury compared [59] with the injury that he was contemplating inflicting upon you, or upon somebody else. So self-defence, in this sense, I would say, is restraining, perhaps, the other person or even knocking him out. The use of force is not necessarily violence.

Ratnapani: The mental state, surely, that's with that...

S: Though there, one of course has to be very careful because even if one was just restraining someone you could be quite angry, which would be an unskilful mental state.

Padmavajra: I think teaching the metta bhavana to people the first time, or going into this sort of precept, people immediately think it's some sort of pacifism, some sort of passive approach - that you are just laying yourself open to being a victim in some way. I wonder if you've encountered that? I think it's quite important to scotch that one. It doesn't mean that you are just a...

S: Well, perhaps people are very much afraid of being made victims; perhaps they feel they are victims already, and they don't want to lay themselves open still more to being victims. So perhaps one should emphasize the positive and outward-going, even active, aspects of metta bhavana. Metta bhavana doesn't represent a sort of lovey-dovey approach, allowing anyone to walk over you roughshod. It doesn't mean, 'Oh, I'm a Buddhist now, you are free to kick me around.'

Atula: Metta is very far from a passive state.

S: Yes. So I think that needs to be communicated to people at the very beginning. I mean, otherwise they've heard about Christian preachers and clergymen generally speaking to them about loving other people, but it probably sounded so weak and watery and insincere, they come to you with all those sort of associations.

Padmapani: I think it's quite interesting when they see Buddhists doing the martial arts, like T'ai Chi or karate, because it does have ... cut an image which is quite popular nowadays, which is usually associated with aggression.

S: Years ago when Sukhavati began to be constructed, quite a few people were amazed to see Buddhists working, because they hadn't associated that idea with Buddhists or with Buddhism at all. So perhaps one needs to consider that sort of thing. Say, let it be known as a sort of skilful means that Buddhists do take up karate. And then people might at once ask the question: 'Isn't it incompatible with Buddhism? Isn't it incompatible with the metta bhavana?' Then you have your [60] opportunity, you can explain or clarify matters: 'No, it isn't.' Even people who normally practise karate without any reference to Buddhism or spiritual life don't take it up - at least they might take it up - for aggressive purposes, but they don't remain in it for that reason. They're soon disabused of that sort of idea or intention, even in the karate tradition itself. And they end up relatively mild and gentle people - but people who are able to look after themselves; at least protect themselves and their friends - even if they have no aggressive intentions.

Prasannasiddhi: I think the distinction has been made of the group and the positive group or the spiritual community within that group. And then if you are, perhaps, living in a city and you're in a spiritual community, in a sense, or a community, then presumably you could act out fully the first precept within that community. But if you are out in the city, on the level of a group where they aren't so sensitive to higher values and things, it may well be that you will come across people who are rather violent and you've got to be able to ?

S: You may at least have to use a certain amount of verbal - well, we haven't got the verbal equivalent of force. You may have to speak strongly.

Prasannasiddhi: You might well, if you are dealing a lot with such people, I would imagine you would have to be strong enough to handle them, just to keep them off, in the first place, and you then sort of deal with the next level.

Ratnapala: One of the advantages of karate [is] it does allow you to defend yourself. I was attacked a few weeks ago, and I was able to block all the punches, bringing no harm to either of us. I was very pleased afterwards that it worked out so skilfully. Nobody got hurt. But if he'd hit me I might well have just hit him back. It would have been very...

S: Wasn't it you who opened the door once and saw ???

Ratnapala: I didn't do quite as well that day ?

S: So at that time you hadn't taken karate up, had you?

Ratnapala: No, I hadn't.

S: So what happened - you got hit, didn't you? But this time it seems not to have happened.

Ratnapala: No!

[61]

S: But to go back more to panatipata veramani as a general ethical principle. I think because it's the first of the precepts, perhaps there is a tendency to regard it as the most elementary. In a sense it is - in the sense that, at least, a modest practice of it is an absolute...

Tape 3, Side B

But in another sense it isn't elementary at all, inasmuch as it remains with you throughout your spiritual life, and your awareness of its importance becomes deeper and deeper. You see more and more in it as you go on. You might even say that you could lead your whole spiritual life just in terms of trying not to injure other living beings in any way, not even with your thoughts. I mean, you might discover that you are injuring them mentally, and that would oblige you to take up the practice of meditation so as to make your thoughts more positive and helpful rather than harmful or injurious to other living beings.

Also, this whole principle of abstention from violence or injury to other living beings goes absolutely against the general trend or tendency of nature. I mean nature does some pretty awful things. So in trying to practise this principle, you are dissociating yourself from nature, in a sense. You are reversing the trend, reversing the tendency and going against the grain of nature, of the lower evolution generally, in a way. Nature is red in tooth and claw, but the noble disciple cannot be red in tooth and claw. He has no teeth or claws - well, no, perhaps one shouldn't say that - he has teeth and he can use them; he has claws and he can use them, but quite skilfully and mindfully to prevent further injury or greater injury.

Anyway, we have fairly recently, I think, gone into this whole question of the first precept quite thoroughly, especially in connection with Tuscany - both the preparation for Tuscany and when we were there, and that is all on tape, so perhaps we need not go into that further now. But perhaps one should just emphasize that one needs not to take any of these precepts, as we call them, for granted. If one is involved in violence or inflicting injury on other living beings to any extent, that is literally a defilement, a kilesa, of your action, of your bodily action.

And then, what is in effect the second precept, adinnadana, taking the not-given. This also raises all sorts of implications. This also, no doubt, has a wider connotation than we usually think. You can see how the first precept shades off into the second, because sometimes when one takes that which is not given you take it by force - or even by fraud, which is a form of violence. Here again we've had some quite extensive discussions, even on the nature of property and the place of property in [62] the spiritual life: do you need to have things so that you can give things? etc.

Padmapani: Sorry, I don't understand that one. Would you - ?

S: Well, dana is praised as a virtue, isn't it? Especially - well, I was going to say especially in

the Mahayana, but perhaps that's doing an injustice to the Theravada. But certainly dana, giving, is stressed in terms of the giving of material things, but in order to be able to give material things you must have material things in your possession. In other words they must be yours, because they must not be somebody else's. You mustn't give away other people's property. You must give away your own property. But that does suggest, surely, that you are in possession of private property; so that leads us into rather deep water, doesn't it?

Tejamati: Do you want to go into it now?

S: Well, I have gone into it, actually, to some extent on those other occasions, but if anyone has any special question, perhaps, we can go into that - a special angle on it.

Padmapani: Maybe one can give of one's energy, which is a...

S: Well, yes, one can, obviously, because your energy is not another person's. But that sort of bypasses the whole question of material giving.

Devapriya: I did understand that the order of monks in the Buddha's time were - the Buddha said it was all right to hold property in common but not individually.

S: Yes. Ah, that isn't quite correct. You could have individual property, but to a very limited extent because your three robes were your own, your bowl was your own, and your needle was your own; and your water strainer was your own, and your girdle and your razor. These were all your personal property which, in a sense, you were not allowed to give away because they had to be always with you. They were part of your equipment, as it were, as a bhikkhu. So you could not give them away. Other property was all held by the Sangha - which in practice meant the local Sangha - in common: that is to say buildings, furniture and so on, pots, water vessels. These were all held in common. So it would seem that the Buddha did not regard the possession of personal property as necessary for the expression of your personality, let us say.

Atula: It seems to me that if someone is practising dana, if they are not taking the not-given, there's an attitude that it's going against private, sort of, holding property.

[63]

S: But, I mean, the Buddha seemed to think that, in the case of the monks, they were giving Dharma, dharmadana. They were giving spiritually. They were giving their energy, one might say, their time, their knowledge of the Dharma. They were giving in that sense, on that level. Later on, of course, the Mahayana didn't agree, because the Mahayana had the Bodhisattva ideal, and they believed that the Bodhisattva should practise dana in all its forms - should give even material things. And that meant that the Bodhisattva had to possess material things, and to that extent he couldn't be a monk in the as it were old-fashioned Theravada or Hinayana sense. One even finds Sarvastivadins relaxing the rules about the number of things that a monk could own as his personal property. The list got extended and extended from I think eight items up to about 18 or 20, including books, at a later stage. In the Buddha's day there were no books, but later on it became the accepted thing that a monk could own books as his private property.

Dhammarati: Could you extend books to paintings and music books?

S: So where does one stop? One could say - some people say, a strict Theravadin might say, that the Mahayana was only rationalizing its declining spiritual standards. The Theravadin would say that Mahayana monks became greedy and desirous of possessions and so they rationalized it all in the terms of the Bodhisattva ideal. Well, that might have been true in some individual instances.

Dhammarati: I don't know if I understand it clearly, but there's a sort of socialist idea against private property, not so much in terms of private possessions but when your control of property becomes so great that you can use it to exploit others. And there's quite interesting analogies in the Movement a wee bit - that some people own enough property to charge rent and actually live off the income of other Buddhists in turn(?) ? and you get a quite interesting situation developing there.

S: I'm not quite sure of the point that you're making.

Dhammarati: Well, look, for instance, because somebody has enough resources to own property, and can then let that property to - well, say it's somebody in the Sangha who owns the property, then renting that property at a level that always can replenish his resources that bought that property in the first place: what you have, in effect, is four or five people committed to a lifestyle, a certain activity, to earn the income to pay the rent and let somebody be free to make decisions and have a lifestyle because they've got that income that the five people who rent this property don't have. He has his freedom because of his income, because of his property, that the five people who are renting the property don't have, although nominally they are both part of the same [64] Sangha. You've actually got private property becoming a tool, to some extent, that...

S: Well, any possession is a tool which you can use either skilfully or unskilfully. It's the same with your energy, with your knowledge, with everything. So I don't think the setting up of any particular system can guarantee that that will not be the case. After all, one has only got to see what has happened in all the communist countries, and how power is being monopolized by a small number of people and in some cases used just for their selfish purposes, so that they enjoy higher standards of living, etc. etc.

But with regard to the instance you mentioned, well, all right, one might say it's not even as simple as that, because how does that particular person, the owner of the house, come by the property in the first place? He might have worked hard for a number of years with the idea of eventually freeing himself from the need to work; and he thinks a house is the best sort of investment, so he invests what he's saved up over the years in a house. He lets it to a number of people who then pay him rent and he lives on that. One might say, is not that a fair arrangement? He after all has earned that money by working and it represents his investment. So that's one possibility. The other is, of course, that he inherited the house from his father. Then you might say, `Why should someone be given that sort of start? Why should he start off with that sort of benefit which someone else doesn't have? Why should property be inheritable?' On the other hand, you might say: `Is not a father free to work and earn for his children? Is that not part of your right as a parent, to give your children as good a start in life as you possibly can? If other parents are not doing the same thing, does that mean that you're not permitted to do it for your children?' etc. etc. The argument can go on.

Devapriya: That is contrary in a way to the idea that was quite strong at one time at Sukhavati

of the common purse. Everybody puts in what they have.

S: Well, I was speaking just now about society in general. When you speak of Sukhavati you are speaking of a spiritual community. There, presumably, different laws operate - purely spiritual laws, ideally, especially if the community consists entirely of Order Members. If one is part of a spiritual community, surely one should be willing to share everything with the other members of that community. You have a common purse because you have a common life and a common ideal. The common purse only formalizes that on the economic level. We find much the same thing in the case of the Buddha. Apparently the Buddha did not suggest that lay people should live communistically, but the [65] bhikkhus were apparently expected to live communistically, because they were a spiritual community in the full sense. They were expected to share everything, barring their robes and bowls and so on.

Padmapani: Doesn't the trouble - in terms of property, in terms of material possessions - come from the difficulty if people come to accept the property as theirs through common ownership and abuse the property which possibly might not be abused by the person who happened to have the money to buy the material?

S: That's true. We know that from experience. But that's because people aren't responsible and to the extent that they are not responsible they're not spiritual; and to the extent that people living in a spiritual community aren't all responsible it isn't a spiritual community. We know that what belongs to everybody belongs to nobody and is often abused.

Padmapani: I think that's what sets up, sometimes, that dichotomy between people having things and other people keeping their things, which...

S: And, of course, sometimes people hang on to things just because they know that if they gave them up - gave them, let's say, to the community - they wouldn't be looked after properly. That is sometimes the case. It does happen that people aren't very careful, not as careful as they should be of common property. So one can sort of make things common property prematurely. You can make things common property, you can expect the individual to give up his personal property, to surrender it, so to speak, to the community, only when every member of that community is sufficiently responsible to care for that property in the same way that the original owner might have cared for it.

A case in point is the Order Library; and years ago that spent some time at Aryatara. Some of the most valuable books disappeared then, and are still missing. Even now, sometimes, people don't replace books properly and don't look after the contents of the Library in the way that they should. That's a small instance.

Also, what tends to happen in socialist countries, or in countries at least to the extent they are socialist, [is that] you take away people's individual property and it becomes as it were state property, which is then administered by bureaucrats who are paid for the purpose, and the property is often not utilized properly or even misused, and not used for the benefit of the people. It's just in the hands of the bureaucrats and often just stagnates. They don't take the interest in it that perhaps individual owners would. It's quite a fine point in a way, quite a difficult situation.

[66]

Devapriya: I think especially when Order Members aren't bhikkhus and they aren't upasakas - there's that...

S: Well, it should be simpler, because the complications of different lifestyles don't come into it.

Padmapani: Doesn't anyway, Bhante, when individual Dharmacharis die, their property become part of the Sangha?

S: Well, in the case of the bhikkhus, and that's our model, in a way, individual property reverted to the Sangha. Sometimes a dying bhikkhu would say 'I'd like So-and-so,' usually one of his own pupils, 'to inherit my robes,' etc., and those wishes were usually respected. Otherwise his robes went into the robe store, as it were, and were given to the next bhikkhu who needed new robes.

Padmapani: I mean if a Dharmachari doesn't make a will, what happens to his property [when] he dies?

S: Well, if he doesn't make a will it goes to his next of kin.

Padmapani: It goes to his - ?

S: Of course. So if you want, as a Dharmachari, your property to go to the Order in any way, or to a particular Centre, you have to make a will to that effect. It won't go automatically. And it might even happen that if you make a will leaving your property to, let's say, the FWBO, your relations could conceivably contest that. If, for instance, you had a wife, and you left your property to a charitable trust, as it would be, she might contest that. It would perhaps be contestable.

Anyway, what is the principle that we come back to in the case of practising abstention from taking the not-given? What is the positive principle?

Atula: Generosity.

S: Generosity. It's trying to utilize whatever resources you have for the benefit of all, including yourself. And any practical arrangements you make, whether on the domestic level, the social level, or the political level, the state level, the national level, should all be designed to further that purpose.

Atula: So really, taking Dhammarati's point about someone using their own property to keep their freedom, to give their own time up, I don't think - it's sort of going back to the principle: the only way that you can, [67] if you disagree with that person, is to just tell them that you [disagree] - if you feel what they're doing is exploiting others.

S: I think it depends who is doing it. What does one mean by exploitation?

Atula: Well, I think sometimes there are some people that haven't got the resources at their command, and that others have. I think that is very much the case. And I think that extends psychologically. I think the way some people have been educated, they've got much more

mobility and freedom than others, perhaps, who have lived in a more working-class background. And it does seem that people should keep more of an eye out between individual cases to encourage certain movements...

S: Yes, but where does property come in here?

Atula: Well, I think...

S: Whether the person you are talking about is a member of the public, a Friend, a Mitra or an Order Member - it differs at each level, so to speak.

Atula: In the case that I was thinking of, it's an Order Member, and I personally feel that I disagree with it. But the only way to deal with that, I think, is to actually tell him about it.

Padmavajra: But surely, even if he's an Order Member, OK, he's charging rent; unless he's really charging something absolutely exorbitant on that, really just charging something diabolical, I personally think it's fair enough. It's a straight business arrangement, surely?

Atula: Yes, well, I don't...

Padmavajra: I don't know the case but, unless he's really being exorbitant I personally think it's fair enough. Those other people presumably are earning the money. They'd have to live somewhere, wouldn't they? They'd have to pay rent somewhere. So I don't...

S: The important factor is his purpose. Is he making those arrangements so that he can study, so that he can preach the Dharma, etc? And that, no doubt, can be taken into consideration, too. For instance, you might say he ought to sell his house and give the money to the nearest FWBO Centre, but perhaps he doesn't have sufficient confidence to do that, in that particular Centre. Or perhaps he feels that if he used his resources in that way to enable himself to live free from the need to [68] earn, and devote himself to study, meditation and teaching, that would be the best thing that he could objectively do, the best use that he could make of those resources which he has. It doesn't preclude him from making other arrangements in future. But he might think that for the time being that is best.

One also has to, I think, accept in principle the good intentions of each Order Member, that each Order Member is genuinely doing the best that he can in any situation including the use that he is making of any resources that he may have. If you have any doubts about it, what you really need to do is to get together with that person and ascertain whether that is in fact the case. If you're reassured of his good intentions, that he is genuinely doing his best, well then, the matter is closed for you. You're satisfied.

Atula: I think that's the best way.

S: But I think the assumption always must be, in the case of an Order Member, that he is doing what he thinks is best. He may be mistaken in thinking, but at least his intention is that he does what is best - in this sort of case that he is making the best use he can think of with whatever resources he has. Otherwise you can apply this endlessly. Like somebody has a hundred pounds; all right, should he go on holiday to Greece? Or should he put it towards a publication? Or should he send the money to India? Well, there are all sorts of possibilities.

Well, it's up to him to decide what is the best use that he can make. Well, maybe the best use is that he goes off on holiday to Greece because he needs a bit of a change and a bit of refreshment, as it were. But he has the responsibility of his act. You can't deprive him of that responsibility. I mean, if you assume that that is his \$100, it's his responsibility just to spend it in the very best way he can, taking into account everybody's needs, including his own.

Padmapani: I suppose, in a general sense, in a higher sense, in the most positive sense, that person if he goes away and when he comes back he's in a good mental state, therefore the Movement benefits.

S: Well, yes, I realize that.

Padmapani: I'm not using that as an excuse. (Laughter.)

S: Well, I assumed that is what is to be understood. (Laughter.) I was assuming that the holiday in Greece was not just a holiday.

Padmapani: No, I'm talking from the point of view - no, that's obvious - I'm talking from the point of view of the person begrudging that person [69] going away. If he saw, for instance, that it was actually going to help him, etc.

S: Well, one might quite rightly begrudge someone spending \$100 in that way if one felt that he wasn't simply spending the money for that purpose, just to refresh himself for the return to duty, so to speak. If one really felt it was a weakness and just a falling by the wayside and a self-indulgence, one might argue the case with him and say, 'No, you shouldn't do that. Use the money for some other purpose or let somebody else go to Greece who really needs to go.'

Devapriya: Where does the line get drawn, though, between arguing that case and coercing and playing on somebody's guilt, that they shouldn't go?

S: What do you mean, where does the line get drawn?

Devapriya: Well - (Laughter.)

S: Let him look after his own guilt feelings. You say what you think, honestly. He's an Order Member. I mean, we're talking about Order Members. He or she should be able to look after their own guilt feelings. I'm a bit tired, I must say, of the argument that you shouldn't ever point out anything wrong, or tell anybody off, because you might activate their guilt feelings. Well, all right, everybody's got guilt feelings, so everyone has to deal with them, because everyone has been brought up as a Christian or a Jew or whatever. So don't sort of hesitate to say what you think. Give the Order Member concerned the benefit of the doubt, that they will take seriously what you say and not allow their guilt feelings to be activated unduly.

Devapriya: How would that apply to Mitras, then?

S: Well, it would apply to them to the extent that they are Mitras and not Order Members. In other words, you have to be a little more gentle and make a little more allowance for self-indulgence and perhaps a little more allowance for guilt feelings. But in the case of a good, healthy, robust young Mitra, why should you make any allowance at all? (Laughter.)

Just say what you think. Why let him get away with it, so to speak? You're not doing him a service, if you do.

So it really comes down to this, that whatever the particular social and political arrangements may be, some property will remain with you or under your control, or at your disposal. It may be material; it may be financial; it may be just your own energy; it may be just your own time. But whatever property you have got at your disposal, whatever [70] resources on any level, of any kind, you have to consider seriously: 'What is the best use that I can make of these, the best use from everybody's point of view? Let me not use these resources just for the purpose of selfish indulgence.' If you bear that principle in mind I think it'll settle all problems and difficulties. It's a bit more complicated when you are living within a family, because then you've got other people's interests to take into consideration as well as your own, people for whom you are responsible. But the principle is the same: what is the best use of these resources that I have?

Prasannasiddhi: And that refers not only to money, but your time, your abilities.

S: Your time, your energy, your abilities, everything. You might consider the best use that you can make of your abilities is to just go away and meditate on your own for two or three years. Or you might consider the best thing you can do is to work hard and put your children through university. You might consider that. Or you might think the best thing you can do with your time and energy is to take more and more classes, give more and more lectures. Or if it's money, the best use you can make is to spend it, to give it away or to invest it and administer it bit by bit. But you must be guided by that one and the same principle: the best possible use of your resources, whatever they are. The best in the sense of what is best for people generally, as far as you can see. Some people will differ; I think you have to accept that. And that's where it's important to accept, within the Order at least, everybody's basic sincerity and genuineness and good intentions. If you have any serious doubt, you just have to take it up with the person concerned. If you really think that they are being self-indulgent, which means that you will be thinking that they're failing to be an Order Member in the full sense, then you must take it up with them.

Anyway, what about precept three, which is, of course, the well-known musavada? It's the same in both, in the prose and in verse. False speech. Well, we've had quite a lot to say about false speech on various occasions, haven't we? It's come up again and again. But again, it's a very basic principle. Truthful communication, honest communication, straightforward communication. The truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth.

Has anyone got any comments on this principle? I don't have any of my own at present. [Has] anyone experienced any difficulties in connection with this precept recently? Any fresh ideas on the subject?

Atula: Well, the truth is always a difficult one.

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S: I've had my say on numberless occasions.

Atula: I often feel that people are truthful but not very honest in the way they sort of batter people with truths, rather than - perhaps a bit like Blake's

A truth that's told with bad intent
Beats all the lies you can invent.

S: Well, perhaps it's helpful at least to start off with truth. I think here again you have to be careful, not emphasizing this so much that you almost suggest that you shouldn't ever speak the truth, you know, because you might of course be speaking it not quite positively.

Padmavajra: I found this in connection with criticism lately and the area of giving criticism - that it's very easy to rationalize not giving criticism from the point of view of saying, well, my motive is wrong. Whereas in point of fact that's probably just a rationalization of being afraid to put yourself on the line, so to speak. I have noticed in criticizing somebody lately that one reason I don't want to do it, even though it's true, is that when you do that you do have a responsibility towards that person. You can't just criticize and walk away and leave him. You actually make a certain commitment to that person, if you do that. And I think that is one reason why personally I hold back from criticizing people.

S: Well, yes, you might have opened their eyes to some quite, well, maybe negative aspect of themselves that they hadn't noticed before. And they might need quite a lot of help in coming to terms with that. Well, are you in a position to give them that help? Are you prepared to give them that help? You have to consider that. But then again, supposing they just ask you, 'What do you think of me? What do you think about this? What do you think about that?' One has the duty of honesty then, presumably, if they ask you. I mean it's not a small matter to ask another person, especially an Order Member, or another Order Member: 'What do you think of me?' Well, then you're really asking for it, literally, at your own risk. And you shouldn't expect them automatically just to say: 'I think you're great,' and leave it at that. But certainly within the Order it should be possible to speak the unmitigated truth.

Ratnapani: In fact I'm now beginning to see it - holding back from criticizing - how in a way that's an abuse, almost, to the person. You're holding that person's development back if you can see something and you don't say it; especially between Order Members. We should all be able to take it.

S: Right. In principle you all can, in the long run anyway.

Ratnapani: It's an incentive to follow through the whole Order, even if it is something quite shattering, but there will always be the context, won't there, to put the pieces back together in a better way, and let everybody feel you're...

S: You might throw them away and start all over again. (Laughter.)

Devapriya: I suppose what I've found is that people have a different opinion about what truth actually is, so although you might say 'This is what I see,' you might find that the other person says, 'No. I don't think you're -'

S: Here I think you have to distinguish between matters of fact and matters, of, let's say, judgement. I mean whether a certain person was present, let's say, on a certain occasion, in a certain place, say a Council meeting, that surely is a matter of fact about which there cannot be opinions. I do gather on one occasion (laughter) at least, there was a difference of opinion as to whether someone had actually been present and he wasn't sure himself! But then, you

can have a genuine difference of judgement of a situation, or assessment of a situation. So I think one has to try and distinguish initially between matters of fact and matters of interpretation, perhaps we should say.

Atula: I suppose in areas of judgement there is most trouble, actually.

Ratnapani: But I would assume again any Order Member worth his salt, before he makes any sort of serious criticism of someone's attitude, which is something of a judgement, will have thought about it and observed it and maybe compared notes with somebody else, and then offered the criticism.

S: I think one should never try to rebuff someone and say, 'Well, that's just your opinion.' You've got to, what shall I say? - do them the justice of thinking that it's a reasoned opinion; that you've come to that conclusion for definite reasons. You shouldn't just say, 'That is just your opinion,' and try to dismiss it, but actually bring counter reasons if you disagree with their opinion.

Ratnapala: I think this is the hardest of all the precepts to follow. It's so easy to say things which are factually true but say them in such a way as to shade it in your favour. I find I do that an awful lot.

Devapriya: Surely you start off with the facts quite clearly, that somebody was there and this happened and that happened, and make it clear that these are facts, and then you might just debate your interpretation of those facts.

Padmapani: Yes, that makes it a lot clearer.

S: I mean someone might turn up late for a meeting. That he turns up late is a fact, but what is the interpretation of that fact? It might have been sheer laziness, unmindfulness and indifference on his part, which is unskilful. It could be that on his way to the meeting he happened to meet some sick person who had to be taken to hospital, etc., so therefore he has a perfectly valid reason for being late.

Devapriya: Or the meeting started earlier than he was originally told, without...

S: Exactly! These matters of fact need to be ascertained. First of all, was he late? Did the meeting start at the time it was supposed to have started, or that he thought it was going to start? Then, even if he is actually late, the reason for that, before any sort of final judgement can be made. That's a very simple example.

Ratnapani: Did you once say, Bhante, there should be no criticism without metta? Because you've been reported as saying so; I think I've reported you as saying so. (Laughter.)

S: What do you mean by 'should'? Ideally, yes, criticism should go together with metta. I don't think, though, that the fact that criticism is unaccompanied by metta should be considered sufficient grounds for rejecting that criticism.

Voices: (inaudible.)

S: Well, all right, again, to say that the criticism is without metta, that is a judgement. So if someone says, 'Now, my criticism is accompanied by metta,' that should be accepted as a statement made in good faith - within the Order, that is. Because, in saying that someone's criticism is without metta, you are making, in a way, a very serious judgement. There are degrees of metta. Do you mean to say that it is entirely without metta? Or if you say that it should be accompanied by metta, do you mean that it should be accompanied by the metta of a Buddha? So at most one is asking that there should be a certain amount of positive emotion.

Ratnapani: Good will.

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S: Good will. Some element of good will in the criticism. [One cannot] reasonably, of unenlightened beings, expect much more than that.

Ratnapani: Even if there is temporary anger involved in that situation.

S: Yes, there may be basic, underlying good will. But certainly one should never reject a criticism on the alleged ground that it is not accompanied by metta, which is a very difficult thing to know, anyway - especially at that very moment when you're perhaps feeling the criticism rather keenly. After all, you know your mother does love you when you are a small child, even though she is smacking your bottom. That's a rudimentary, basic and fundamental comparison! - but with some validity nonetheless.

From the whole trend of the discussion so far, it does seem that in the Movement generally, and perhaps even within the Order, there seems to be quite a tendency of trying to escape from criticism on one ground or another. That's the impression I get. (Murmurs of assent.) Trying to evade criticism, either on the grounds that it activates your guilt feelings or that it wasn't duly sensitive, or that it wasn't accompanied by metta. It seems to me a lot of wriggling has been going on, and people trying to evade criticism in one way or another and not expose themselves to it, or to rebut it or rebuff it when it comes.

Devapriya: I've often felt that there's an esoteric eleventh precept that you don't acknowledge that you can possibly ever have been mistaken under any circumstances whatsoever. It's often - (laughter) - no, it came up...

Tape 4, Side A

Padmavajra: ... more important not that other people might be mistaken - they might be right - but perhaps it's more important to see where you're mistaken. See what I mean? Not where other people are mistaken, necessarily.

Devapriya: I took that attitude in earlier days that it was always me that was mistaken and everybody else that was right, so...

Ratnapani: Maybe that was right!

Devapriya: Maybe!

S: Anyway, perhaps we've cleared up a few minor micchaditthis and could pause now for tea

and go on to the fourth precept after tea, suitably refreshed.

[75]

TEA BREAK)

S: We're coming on now to the fourth precept or, rather, in the terms that we actually have here, the fourth of the kamma kilesas or actions of defilement. That is to say, we come on to what the Buddha called in the prose passage here sexual misconduct, kamesu micchachara, and what in the verse portion he calls adultery, which in the original is paradara gamanam(?), that is to say `going to' or `frequenting' the wives of others. Adultery clearly covers that.

Tejamati: Sorry, is that gamanam?

S: Gamana(?) is `going'. `Going to' or `going with', `associating with', i.e. sexually, the wives of others. So adultery is an appropriate translation, adultery on the part of males with females, females who are the wives of others.

Again this is a precept we have often discussed. Is there anything new to say here, especially the question of any possible difference between sexual misconduct in general and specifically adultery? Why do you think adultery is mentioned in the verse section?

Ratnapani: It seems to incorporate several aspects that could be unskilful in sexual activity, and there's an element of in a way violence, as you've said before in the early Mitratas: you're harming the husband, there's greed and...

S: ... have a third party ...

Ratnapani: Right. There's a lot of grief, because you ... something that could be avoided.

S: You're presumably disrupting a family.

Tejamati: Do you think the Buddha has singled it out because it was maybe more common?

S: Well, he is speaking to a layman, so to speak. Also one might say that if one thinks in terms of kamesu micchachara that's a pretty broad category. It's sexual misconduct, it can cover hundreds of things. So presumably some forms of sexual misconduct are more serious than others, and presumably if you wanted to practise this precept you would start off by practising it in its most basic, most elementary form, which presumably is at least abstaining from going with the wives of other men. At least that. Do you see what I mean? If you can't observe that, if you can't refrain from associating with or seducing the wives of other men, [76] you're not practising [abstention from] kamesu micchachara really at all. That is the very least that can be expected, the very least degree of control in sexual matters that can be expected of you. But why is that the basic form, as it were? This perhaps has been partly answered already.

Atula: It seems to be a sort of social requirement - has social implications.

S: There's the social aspect. Adultery is socially disruptive. It's disruptive of domestic life. It's disruptive of people's domestic happiness. There's not only the husband to consider; in this

case there's the consequences for any children of the woman with whom you commit adultery and her husband.

But it might seem - what shall I say? - a trifling point in a way, but what constitutes adultery? Adultery is going with the wives of others, but what is a wife? How does one define that? Are there even degrees of seriousness in going with the wives of others? Does it include girlfriends? You see, there's that also. One might say that the most serious form of adultery was going with a legally married woman who had a large number of young children. That would be really serious because it would be disruptive of quite a large family, perhaps. On the other hand, all right, can one look into any mitigating circumstances? Supposing you argued that she wasn't happy with her husband, she was going to leave him anyway - would that constitute a mitigating circumstance?

(A few voices together.)

Ratnapani: I'd like to say 'Maybe, but so what?'

S: Yes.

Ratnapani: Leave that area alone, because then you know you are not committing misconduct.

S: One might even put the old adage of 'make sure you are off with the old love before you are on with the new one.' If you are thinking in terms of entering into a relationship with a woman who is already married, insist that, if she is unhappy with her husband, she just leaves him first and it's all clear; not that you contribute to any further confusion. But clearly this is a very complicated, not to say messy, sort of area.

But, leaving aside the whole question of children, which is an additional complication, it isn't a very skilful thing to as it were intervene or interfere or to contribute to the break-up or complication of relations, [77] especially sexual-cum-emotional relations, between other people, because the emotions involved are very strong, even violent, even primitive. You can be sparking off a serious explosion.

Ratnapala: I remember during my early involvement with the Movement quite often people would say they couldn't understand why adultery was one of the precepts, because if it conduced to breaking up a nuclear family it could only be a good thing.

S: Well, one could argue in that way, but you know only too often a man commits adultery with a married woman with the idea of just setting up another nuclear family with her and him, instead of her and her existing husband.

Ratnapani: I doubt if the ulterior motive would be to break up the nuclear family.

S: Rather doubtful, yes. But even assuming that the nuclear family is to be broken up, the word 'nuclear' should give us food for thought because with anything nuclear there can be a nuclear explosion!

So even supposing you believe a nuclear family should be broken up, the way to break it up is not to invade it as it were from outside but, if you really are convinced it should be broken up, well, talk in a disinterested way to the two people involved in it, not sort of take unilateral

action.

Ratnapala: You could get hit by the fall-out.

: You probably would.

S: You might find yourself willy-nilly part, as I said, of another nuclear set-up.

Dhammarati: You can't really circulate means and ends like that. If you've got craving and violence involved in your means, your ends are going to get ...

S: Mm.

Padmapani: Didn't you formulate a series of relationships with females a few years ago, Bhante? Didn't you say the person ought to know, if they were having a relationship with a woman, whether [she was] married in the sense of going steady, or promiscuous, was it? - promiscuous -

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S: ... something. I classified different possibilities of lifestyle, that is to say the married, the promiscuous and the celibate.

Atula: Ah, that was the social...

Padmapani: Celibate, that was the one.

Devapriya: `Married' you would extend to include people not living together although in a steady relationship.

S: Well, I would even categorize like that, but one must consider when one enters into relationships with other people, of whatever kind, the effect that your entering into those relationships with them is going to have on their relationships with other people; or maybe, above all, on the ordinary social level, you have to consider this question of adultery because one knows that sexual relationships are very, as it were, binding, usually. I use the word binding in the psychological sense.

I do know within the Friends there have unfortunately been one or two instances where even Order Members have formed relationships with women whose relationships with the existing men in their lives was by no means sort of cleared up, or in one or two cases they even were still married. So that sort of thing must really be avoided as very unskilful, and in one or two cases it has led to very serious feelings of ill will, even between Order Members.

Ratnapala: What do you think the psychological effects of promiscuity are, particularly on women? Do you think - ?

S: I've wondered about this, especially lately. I think more and more - this is my tentative thinking, this is my thinking aloud; this is not Bhante handing down judgements as it were ex cathedra; I'm coming to the conclusion that sexual promiscuity in the case of women is not very psychologically positive.

Ratnapala: I agree. But very often when you are quoted as saying promiscuity is a good thing, people just start going into it just because they think that you condone it.

S: But again what does one mean by promiscuity? Perhaps that needs to be gone into. Promiscuity is not a very good word, perhaps. (I'm just trying to get a kind of thread of connection.) One can consider, say, the possibility that someone decides to, say, get married; he goes the whole hog, he gets legally married. I don't honestly see the point in that if one doesn't get married with the intention of starting a family. It seems really, if you are thinking in terms of having children, you want to start [79] a family - you as, say, a man - well, the sensible thing is to get married and as it were to do it properly, under normal circumstances. So that's one possibility. I don't really see the point of getting married, you being a man, if you don't intend sooner or later to start a family. That seems to be the point, really, of getting married and settling down with one woman and undertaking to look after her: well, why should you look after her rather than she look after you? - well, you can look after each other - unless you're going to have children. And, if you have children, it becomes incumbent on you to look after her, at least for the time being, rather than the other way round, for obvious reasons.

So it would seem to me that the only reason for proposing to yourself to stay with one and the same woman for some 15 or 20 years is that during that period you are going to be raising a family which will need your joint attention for pretty well that period. So therefore it seems to me quite pointless to get married, or the equivalent, if you're not thinking in terms of having a family. All right, you don't want a family, therefore you don't get married. So you think in terms of, let us say, more casual relationships with women. All right, supposing you have a relationship that lasts, say, for five years or six years, you're not living together; then maybe it dissolves because that's the nature of things, if there isn't the common interest in building the home and the family and raising the children to bind you together, after four or five years you part. All right, then, you team up with somebody else; after a while again with somebody else. Well, that is as it were promiscuity.

Ratnapala: That would be your definition of promiscuity?

S: I would say that this is as it were promiscuity. But that you're hopping into bed with a different person every other night, this is not just promiscuity; this is, I suggest, neurosis, because it's...

Ratnapala: It doesn't conduce to contentment.

S: It doesn't conduce to contentment, no. And I think it's probably psychologically more damaging for women because of this - well, feminists would deny this - this inbuilt desire on the part of most women, let's say the average woman or the normal woman, to have children, to have a home and to have the same man around for a reasonable length of time, preferably for life. So it's as though in their case they're starting up a process which never is allowed to run its natural course, and this is happening again and again and again. And I don't think this is good for them. It doesn't seem to be, from what I have observed.

But this, as I say, is my thinking aloud; it's not my definite conclusion but it's the way my thinking is tending at present. It seems that it doesn't [80] do a man much psychological harm, probably none at all, to just gaily scatter his seed around here and there. It doesn't seem to

matter in his case, but I think in the case of a woman to come to the point of conception and then the whole process is interrupted, and again it happens and again - this seems to do her harm both physically and mentally.

And in the case of women the side effects of the pill and all these sort of things, I think, cannot be overlooked, it cannot be ignored. One thing I have noted within the FWBO is that the level of general health among the women seems much lower than the level of general health among the men. They've got all sorts of complaints and ailments. And I cannot help associating this with the fact that many of them are promiscuous and are making use of the various kinds of contraceptives, especially the pill and various other things we won't go into. Only last year, just talking to quite a number of women on retreat, I was really quite amazed how many of them were suffering from various complaints and minor ailments. I was almost horrified.

Devapriya: I recall something that you were said to have said, and that was that men should stay single and women should get married.

S: Well, I did say this years ago. Obviously it's a paradox. But what I'm drawing attention to is the quite objective fact that the interests of men and the interests of women are sometimes in conflict, and I think it's difficult to resolve that conflict. The same thing doesn't give equal satisfaction to both parties, it would seem. I think one has to accept this element of conflict between the needs of the male and the needs of the female, and obviously resolve it, solve it if you like, as best you can.

Padmapani: Do you think this sort of situation which you find yourself in is a lot more difficult in the West than, say, it is in India, where the roles are very clearly defined? I mean you read that most laymen automatically get married and they have families.

S: They don't automatically get married; they're automatically married off. They have no choice. It's not a problem: it's a disaster that happens to you. This is how most young men regard it, or at least profess to regard it. You meet someone, as I have often met, maybe 17 or 18, and [he says], 'I'm getting married or being married in a month's time.' And you say, 'Do you want to be married?' And they all say, 'Oh no. No. I don't want to.' And you say, 'Why don't you avoid being married?' And they say, 'Oh no, that's impossible.' It's just something that happens to you, it's like bad weather, it just comes. (Laughter.) There is nothing you can do about it. It's just part of life. So they don't even try to escape, usually.

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Padmapani: It's really interesting, I noticed when I was out in India, the women seemed very stable and balanced. They seemed quite mature in a way.

S: It's very difficult, of course, to generalize but no doubt there is a more stable social pattern there, and I think probably that gives women a greater feeling of security than usually they have in the West. When I say 'in the West,' even that's a generalization - the English-speaking, Anglo-Saxon West, let us say.

Prasannasiddhi: The women may be more stable in Indian society, but are the men? What does this do for the men, to be married off?

S: Well, a lot of them don't like it, especially the young men. Often they feel that it's too early. They say they don't mind being married after three or four years, but they are usually married off quite early. Indians generally - I'm speaking more of Hindus - don't look with any favour upon, well, promiscuity (to use that term), or extra-marital relations, or premarital relations. They recognize quite objectively that a young man has a sexual urge, so they think the best thing to do is to marry them off as soon as possible. But that formerly meant that he was married quite early and had to interrupt his education more often than not, and became the father of children when still in his teens, which was not desirable from many different points of view. So that system didn't have only advantages; there were disadvantages too.

It certainly gave a measure of security to those who felt the need of security, who, of course, were in the majority. The individual man, and woman to a much lesser extent, could break out of that system only by breaking out of society altogether and going forth as a wanderer, in other words becoming a monk, sadhu, holy man or whatever. That was sort of the accepted way of doing the unacceptable.

It is, in a way, a problem which the Movement faces in India, because the only recognized sexual outlet is within marriage. They don't recognize any other. Even masturbation is very heavily frowned upon and regarded as leading directly to disease and weakness and so on and so forth. Even the, for instance, nocturnal emission is regarded in India as being a disease, and young men who suffer from this (I shouldn't say suffer, perhaps, but young men to whom this occurs) will feel very worried and upset. And there are even physicians, doctors of a sort, who profess to treat this 'disease' and to whom these young men go for treatment. They are often so ignorant that they confuse this with venereal disease, which sounds extraordinary, but they do.

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Anyway, that's all by the way. India is certainly not the land of sexual enlightenment, even though, broadly speaking, they don't associate sexual pleasure with theological guilt in the way that we have been taught to in the West. But they are not entirely problem-free, nonetheless. They certainly do regard sex within marriage as the norm. Things seem to have been a little freer in the Buddha's time, because one does hear of ladies like Ambapali who catered for the needs of celibate (?) gentlemen and who was accepted in that role and had what seems to have been a distinguished, not to say honoured, place in the social life of her city.

But anyway, this particular discussion arose out of Ratnapala's query about what effect psychological promiscuity has on women, and it seems - my thinking at present is - that it's not a desirable thing. So there's a certain conflict of interest between men and women.

Ratnapala: This whole area seems quite unclear to a lot of Western people. I have noticed, particularly since my involvement with the Movement, that at one time it was - I mean with men; I don't know much about women - everyone was sort of into homosexuality, and then, I think, it came that you said everyone in fact is bisexual, so everyone suddenly became bisexual. (Laughter.)

S: It's very encouraging to know that human nature is as malleable as this!

Ratnapala: Well, that's what frightened me, Bhante. (Laughter.) I think we're all androids or

something at the moment but...

S: So what's the current state of play in the West?

Ratnapala: We're androgenous.

S: Oh, we're androgenous - you're androgenous. (Laughter.)

Padmavajra: I don't mind being androgenous.

S: Angelically so, of course! However gross and one-sided one might be in actual practice!

Ratnapani: I thought the general state of play was that promiscuity, to most people, meant a very casual relationship, maybe lasting only a few weeks, a few months ... (Voices commenting.)

Ratnapala: I think that went out last week. (Laughter.)

[83]

(Inaudible comments.)

S: What does promiscuous mean?

Ratnapani: Got a dictionary?

S: It means, sort of, generally, without distinguishing. Anyway, what we are actually considering is the fact that adultery, in the sense of sexual contact with the wives of other people, women who are already a party to an established relationship, is definitely regarded as a kamma kilesa, an action of defilement.

Atula: It seems, in this case, getting back to the actual text, that the prose is more a general formula and the poetry is the particular, in terms of Sigala.

S: That's true, yes. Perhaps the Buddha speaks more directly to Sigala, he being a young layman. In modern times it's a little more difficult to know - referring to the situation in which most of you, or your contemporaries or friends, might find themselves - whether one is actually committing adultery. Because if, say, a woman is legally married, well, that is clear: she is somebody's wife, and you should not think in terms of having any sexual connection with her. But suppose she is somebody's girlfriend. Then it is not quite so clear. Maybe she is someone's ex-girlfriend or semi-ex-girlfriend, or something like that. Well, I think the principle holds good that it is incumbent upon you, you have the responsibility, that if you're thinking in terms of having a sexual relationship with anybody, you ascertain that they are in a sense free to have that with you, and that you are not going to invade an existing relationship. Whether that relationship is skilful or unskilful, that is another question. You're not thereby subscribing to the relationship or approving of it simply by virtue of the fact that you refrain from becoming sexually involved with the woman who is a party to that relationship.

But if you've got a woman, for instance, who is just totally promiscuous, it's difficult to know

where one stands. Perhaps, in the case of a woman who is totally promiscuous, you should be even more careful about getting involved with her. Because if she is totally promiscuous, the chances are she is psychologically in a very disturbed state, and perhaps you don't want to become part of that or be affected by that. Perhaps you can help her best by staying clear and maybe just being a friend; not becoming sexually involved but just being friendly.

Devapriya: It is very often difficult to find out if one's prospective partner is free, because you've got to find out, in a sense, what the terms [84] of existing relationships that she might have are, and often they are not clear.

S: Well, then, it's incumbent upon you to ask your friends. 'Is she going with anyone?' Maybe she won't be frank with you. Perhaps she doesn't know her own mind. Perhaps she is really mixed up and confused. She doesn't know whether she's finished with somebody else or not; perhaps she doesn't even know. That's possible. Some women can be very confused in this area - men, too; do not really know where they are. Or of course she may be playing you off against somebody else. There's that possibility you have to be open to.

Ratnapani: Perhaps if you're thinking about the one-night stand there's not enough time to do all this research. (Laughter.)

Ratnapala: Is it equally unskilful for women, Bhante - adultery? For a woman to go with a married man? Presumably it works both ways. She has the same responsibility, if she's a Buddhist.

S: I would say, in principle, yes. Though, under existing social arrangements, adultery on the part of the husband is or can be less disruptive of family life than adultery on the part of the wife.

Ratnapala: Psychologically?

S: Whether it should be so, that's entirely another matter, but under existing arrangements it seems to be the case. But, other factors being equal, a woman, a Buddhist woman, has equal responsibility in this matter.

Ratnapala: Because the psychological state is the same, isn't it?

S: Yes. I mean, to try to sort of tempt away another woman's husband is no less reprehensible than a man trying to tempt away another man's wife. I mean a woman has responsibilities. If she claims to be an individual or is trying to be an individual, as a Buddhist, she has responsibility in this matter, as in others. She's not under present conditions a merely weak passive object to be tossed about between different men.

Padmapani: It's quite an interesting area, that, because for quite a lot of people, even in the context of the Movement, who may be having relationships with women, if you consider [promiscuity] as being unhealthy for women, that actually puts quite a lot of moral responsibility on the man who's having a relationship with a woman that's making her unhealthy. It's quite an issue, really.

S: But there's so much that could be said on this topic. One is getting fresh information, I won't say every day, but periodically, so one is keeping one's thinking up to date. But one of the things I've been thinking about recently - I'm going a little bit off the track, but perhaps that can be forgiven - I won't mention any names and I'll just give the case as it were, because it did lead to certain reflections on my part, in this sort of area.

There were two people involved with the Friends and maybe known to most of you: let's say A and B, A being male and B being female. They'd had a relationship for some time - I think it was perhaps for a couple of years or more - and were generally known to have a relationship, and recognized. Well, due to certain circumstances, they were separated for a while; that is to say they were living in different places, even in different countries, so that there was no possibility of continuing their sexual relationship. Each of them very quickly embarked upon various sexual adventures, A with various women and B with various men, with quite unhappy effects in both cases. And they were telephoning each other apparently and having quite strained conversations, and everything went really weird and a bit haywire.

That's what happened. So my reflections were these. All right, supposing you've been having, say, a regular sexual relationship with someone over a period of, well, a couple of years, so you considered you had a relationship with them; and then, due to circumstances, you were separated, you were parted. Well, surely, one shouldn't think, so to speak, of immediately replacing that person with another sexual partner. It seemed to me that it offered you an opportunity of trying to sort of raise the relationship to another level, and being very careful not to do anything which upset the other person (because each very badly upset the other person), and not doing anything which would prevent you even maybe trying to raise the relationship to a higher level - as it were a more, let us say, purely emotional level.

So I felt quite disappointed that the two people concerned didn't think in those terms. Not thinking, 'Well, we're physically apart, we're not sleeping together for a while, but does that mean that the relationship is broken off? Let us sort of just try to maintain it and even consolidate it on an in a sense higher level, a non-physical level. Let's try to develop the emotional side of the relationship, more letters and so on, and even just thinking of each other.' But that didn't happen. It seems not to have occurred to either of the two people to try to develop it in this way. So each seemed to plunge into promiscuity, and not with very happy results. They did succeed in hurting each other's feelings, and I don't think either of them got much out of those other casual relationships. It seems just a pity that they missed what seems to me to be an [86] opportunity to develop their relationship in a more human way. Do you see what I mean? So these were the reflections I had on that occasion.

And then, sort of generalizing a bit, I thought maybe within the FWBO, amongst our Friends, there's not enough importance attached to fidelity, faithfulness, on any level. It's a question of faithfulness, fidelity, loyalty, consistency, dependability, the building up of things which need to be built up over a period of years. Not while your boyfriend or your girlfriend, or your husband or your wife, is no longer around, OK, you grab some other sexual partner for the interval. This doesn't really seem very noble. Yes, no doubt you will suffer a certain amount of sexual deprivation. You'll miss them. But is it not possible to take that opportunity to sublimate a little bit, and to strengthen the relationship on the emotional level? I felt that maybe people - now it's talking about relationships in general, leaving aside this particular kind of relationship, leaving aside the sexual question - maybe people just don't take their relationships generally seriously enough.

Atula: I think it is true that people seem to develop friendships when they're near people, but as soon as, for some reason, they're physically parted, it doesn't get carried on. It's very disappointing...

S: So that means that you are identified very much with the body, because the mind is not limited by time and space.

Devapriya: Something that I recall for quite a few years in my early contact with the Friends is that - it started off that sex was inimical to the spiritual life, but then it became that the relationship was inimical to the spiritual life. Probably you will still hear it from time to time from certain people.

S: Well, when someone says 'relationship' one is meaning a neurotic relationship of mutual emotional dependence.

Devapriya: But until one is on a very high level there's always a degree of that.

S: Oh, indeed, yes.

Devapriya: So it tends to get blanketed that emotional relationship is negative, so maybe that sort of view has led people to feel that they do need to experience sex with somebody else - well, experience sex; sex is all right, the relationship is inimical. So you do get, historically, that coming about -

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S: I do remember there was a seminar where I spoke in terms of three lifestyles, each one having both a healthy and a neurotic possibility. I said, for instance, you could be healthily married, and neurotically married; healthily promiscuous and neurotically promiscuous; and healthily celibate and neurotically celibate. (Laughter.) Oh dear, we must get these old tapes into circulation and get all these things transcribed. But do you see what I mean? I mean someone can be married [or] can have that kind of relationship, and it can be either positive, I mean healthy, or it can be neurotic. One can think of examples quite easily. And so with the two other possible lifestyles.

Dhammarati: So would you say that the possibilities of a healthy celibate lifestyle were greater than the possibilities of a healthy married lifestyle, or not?

S: I think, with regard to the population at large, probably they are less, but I say that with some hesitation. Probably.

Dhammarati: Sorry, could you just clarify it - that they're less in the marriage relationship?

S: No, the possibilities are less, I think, for the majority of people outside the FWBO, less in the celibate state. Because, for most people, not thinking in terms of a spiritual life or spiritually, just not to have sex or to be prevented from having sex cannot be a very positive thing.

Ratnapani: Outside the FWBO, especially outside...

S: Yes, speaking in general. But the point I was making in introducing that sixfold classification was that there was no particular lifestyle by the adoption of which you could be sure that you were in a positive state. No, you can't be sure in that way. Yes, adopt the lifestyle which is most appropriate, but that doesn't mean you're automatically sort of saved or delivered from the possibility of a neurotic mental state, or neurotic attitude, within that particular lifestyle, whatever it is. But I would qualify that a bit in the light of, say, further thinking aloud, that in the case of women I think there's much less likelihood of a positive promiscuity than in the case of men. I would qualify that. Anyway, just consider whether you agree with that or not.

Have we dwelt sufficiently on that particular topic? I think maybe we have, except there is one point I'd like to emphasize, just going back to the actual topic: that is to say the fact that the Buddha regards adultery as a kamma kilesa - an action of defilement. It does underline this whole question of awareness and the fact that one is responsible for one's [88] actions. One must go into this sort of situation knowing what one is doing, not allow oneself to be carried away by blind impulse.

Ratnapani: One thing popped into my mind when you moved on briefly to just fidelity, loyalty, etc. in general, in all human relationships, and that was something that was again attributed to you in Tuscany last year, which was something to the effect: 'Sooner kill yourself than go back on your given word.'

S: Well, I don't remember saying those words. I might well have said them. Yes. Because, yes, the pledge, the given word, is so important. I mean, in India sometimes they say if you break your word you make yourself a liar, which is a quite serious matter. Yes. Even in the case of marriage. You give your word, don't you? So you should either give it and keep it or, if you don't think in terms of keeping it - well, don't give it. Just say, 'This is a temporary arrangement.' Be frank about it.

Padmapani: I suppose it's a lack of people understanding the power of speech ...

Tape 4, Side B

S: But more generally there is a fact which I think I have dwelt on recently - that relationships of all kinds, just to use the word relationship in a neutral sense, relationships of all kinds in modern times tend to be rather temporary, or more temporary than before, just because everybody is so mobile. I certainly notice when I visit India my friends there are, I think almost without exception, exactly where I left them 20 years ago. They are living in the same houses and they are working, for the most part, in the same jobs. And I can just go, I remember the address, I can go and find them there just like 20 years ago! But friends in England, I couldn't do that. Even friends I've made during the time I've been here would probably have changed their address two or three times since I've known them.

Atula: I can do that with some friends [I've known] 20 years.

S: But this is the general tendency, and I think it is more extreme in the States than it is here.

Ratnapani: It is a tendency never to go very deep in any friendship - if it is going to be temporary. Well, you can't go very deep if it is temporary...

S: But I think one of the things one must realize about the FWBO and about the Order in particular - you've got a network of relationships [89] among Order Members which are for life. You may not be working on certain relationships now, because maybe certain people are far away, but in principle the relationships are for life and you are working on them all the time. Perhaps you work more intensively with those Order Members with whom you happen to be in immediate contact, but perhaps you should think in terms of being in immediate contact with a relatively small number of people for quite a considerable while; rather than six months with these people and a year with those people, and so on. That doesn't really give you time to deepen your relationship in the best sense. It doesn't give you time to develop fidelity and loyalty or even to think in those terms, perhaps.

Ratnapani: It almost seems like - go somewhere and it doesn't matter where or who they are, in a way, if they are Order Members. Stay five years and work at it. So over that period of time the little differences that seem to mean so much now will just get smoothed out.

S: Yes. It doesn't mean getting stuck in a rut. I mean we must be alive to those sort of dangers, those sort of possibilities. But it's continuity of development, continuity of the relationship; especially continuity as regards friendship, spiritual friendship.

Devapriya: Maybe that's why - because there is no much mobility people don't take their word so seriously. Because in a village where everybody is there 20 years, you will very clearly see the consequences. But here you say one thing and you're out the door the next day, and it doesn't have so much weight, somehow.

S: Or even in the village, of course, even if you go, your family is still there, and they are regarded by the rest of the village as responsible for you. If you have left owing money they will jolly well collect it from your family, and you of course will know that and you won't want, perhaps, your family to suffer, so you won't act, perhaps, so individualistically.

Dhammarati: ... teaching(?) is this fidelity and the demands made on one's time; because I've noticed a bit at the Centre now, we've got Mitras becoming Order Members that you had contact with as Mitras, and it's almost like they have to walk on their own now because you get this wave after wave of new people coming in who need attention, quite concentrated attention. It's difficult, sometimes, to find time to develop...

S: Well, that is certainly true. But I think most people can find more time, most Order Members can find more time than they actually give; and I think especially, probably in the east London area, the responsibility, in effect, is not very evenly distributed; that some Order Members [90] are not taking on a sufficient share of this general responsibility. And therefore it's coming more heavily on comparatively few people. Perhaps, unfortunately, some of the Order Members are not themselves in a position to take on that sort of responsibility; which, if it is so, is regrettable.

Devapriya: Do you feel that that responsibility is to some degree incumbent on people around a particular Centre, if they're around a particular Centre?

S: Well, I'll put it this way: an Order Member is an Order Member, mm? I mean, it goes back into what we were talking about under the heading of precept two - the best possible use of all your resources, including your time and energy. If you're an Order Member you should think

in those terms. So among the uses of your time and energy, which you can consider, is spending time, on terms of spiritual friendship, with Mitras and fellow Order Members. You should seriously consider that. Clearly, the local Centre is the most easily available source of those contacts if you decide that's what you want to do, that's what you want to have.

Padmapani: Does that mean if you don't want to do that it would be better if you moved away from that, then, because it's a drain on - ?

S: (interrupting) If there are too many Order Members living around the Centre, in a way benefiting from that overall situation and not contributing much to it, I think that is quite draining, and maybe they should consider moving away. They may be contributing in other ways. That is to be considered, too. They may be engaged in literary work which will eventually be of service to the whole Movement, but it's up to them to make it clear what they are doing and that they are thinking in those sort of terms; they are not just being individualistic.

Padmapani: Sorry, can you define that word, Bhante? I never really - maybe I ought to look it up.

S: Individualistic? Individualistic means just acting as though your interests, your narrow interests, were the only ones to be considered; your point of view was the only one to be considered; your attitude was the only one to be considered; your feelings were the only ones to be considered. In other words, acting as though only you existed in the world, which is a thoroughly infantile attitude.

I hope I'm not going to be misunderstood or misquoted, but this is one of the advantages, you might say, of family life, especially with a big [91] family, that individualism gets knocked out of you - by other individualists! It's a mutual process.

Anyway, I think perhaps we'd better pass on. I think we've given adultery enough attention this morning.

: Yes.

S: I think we are all clear about adultery - that it isn't on. And that one needs to consider, when you do decide to enter into any sort of more intimate relationship with another person, whether that is going to have a disruptive effect on their relationships with any other person, any third party. It's your responsibility. The fact that they don't mind or they say: 'Oh, it's OK, he won't mind' - that is beside the point. She may say that he's quite broad-minded in such matters, but I think you can't take that statement, in the circumstances, at its face value.

Anyway, so there is something general about these four kamma kilesas, these four actions of defilement: 'These four evils the wise ne'er praise.' You see the significance? The Buddha says, 'These four evils the wise ne'er praise.'

Ratnapani: Well, it seems like it's enough to condemn it. If the wise don't praise it, it's almost enough to condemn it. The wise don't ... for it not to be a good thing.

S: It's not enough that the wise do not practise these things; they must refrain from praising

them. They must refrain from speaking in such a way that people think that they approve of these actions of defilement. They don't even give verbal support to them. So one must be very careful not to seem to condone these sort of activities out of so-called broad-mindedness.

Killing is a serious matter - to use the terms of the translation - stealing is a serious matter, lying is a serious matter, adultery is a serious matter. One does not want to seem to gloss over these sort of things, much less still to speak in praise of them or even to appreciate them, or to be willing or ready to consider mitigating circumstances - especially in one's own case.

Anyway, let's go on to 2; would someone like to read the whole of 2 - the second of the things which the Buddha recommends to Sigala the young householder?

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"(2) In which four ways does one commit no evil action? Led by desire does one commit evil. Led by anger does one commit evil. Led by ignorance does one commit evil.

Led by fear does one commit evil.

But inasmuch as the noble disciple is not led by desire, anger, ignorance and fear, he commits no evil.

Thus spoke the Exalted One. And when the Master had thus spoken, He spoke yet again:

"Whoso thro' desire, hate or fear, Or ignorance doth transgress the Norm, All his glory fadeth away E'en as the moon during the waning half. Who ne'er thro' desire, hate or fear, Or ignorance doth transgress the Norm, All his glory e'er increaseth E'en as the moon during the waxing half."

S: There are several interesting points here. First of all, that evil actions are due largely to these four kinds of mental states. Three of them, of course, correspond to the three akusala mulas, but the terms used are slightly different. Instead of lobha we have tanha. Dosa remains the same, and so does moha. And then we've a fourth one, bhaya, which is not usually enumerated but which certainly is very important. So this set of four is more complete than the more usual set of three.

Also the Buddha speaks of the noble disciple not being led by these mental states, only to the extent that they are not present. So the Buddha is really recommending the elimination of desire, anger, ignorance and fear - which is quite a tall order, and presumably involves the practice of meditation, eventually the development of vipassana, Insight, Wisdom.

So 'led by desire one commits evil' - I think the 'led by' is very important or significant here. The Buddha doesn't mean that ethical action is impossible until such time as all these four mental states have been eradicated. He doesn't mean that. So what does he mean?

Atula: That you [shouldn't be] really passive to the state actually overtaking you.

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S: Yes. You can, for instance, experience anger, even hatred, but not give way to that, not allow your action actually to be dominated by that. So this is usually the state you experience first - that you're continuing to experience unskilful mental states to some extent but you don't allow them to affect or influence your action. I mean a higher state is, of course, when you have eliminated them all completely, either temporarily or permanently.

Do you think this is an exhaustive enumeration - that if one does commit an evil action it is either out of desire, anger, ignorance or fear, or a combination of two or more of those states? Do you think the enumeration is exhausted?

Ratnapani: Anything else always seems to be like a ramification of one or more of them. A subdivision of something.

Atula: They seem to be like a root - deepest sort of states.

S: 'Inasmuch as the noble disciple is not led by desire, anger, ignorance and fear, he commits no evil.' How can you do any evil if you're not in an unskilful mental state? It's impossible.

Dhammarati: Why do you think fear is not usually mentioned?

S: I don't really know. I've often wondered this, because I think it is a fairly important mental factor.

Dhammarati: Do you think it is independent of, er...

S: Well, you could reduce fear to one or another of them; you could reduce fear to desire. Because if you desire to possess something you're afraid you might lose it. But, on the other hand, you can reduce anger to desire in that sort of way. You can become angry because the desire is frustrated.

: Reduce them all to ignorance.

S: You can reduce both to ignorance. So if there is to be an enumeration of more factors than simply basic ignorance, one would have thought that fear qualified for inclusion. But I think it probably is desirable to include fear as, as it were, an independent factor here.

Dhammarati: Thinking about the Tibetan classifications, like craving as the attempt to include something and hate as the attempt to exclude something, what's the nature of fear, ... ?

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S: Well, fear would seem to be of a double nature in this respect: that is to say, a fear of losing that which you have a craving for and a fear of being landed with that which you've got an aversion for. Fear is basic fear of the loss of the pleasant and the gaining of the unpleasant. Fear also usually refers to the future, doesn't it?

Atula: It's a state of insecurity all the time.

S: Yes. One could speculate that fear was less predominant in the Buddha's day but that would be, perhaps, only a speculation. But certainly the Buddha says here: 'led by fear does one commit evil.'

Ratnapani: It [would] seem much more complete, [wouldn't] it, if there were four animals in the hub of the wheel and so on? It does seem ...

S: What would be the animal to illustrate fear, do you think?

Ratnapani: The mouse?

S: Well, they're bold little creatures!

: Sheep?

S: Deer, perhaps.

Voices: Mm, they're quite frail.

Padmapani: Didn't the Buddha have an experience of fear when he was in the jungle...

S: That's true, yes.

Padmapani: - and he heard the roar of a lion, tiger, was it?

S: No. Just when he heard noises, unidentified noises. Just the movement of a twig, even.

Padmapani: Fear of death.

S: Well, it was just fear, as far as we can tell.

But then you notice in the verse, the Buddha says: 'Whoso thro' desire, hate or fear Or ignorance doth transgress the Norm' - the Dhamma - 'All his glory fadeth away, E'en as the moon during the waning half' - waning half of the month, that is. And similarly, 'Who ne'er thro' desire, hate or fear Or ignorance doth transgress the Norm, All his glory e'er [95] increaseth, E'en as the moon during the waxing half.' So what is this yasa, this glory that increases when you refrain from unskilful actions? What is it, this yasa?

Devapriya: Field of merit.

S: It's your merit, yes. What's the connotation of the term?

Padmavajra: Well, presumably if you refrain from those unskilful mental states they will be replaced by positive ones.

S: You're still being a bit prosaic. Right, forget that word yasa. Take the word glory. The word glory translates yasa reasonably well. All right, you say someone's glory increases because of his skilful activity; what connotation does that have, what suggestion does it convey?

Dhammarati: You get somebody who is intensely sort of...

S: Intensely alive, intensely positive; but not only being himself intensely positive but sort of radiating that.

: Imbued from the high deva realms, or something like that - the brahma viharas.

: It could be happiness and glory on all sorts of levels, couldn't it? It may be from deva realms

or it could be mundane. He could take it however he likes.

: Worldly gain.

S: Yes. Even his fame increases, his good repute, his positive influence in his surroundings, in his society.

So `Whoso thro' desire, hate or fear Or ignorance doth transgress the Norm, All his glory fadeth away, E'en as the moon during the waning half. Who ne'er thro' desire, hate or fear Or ignorance doth transgress the Norm, All his glory e'er increaseth, E'en as the moon during the waxing half.' So it's as though this verse suggests that you're not just concerned with dull ethical precepts - doing this and not doing that. You're concerned basically with a process, or with a principle, which is going to increase your positivity as an individual, the positive effect that you have on others, the good repute that you enjoy, the radiance that you emit, so to speak. Because if - the Buddha doesn't mention positive mental counterparts, but if you really are entirely free from desire, anger, ignorance and fear, you'll be in a very positive state indeed.

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Ratnapani: Having a good reputation seems to be a desirable thing.

S: Yes, within the group or even within the spiritual community, a good reputation is an asset. That you are known to be reliable; that you're known to be honest; that you are known to be a man of your word; you are known to be faithful, known to be loyal, known to be fair, straightforward, just, incorruptible - to have that sort of reputation is a great asset, in any healthy society.

Ratnapani: Yes, but normally in this country we find it dubious to motivate someone to doing anything in order to attain a good reputation; [it's considered] not quite modest enough. This seems to be quite straightforward; if you've got one, well, you should be proud of it, and it's worth accumulating one.

S: Yes. It's as though very often in modern times, certainly in England, I think, in some circles, we fall between two stools. We despise the, let us say, group qualities, the group positive qualities, but we are not able to develop more spiritual positive qualities. So we fall between the two stools. We are neither able to be a healthy positive group member, nor are we able really to follow the higher spiritual path. We depreciate the one and are unable to practise the other. I think this is a serious danger for many people, even in our own Movement.

Devapriya: Well, the group is so often seen as a negative thing.

S: Yes, well, very often it is. But, on the other hand, there are such things as positive group values.

Devapriya: I think the attitude of a group being negative almost precludes the acceptance of a more positive group and positive group values. So then you swing to individuality.

Atula: It does seem as though - to speak personally - the biggest difficulty that I find is how

you sort of balance up in yourself the demands, like your own, what you feel, your own sort of goal, what you are trying to get to, and the actual demands of the community as such. It does seem a difficulty, a constant conflict that you're trying to somehow move towards resolving. Because sometimes the actual...

S: When you say community you mean community in the wider sense?

Atula: Well, I'm trying to speak more in terms of the Sangha. Sometimes you get into difficulties...

S: Not in terms of being a good citizen?

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Atula: No. No, in terms of trying to sort of accommodate the demands that are being made on you - whatever they actually are at the time - and the relatively selfish needs of your own. It does seem to be a constant conflict. And I think it is so with a lot of other people.

S: Do people find this?

Ratnapani: No. I would have thought conflict would be a mental state which you were going to get into, given almost any circumstances. Because if you're happy that you are using your energy as skilfully as you could then there wouldn't be any conflict; you'd have to say, 'Sorry, I can't do it. I'm doing such and such.'

Atula: I find that a bit, too - because I think that there are times when there are very reasonable demands being made on you and, at the same time, that you're having difficulty either dealing with your own energy or whatever. Whichever way you look at it, there are real difficulties.

S: But can one describe a demand as reasonable, as though 'reasonable' was a quality of the demand itself? It only becomes reasonable, at least to some extent, from the circumstances in which it is made. I mean someone might say, 'Could you do the washing up today?' That's a reasonable demand. But supposing you are quite ill, that demand then is no longer reasonable.

Dhammarati: Maybe not so much reasonable as there are some demands that would really be desirable if you had the resources to meet them. But when the resources are so limited the demands don't go away.

Ratnapani: But that is not conflict, is it? That's just stretch. That's just having to do more, or whatever, or get more resources.

S: But then one has just to be frank with one's - with at least fellow Order Members, and say 'I don't have the resources; I don't have the personal resources.' But then, of course, you have the responsibility to build up and to husband your resources, because you should have the resources, one might say.

Dhammarati: It came across in one of the other tapes, on the Bodhisattva Ideal: some idea almost that they're(?) deliberately building up conflict between the self-regarding aspect of practice and the other-regarding aspect. It's almost that you've got demands there that

preclude each other.

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S: Yes, you need to break through to a new level where they are not experienced as being in conflict - that is, if you're a Bodhisattva or would-be Bodhisattva.

Dhammarati: How close to the edge of a breakdown do you have to tack before that conflict ceases?

S: Well, perhaps there's no objective criterion.

Atula: It does seem to be a constant conflict.

S: But it should be, let us say, a metaphysical conflict rather than a psychological one. (Murmurs of agreement.) What you are really up against is the duality of subject and object. That's where you will break through. It's not just a question of deciding on the usual dualistic level of experience whether you are going to do this or you are going to do that, or you are going to listen to yourself or you are going to listen to somebody else. You used the term 'accommodation', but it's more than accommodation.

Dhammarati: So what's the nature of the conflict, then? When you have broken through, say, to a different level of experience, how do you experience that conflict actually building up?

S: Well, I suppose you can experience it all sorts of ways. You can experience it in terms of demands being made upon you, demands that you are not in a position to meet; or a genuine conflict of interests, or an inability, even, to make up your mind what is of greater importance. It may be very difficult, even objectively, to be sure.

Atula: Yes, you sometimes feel that perhaps you're not giving way to external demands.

S: Yes, perhaps sometimes you do wonder whether you're not being a bit self-indulgent.

Atula: Yes, yes, yes.

S: Lazy, in fact. Selfish.

Atula: Yes, all that, all that! (Laughter.)

S: The ever-present sense of guilt lurking in the background. You have to deal with that, too. You mustn't be misled.

Atula: Yes. It's all there. (Laughter.)

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Dhammarati: You must do this every night! (Laughter.)

Devapriya: There's the other extreme as well, working too hard and neglecting your own needs. Running yourself down. Maybe that's...

S: But do people neglect their own needs? There must be a part of them at least that wants to operate in that way. Perhaps it's just got a bit out of proportion. After all, it is you working. You couldn't go on working in that way, overworking, so long, unless there was at least some part of you that wanted to work in that way, operate in that way. If you really didn't want to, you'd soon stop. If all of you didn't want to, you'd soon stop.

Anyway, we seem to have done our bit for today, this morning.

Padmavajra: Can I just ask a question? Going back to the thing about glory and the whole thing of having a good reputation. Again it's something I've heard attributed to you in Tuscany about respect and in a way you have to respect somebody before you can love them, or before somebody can love you they have to respect you. Is that all on tape?

S: We discussed that, yes. That's all on tape. (Laughter.)

Ratnapani: Go on!

S: No, that was this last time, but it was again a quite lengthy discussion, I think. But again, in a sense the relevant point here is that you can't expect love to come very quickly. Why do people suddenly sort of start loving you? They've got to get to know you. They've got, I mean, maybe they should consider whether you're worthy to be loved. Do you deserve to be loved? - at least, as a friend? Are you able to be a friend? Do you deserve that someone should take you as a friend? So you have to, in that sense, win people's respect before you can ask for anything more than that. Maybe we're in too much of a hurry. There's no such thing as instant friendship. You can 'fall in love' - this is something I did say - you can fall in love but you can't fall into friendship. Friendship takes time to build up. We can fall in love very quickly and out of love very quickly. It can all be over in a week, in a matter of days. But friendship isn't like that. You could say that love is like the flower that springs up in a night and withers and falls by night time, but friendship is more like the mighty oak which can stand even for centuries. Well, you may spend an idle hour plucking a flower, but you can't spend an idle hour growing an oak tree!

Devapriya: In that context, I was thinking that there'll need to be a conscious decision by both parties to actually grow the oak tree.

[100]

S: Oh, yes, indeed. One may take the initiative, but in the end it will need a mutual agreement. Well, even love requires that, to some extent. But friendship by very nature is mutual.

Ratnapani: [Someone could] carry around a bigger bag of fertiliser than some others, to start off things with more...

S: (chuckles) Anyway, let's leave it there until tomorrow morning. And we're going to examine tomorrow, or start by examining, the 'six channels for dissipating wealth,' which are not to be pursued by the noble disciple!

Continues on Page 101 [101] Day 3 Tape 5, Side A

S: All right, let's go on to 3: 'What are the six channels for dissipating wealth which he does not pursue?'

"(3) What are the six channels for dissipating wealth which he does not pursue? (a) Indulgence in intoxicants which causes infatuation and heedlessness, (b) Sauntering in streets at unseemly hours, (c) Frequenting theatrical shows, (d) Indulgence in gambling which causes heedlessness, (e) Association with evil companions, (f) Habit of idleness.

(a) There are, young householder, these six evil consequences in indulging in intoxicants which cause infatuation and heedlessness:

(i) loss of wealth, (ii) increase of quarrels, (iii) susceptibility to disease, (iv) earning an evil reputation, (v) shameless exposure of the body, (vi) weakening of the intellect."

S: Let's go into these. Do you see the subdivisions? We've got the four actions of defilement. We've dealt with the first two, we've come on to 3. This is divided into six, and there would seem to be later on even further subdivisions, but that isn't made completely explicit. Anyway, let's look into the first of these - the first of these 'six channels for dissipating wealth which he does not pursue'.

First of all, a word or two about the general Indian - especially ancient Indian, even ancient Indian Buddhist - attitude towards wealth. It's assumed that in order to live your life as a householder you'll need a certain amount of wealth, and the accumulation of wealth is regarded, therefore, as a desirable thing. And dissipating wealth is regarded as an undesirable thing for a householder - dissipating rather than spending, wasting rather than investing. 'There are, young householder, these six evil consequences in indulging in intoxicants which cause infatuation and heedlessness.'

So, first of all, indulgence in intoxicants is a channel for dissipating wealth. It comes about in these six ways. If one indulges in intoxicants which cause infatuation and heedlessness, first of all there is loss of [102] wealth. That is pretty obvious, isn't it? You spend money on drink. Not only do you actually spend the money on drink when you could be working and earning money, well, you're just drinking. Perhaps this does not need much underlining.

Devapriya: Would that, in this context particularly relate to drinking? - because I know in India there is quite a lot of hashish. I don't know what it was like in that time.

S: It would seem to refer to liquor but it probably could be extended to cover drugs. I don't know what drugs were very widely known or used in India in the Buddha's time. But the principle seems to be clear: 'intoxicants which cause infatuation and heedlessness.' We can see what that is. (Looks it up.) This is the same as in the precept surameraya majja pamadatthana - just things which produce unmindfulness. It is surameraya which are definitely 'liquors', usually translated as 'drink fermented or distilled'. But one can get the general principle with drugs also - to hide one's awareness or one's mindfulness or heedfulness, clearly they come under the same category.

Padmapani: In Hindu society - I don't know about then, Bhante, but now - isn't, for instance, hashish considered to be a drug which only low-caste people would take, whereas drink is considered a drug, an intoxicant, which quite a lot of, say, the middle Hindu classes...

S: No, I'd say if anything it was the other way around: that drink, liquor, is regarded as very degrading, which only very low-caste people and aboriginal and tribal people indulge in. That was the general attitude; whereas drugs - hemp, especially - are smoked by sadhus, by holy men of many different caste origins, and that gives a sort of religious association for smoking which drinking doesn't possess. Originally, in India we know that in Vedic times drinking was very common, but in modern India drinking is very much looked down upon. In India normally, it's only the Westernized people who drink in the way that people do in the West, otherwise drinking is regarded generally as a very degraded sort of thing to do. If you drink you might do almost anything. There's no civilized social drinking there. It's all just drinking in rather wretched little dens provided for that purpose.

Ratnapani: [Do people] tend to be alcoholic or teetotal, and nothing much in between?

S: (pause) Mm. But orthodox caste Hindus look down upon low-caste people, or aboriginal people or tribal people, who drink. So in India, for many hundreds of years, intoxicating drink has not had the sort of, one might say, cultural or even poetic associations that it has had in the [103] West. It hasn't had the religious associations. In the West wine is used in the Holy Communion. There is nothing like that in India. Unless, of course, you bring in the Tantric sects; because in some of the Tantric sects wine is partaken of, but as part of a deliberate attempt to break through social conventions - which shows, of course, that the social conventions must have been very strong in this respect.

Padmapani: Hasn't it been said - Padmasambhava said - 'Smoking is out - no smoking - but drinking wine is all right'?

S: Said by?

Padmapani: Sorry, I supposed I had read it but I might have got it wrong - Padmasambhava. In some of the things that he was doing he was drinking wine, right? - but smoking was definitely not allowed, was not on.

S: The Nyingmapas, including the Nyingmapas whom I met, were very much against smoking. In fact, all Tibetan Buddhists were, when I first contacted them. Now the situation is very different. The Thirteenth Dalai Lama, for instance, prohibited the import of cigarettes into Tibet, under severe penalties. But cigarettes were nonetheless smuggled in. But among Tibetans, until very recent times, smoking cigarettes, smoking tobacco, was not considered at all a respectable thing to do. At the same time, drinking, though it is prohibited, according to the fifth precept, although it's prohibited for monks, doesn't seem to have been regarded in the same light. It wasn't exactly respectable but it was sort of tolerated, whereas smoking cigarettes was not tolerated.

The Tibetans have a rather dreadful story which is supposed to go back to Padmasambhava, about the origin of the tobacco plant. According to them the first tobacco plants sprang up from the menstrual blood of a prostitute. So those are the sort of associations, or this represents the sort of associations, that smoking has for the Nyingmapa Buddhist, in fact for Tibetan Buddhists generally.

They know, of course, that as far as Buddhism is concerned, as far as the Buddha's own teaching is concerned, alcohol is definitely frowned upon. The Nyingmapas indulge in it.

Originally it was a sort of sacramental indulgence which has become, one might say, desacramentalized. The Gelugpas, on the whole, who tend to stress monastic discipline more, are so aware of the dangers of drinking that they insist on total abstinence, especially for monks. I'm told that if a monk comes back from the bazaar to the Gelugpa monastery with his breath smelling of alcohol, he is dealt with very severely. Tibetans do like beer, various other [104] intoxicants that they take, but they are well aware that it is not really in accordance with Buddhist tradition.

But, while we are on the subject - I wasn't intending to raise this, but having thought of it; I was thinking here only in terms of liquor, but since the question of drugs has been raised and the question of smoking has come up - I must say I have been rather surprised to find quite recently how many people in the Movement, even in the Order, still do smoke cigarettes, including women. (I don't know why I should be more surprised at women smoking, but I am!) I just wonder about that, why it is; because it seems to be, one, an unnecessary habit - I mean it doesn't contribute to one's health or well-being, I think, in any way - and also it's a source of expense. One might say here it's a channel for dissipating what little wealth you have. So why do you think it is? Have you any idea? Can you throw light upon this - why so many people, or so high a proportion, as it seems to me, of people in the Movement, still do smoke? What do they get out of it?

Padmapani: I don't smoke myself, but isn't it an anxiety thing?

S: Is it?

Padmapani: It's sort of, maybe it comes through pressure. One smokes to alleviate certain pressures, a sort of ritual, maybe, one does to alleviate the pressure. Because often I see - I saw, for instance...

S: I thought we had a lot of rituals in Buddhism which might help in this respect! (Laughter.)

Padmapani: I am at a disadvantage(?) because I was actually at Pundarika, but I remember when Subhuti was under a lot of pressures, especially from the DS, right?, and he had this main beam which he didn't want to put in or something (?) - and he was chain smoking. And I came over, took some photographs, and I was really surprised, because Subhuti, you know, like that, he was smoking one after another, and he was under a lot of pressure - also, possibly from yourself, Bhante. (Laughter.)

S: Well, I was certainly under a lot of pressure then, and I wasn't smoking!

Padmapani: You were in the old cottage ... pussy cats.

S: I was certainly under a lot of pressure, because I can remember spending almost hours standing in that telephone box by the village green with the wind whistling through the broken glass (laughter), [105] expostulating with Subhuti. If anyone was under pressure, I was. But is it a question of pressure?

Ratnapani: It's an anaesthetic, yes.

S: It's an anaesthetic?

Ratnapani: It takes the edge off all emotion.

S: All emotion?

Ratnapani: All emotion. Well, especially negative emotion, actually. It takes the edge off feeling.

S: My own recollections of smoking tobacco are very dim and distant. I smoked for a few months in my misspent teens, but I gave it up because I just didn't enjoy it. It just made my throat burn. That's all I ever got out of it. So I stopped.

Ratnapani: Yes, but I think that is mostly what it is. It takes the pressure off. You feel your feelings less if you smoke. They are slightly anaesthetized. So usually, of course it would be unpleasant feelings like fear, pressure, anger, ones you don't want to feel. But also I think sometimes people smoke to suppress positive emotion - [they] can't handle that either; [to] take the edge off that.

S: Well, a very high percentage of the population smokes in Britain, so is it that they are all trying to anaesthetize their emotions, would you say?

Dhammarati: There does seem to be quite a shift, actually. I think it's much less than it used to be.

: It's dropping.

S: It does seem to be. It is said that fewer people smoke now than did, and it is not so common among young people as it might have been a generation or two ago.

Ratnapani: I thought it was a lot less in the Movement. You go to an Order day, and if I see someone else smoking I'm sort of, I must confess, relieved. (Laughter.) I'm not the only sinner!

S: I used to be under the impression that there were one or two people still smoking, but...

Ratnapani: I thought that was what it was.

[106]

S: I get the impression now it's six or eight or ten or more around the LBC. I'm speaking mainly of Order Members.

Atula: I don't think it's that many, personally.

Padmapani: I think there's that many.

Atula: Siddhi smokes, but I don't know of any others.

Padmapani: Well, Devapriya smokes.

S: I found - I mean several, three or four women were smoking on the last study retreat that I did. Perhaps they do it in a more ladylike way, do it usually in their boudoirs - whatever that

is! But the question one has to face [is] should one let oneself get into that sort of state - that one needs to smoke - or can one not deal with it in other ways, I mean through meditation? Is that too difficult or is that asking too much?

Atula: I find smoking in particular seems to be a very difficult habit to give up. I found enough difficulty giving up drinking at first, and that I could actually do. Smoking seems to be more difficult.

S: Well, I think there is a question, in the case of smoking, of physical addiction. That is to say, you become, if you've smoked since you were quite young, your system has become used to whatever tobacco contains, dependent upon it, and you start, if you try to give up smoking, experiencing withdrawal symptoms...

Ratnapani: But again, I mean in my case those withdrawal symptoms - in a happy situation, if I'm on a solitary retreat, I sort of fancy a cigarette for a day or so and that's that. But if I was at work I'd really be aware of it and it depends on circumstances; even, for me, with the physical aspect. I remember when Vajrakumara stopped he used to go through physical misery. He was really quite unwell, quite ill.

S: Well, this can happen when you give up any substance to which the body has become accustomed. I know that four or five years ago I gave up sugar in tea, and I felt the physical repercussions of that for about two weeks; but they were merely physical, and after two weeks they stopped - though, of course, I'd been ingesting sugar regularly, almost at hourly intervals (laughter) in tea since my infancy. That would be well over 50 years. But nonetheless those withdrawal symptoms only lasted about two weeks; they were purely physical; and then they stopped, and that was that.

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So probably this question of withdrawal symptoms, with regard to tobacco and alcohol, isn't such a serious matter. Perhaps it's the mental, the emotional, need which is the more serious problem; the need for oblivion, as it were.

Devapriya: Well, I find it's to take the edge off. The times I have given up smoking have been when I've been on retreat or when I was in Tuscany and been in a situation where there weren't the sort of pressures of work of the city, and there weren't other people smoking. Then I could watch the desire come up and go again. But in the city I tend to grab after it.

S: So does one seriously think that if one is in that sort of situation there is no remedy in fact except to have recourse to tobacco?

Devapriya: I actually enjoy it some of the time; some of it has a neurotic edge, but I do actually enjoy smoking some of the cigarettes that I do smoke.

S: But if one smokes in order not to feel, can that not have very serious consequences for your life in general, even your development as an individual in general? You're not experiencing your own feelings or you are even blunting the edge of your own feeling.

Padmavajra: It's got to have an effect on you.

S: I don't want to instil anyone's guilt feelings but maybe that has to be considered. In other words tobacco tends to diminish feeling; so does one want to diminish feeling - even negative feelings perhaps? Diminish in the sense of not experiencing them when in a sense they are actually there? (Pause.)

Devapriya: Yes, I do!

S: But perhaps that leads to wider questions: why does one want to diminish one's feelings? Or can it ever be a skilful thing to do? Can it be a skilful thing to do habitually - that we block off our feelings enough anyway? What about the situation that causes us to want to diminish our feelings or not to experience them? Should we be in it, even? Perhaps we ought to, but if we ought to, is there not some better way of dealing with the situation rather than just blunting the edge of our feelings? Is it, in fact, that which happens, anyway? That's what is being said, we've accepted that so far, but is it as simple as that?

Ratnapala: I don't know whether it's that people have accepted it or they can't think what the alternatives are.

[108]

Ratnapani: I know in my own case I associate it very much with an infantile side, a side that doesn't want to experience unpleasantness, quite an unintegrated bit. I feel it's almost that bit that smokes in some ways. It's that bit that suffers when I don't. It's almost as if the rest of me - I don't want to sound too schizoid - but the rest of me doesn't need to, doesn't particularly want to, but that bit, it just keeps it quiet. I think other people deal with unintegrated energies in different ways. A lot of people eat sweets...

S: Or fidget.

Ratnapani: - or they really look forward to their food. Or they fidget, or whatever they do.

S: Yes, one doesn't want to pick on the wretched cigarette smoker as though they are the sole culprit, or the only person who ever indulges in unskilful activity.

Ratnapani: I'm reasonably indifferent to food. I don't get desperate to eat. I don't sort of look forward to the next meal with a great thrill...

S: Well, that's a feather in your cap, certainly! (Laughter.)

Ratnapani: - because I'm smoking, and it's doing the same job that other people...

S: But I mean, well, I couldn't help noticing, even in Tuscany, that people weren't drinking, they weren't smoking, but some of them were tucking into their food with really suspicious heartiness, going for seconds and thirds, (laughter) and [throwing] greedy glances in the direction of the kitchen. It was very noticeable. So one has to take a balanced view.

Ratnapani: If the food isn't very good, my responses are less violent than perhaps some people's are. My disappointment is less. (Laughter.)

Tejamati: One, because your feelings are numbed, and two, because you've got...

Ratnapani: I just light up a fag.

S: You might have spoiled your taste buds, of course. One used to hear this Freudian interpretation of smoking - one doesn't hear it these days - that it had something to do with mother and the nipple and sucking and satisfaction. Well, there might be something in it.

[109]

Ratnapani: Oh yes ...

Padmapani: Didn't Mr Chen mention that smoking attracts pretas? Is there something...

S: Well, yes, this is a general belief among Tibetans. This is all connected with the whole question of smell, of scent: that if you burn fragrant incense to create a pleasing atmosphere and possibly attract positive, as it were, let's say, psychic influences, supposing you burn foul, nasty-smelling stuff? - what will that do? That will have the opposite effect. So they say that the burning of tobacco operates in that sort of way.

Padmapani: So it's not the burning, it's the actual smell that attracts the positive or the negative, in that sense? Because the incense is burning as well so it must be the...

S: It's not the process of combustion, let us say, which is a chemical process, which has that sort of effect. It is the actual scent. I mean, pleasant in the one case and unpleasant in the other. One couldn't think of, say, allowing smoking in the shrine, because it would be counteracting what you were trying to do, i.e. to create a pleasant, positive atmosphere. And one knows - one has been in certain places where tobacco has been plentifully smoked, maybe the night before - and you all know what sort of foul smell you get the morning after from that. So can that factor be having a very positive influence? If incense is good, tobacco must be bad, presumably. For instance, you might piously light a stick of incense in the shrine and then undo all that good work by going outside and lighting up a stick of tobacco, having a cigarette.

Padmapani: Or even smoking in the same room where you have got your incense lit.
(Laughter.)

S: Yes. So maybe this is something we need to give thought to. And there is this question of expense. Maybe it isn't an enormous expense, but - well, the bill of the nation for tobacco is absolutely - it goes into billions, doesn't it? And what about tobacco-related diseases? What about bronchitis and sore throats and lung cancer and all that sort of thing, all the medical attention they require, the hospital facilities that are required? The bill becomes rather heavy in the end, probably several billions.

So you begin to have some sympathy with King James II [King James I], who spotted the evil at source, almost as soon as it was introduced into Britain, by Sir Walter Raleigh apparently. King James came out with a treatise against it, and he said of tobacco that it most resembles [110] 'the stench of that pit which is bottomless,' in other words the stink of hell. (Laughter.)

Anyway, perhaps that's enough said about that. But what about drinking in general? I mean we've not touched upon that - I mean drinking in the sense of drinking alcohol. What about that? (Long pause.)

Dhammarati: It's a question of why is it so pleasurable, what makes people enjoy it so much?

S: Well, I think that there are two things here. One doesn't, of course, mean undiluted alcohol, one partakes of alcohol mixed with something else. I don't need to enumerate the varieties. So there are certain things: for instance, suppose you take the case of wine. The taste of wine is pleasant and agreeable. That's one factor. And then there is the effect of the alcohol itself. So what is the effect of alcohol? Apart from the pleasurable taste due to the grains or the fruit from which the liquor is made, what is the effect of alcohol?

Ratnapala: Euphoria.

S: Is it euphoria? Is it the same for everybody?

Ratnapani: It's depressive, isn't it, alcohol?

Padmapani: It numbs the senses.

S: Does it?

Dhammarati: Eventually, yes!

Devapriya: It seems just a little bit of alcohol doesn't cloud, it has a sort of loosening effect, on me. But beyond maybe the second glass, the effect on me is definitely - well, it's unpleasant really. It sort of clouds everything over.

S: It seems that in its, let's say, initial effects, alcohol differs in the case of different people. It does seem to produce this sort of loosening-up effect. It does seem to break down superficial barriers. But what is revealed, or what manifests when those superficial barriers have been broken down - that differs from one person to another. In the case of one person his natural joviality may manifest; in another his suppressed lecherousness; in another his suppressed irascibility and ill-temper; and in another his repressed depression or melancholy. Do you see [111] what I mean? I think the effect of alcohol is to dissolve barriers or to dissolve, what shall we say? - restraints.

Padmapani: Social inhibitions.

S: Social inhibitions, yes. But once that initial effect has been produced, if you persist in drinking, if you take more alcohol, it would seem that your awareness, your mindfulness, becomes clouded over. Probably there is nobody whose awareness or mindfulness would not be clouded over ever, as a result of drinking alcohol. After a very small quantity has been surpassed, that clouding-over effect does start to be produced.

Atula: This is a whole area in this country, social drinking - it doesn't seem as though people consume a great deal but they use alcohol, they frequent pubs for social occasions.

S: But even so they seem to take far too much.

Atula: Yes.

S: Because probably, in the case of wine, only half a glass is enough, or even less. And in the case of beer maybe half a pint is more than enough, just to produce that initial loosening up. But people sort of go on from there. They don't take that as a point of departure, unfortunately.

Devapriya: Maybe what it reveals after the first little bit is then something that people want to completely cloud over.

S: Well, in the case of some people. But in the case of others their natural joviality may be released; but then they may think, 'This drinking has made me jovial, the more that I drink the more jovial I'll become' - but that, of course, is a mistake.

Ratnapani: De Quincey talked about a peak on alcohol, didn't he? - saying that you reach a peak, which I presume would have been like this release, and after that it's downhill and the more you drink you just seem to get thicker and more cloudy; and saying that this peak could come, for some people, after an hour but often after just a very few minutes; and after that, forget it. I think if you are aware it can be, perhaps, skilfully used, if you see that peak of loss of inhibition, and then leave it alone.

S: I think probably the more mindful and the more aware you are, the smaller the amount of alcohol you require to dissolve whatever social inhibitions are there. And then, having dissolved the inhibitions and started functioning free from those inhibitions, you just wouldn't drink [112] any more. Even if you only had a mouthful or two, you should just stop then, really, ideally.

Ratnapani: Personally I think one inhibition it dissolves is the inhibition that stops you drinking! Once you start you sort of go on.

S: Well, in that case it would seem you can't win.

Devapriya: The main thing that's put me off alcohol is pubs - unpleasant places generally.

S: Well, again, I suppose even pubs vary. They are not [113] all alike. I suppose it depends which ones you go to.

Devapriya: I suppose I'm thinking of the sort of effect that alcohol does have on people after a little bit, and the atmosphere it creates.

S: Yes. One might say the atmosphere of a well-frequented pub is not a very pleasant one, even though maybe sort of superficially positive in a chummy, rowdy sort of way.

Padmapani: Were you referring to another sort of pub, Bhante?

S: Pardon?

Padmapani: Were you referring to a different type of pub, or what? - just before Devapriya...

S: Well, going by my own limited experience they do vary very much. I remember last year Subhuti and I came up from London, and we stopped at the Red Lodge as usual, but we

fancied a cold drink so we went into the public house there, instead of into the cafe. To my surprise, the pub was far quieter and pleasanter and more peaceful than the cafe was. But it might be because it was not much used. There were only two or three people there. But one could certainly sit more quietly there, more peacefully, than one could in the cafe. I don't want to generalize from that.

Dhammarati: Do you think people do make the mistake [of] sort of going over what they actually enjoy, or is it back to this active seeking after oblivion to some extent?

S: I think the main problem is that the vast majority of people, even in the FWBO, don't try to cultivate mindfulness all the time. They are not watching themselves as it were, when they have a glass of wine or beer, or even a cup of tea. They are not watching themselves. They are not observing the effect of what they are doing on themselves and upon their minds and upon their emotions. If they were to do that they would see that was happening and act accordingly.

Prasannasiddhi: Why should you need to have this loss of inhibition in this manner, in the first place?

S: Well, the assumption is the inhibition is not a desirable thing - that it's something that is the result of social conditioning, something that you have not, as it were, freely accepted, and something that you'd be better off without. That is the assumption. For instance, you may have an inhibition about talking to people. You may find it difficult to open up and be friendly, even though you actually want to.

Prasannasiddhi: This society sort of says it's not good to be - the general atmosphere says it's not good to be...

S: Actually that must be the sort of impression that you've been left with, otherwise why should you not be more communicative and open out more? I remember an experience of my own in this connection that I often refer to; some of you must have heard it before. When I used to be at Muswell Hill, living in a flat there with Siddhiratna, as he afterwards became, and Kevin as he still is, and, at a later stage, Vajrakumara as he now is, I sometimes used to invite Friends up for a meal in the evening - Friends with a capital F, there weren't any Mitras in those days - and sometimes Order Members too; and so there would be sometimes four or five of us for a meal, and sometimes people were so painfully inhibited that there'd be no conversation at all and things would just get stuck. And then I'd just sort of quietly send Siddhiratna out - er - [someone prompts] Graham as he then was - to get a bottle of something. And that always worked. After a glass or two of something, people started becoming more talkative and more communicative, and relaxing a bit. So that seemed quite significant. It wasn't that what was repressed or inhibited was negative; if anything, it was positive, decidedly so. But it seemed a pity that they couldn't dissolve their social inhibitions except in a bit of alcohol. I don't think that is any longer the case, or not any longer so much the case. People are much less inhibited and more open than they used to be, so I need have less alcohol around now. (Laughter.)

Ratnapani: That's true, I remember that. I used to stagger away from there actually quite pickled sometimes, from Muswell Hill - over-fed and slightly drunk! I remember one time sitting next to you at the meal table, and I'd had a couple of glasses of wine probably, but I was still blocked as anything and just sitting there and thinking how ridiculous that was,

because I'd become aware of it by then; and you were sitting [114] there slapping me on the back and saying 'Hello,' and being incredibly friendly, and I was sitting there saying 'For heaven's sake, let go!', but I couldn't, even with the medicinal wine!

S: Anyway, I'm not recommending the use of wine as a general dissolver of all social inhibitions. It isn't really as simple as that. There are other ways of doing it.

Dhammarati: We did some Shelley [Keats] over the summer, and in the Ode to a Nightingale there's a very interesting passage where - there's a sort of preamble and he's talking about 'as though of hemlock I had drunk', and then this line:

I have been half in love with easeful death or whatever. You've got this picture of somebody in pain actively going towards an absence of experience as an attractive option. He's sort of comparing this like there's a close equivalent to his experience of a nightingale. That kind of attraction to oblivion struck me as...

S: Well, some people do drink in order to forget - and that would seem to be very unhealthy, very unskilful.

Dhammarati: It seems such a sort of funny contrast: the usual fear of death and the usual fear of pain just wasn't there. It's as if oblivion had become a positively seductive alternative to experience.

S: Well, Buddhists might regard that as a form of the craving [for] annihilation, *vibhava tanha*. Anyway, the broad consensus of Buddhist tradition, right from the beginning, is that the effects of alcohol are on the whole undesirable inasmuch as they conduce to unmindfulness. A few schools have recognized or permitted the use of alcohol under very exceptional conditions, but they are very much in the minority.

Padmapani: I must admit I do find it - when you look at the advertising industry in that area, especially among teenagers and the way they package the deal. You notice this very much in the cinema. One goes to the cinema, one sees these very tantalising jet-set adverts which advertise, say, Martini Bianco etc...

Tape 5, Side B

Padmapani: ... and you get a lot of young guys spending all their money on cars and drinks and clothes and chatting up the women.

: Around the LBC?

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Padmapani: Well, they...

S: Some of them in close proximity. It would seem really unfortunate that they are so near to the Dharma and yet so far away. Maybe we ought to take a leaf out of the Salvation Army's book: actually go around pubs, not drinking but just handing out leaflets and saying 'Do you really know what you are doing?'

Voices: I wouldn't ... in the East End. (Some laughter.)

S: We might be able to have a little ... discussion.

It should, anyway, make one realize that here you are at the LBC, I mean just a few score, maybe 100 or so people committed to a different way of life, and the LBC-cum-Sukhavati is like a sort of fortress as it were, beleaguered by all these different other forces. But sometimes it would seem that people don't realize their situation, and behave in a very light-hearted way as though they were entirely surrounded by friends and helpful influences. Do you see what I mean? They don't seem to, very often, realize the urgency of the situation. And you can't afford to just ignore what is, in fact, the opposition that you're surrounded by. People may not actually affront you in the street or anything like that, but they are in effect completely opposed or completely counter to whatever you are trying to do, and one should be fully aware of that and perhaps be making a much more energetic and vigorous attempt to go out a bit more - to convert them, so to speak; not in the narrow sectarian sense, but convert them in the sense of change them from something negative to something positive, from something unskilful to something skilful. One might even say that the fact that there is a pub down the road from Sukhavati should be regarded as a challenge. [We] should go after getting it closed down, not by invoking the law but by depriving it of customers. (Laughter.)

Dhammarati: Quite a good resource, the Black Horse.

Tejamati: If anything, I would think their trade has increased over the last few years!

S: One doesn't want to sort of lay down a hard and fast rule that alcohol is, under all circumstances and all conditions, absolutely prohibited, but probably it would be good if it was 99.9% prohibited, at least. And that if Order Members, Mitras and Friends do indulge in it, it is regarded as a quite exceptional activity.

And, of course - this is the point here - it is an avenue for dissipating wealth. People reckon to spend a lot of money on liquor, as they spend [116] on tobacco. They always seem to have money for that, however poor they are. I suppose one mustn't use the word poor now. What is the word that one uses instead, or the expression? - one 'belongs to the lower income bracket'? Your bracket seems to have managed to bracket in your tobacco and alcohol!

Atula: I think there's still plenty of poor.

S: Well, there are plenty of people in the lower income bracket.

Atula: (inaudible comment.)

Padmapani: It is very true, though, isn't it, that no matter how poor or what income bracket they are in, there's always the vital issues which they consider, like alcohol and smoking, are always there; those priorities are always there. Maybe even their clothes will be shabby, but they smoke and they drink.

S: I remember one - well, it was my mother, in fact - telling me an experience of hers, a few years ago. She went to the post office to draw her old age pension, and there was a woman drawing out some sort of child benefit allowance, a woman whom she knew through the

social work that she'd been doing some years before. So my mother said this woman drew out her children's benefit or whatever it is, and she at once, at another counter in that same post office, which was also a shop, spent the whole amount on cigarettes. So my mother, being a somewhat outspoken woman, and also having been a social worker for many years, tackled the woman about it and said: `Don't you realize that that money is for your children and not for your cigarettes?' And the woman was quite sort of ashamed and quite sort of apologetic, but it seems that that is very often what happens.

Dhammarati: But I suppose if you've got a situation where there are a lot of problems and a lot of stress and there is no positive way of tackling that stress, then by default people are, almost in desperation, drinking and smoking. It isn't absolutely wanton wickedness that people that are abandoning their children to depravity are ... smokers. It is a complex thing.

S: I think one has to recognize that human beings are, in almost all cases, responsible for their actions. If you just regard them as passive, merely subject to social forces and reacting as it were mechanically, one is not any longer recognizing or seeing them as responsible individuals, and perhaps that is almost the worst thing that one could do. If they are actually irresponsible, in a way, that is a really terrible thing.

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Atula: It does seem to be an assumption that, where there is poverty, then people are necessarily drinking and smoking their money away, which isn't true...

S: No, but leaving aside individual cases, the mere fact that in this country we spend so much money on alcohol and tobacco and this is apparently spent by people who are not mentally deficient, who have not been deprived of education, and who are not living in absolute poverty, as perhaps they are in the East, people who are apparently responsible in the ordinary civic sense - responsible enough to be allowed to vote, anyway - that amount of money is being spent by them. And at the same time, perhaps, those people [are] complaining about not enough money for education, not enough money for new roads etc. But I don't think you can just regard people as victims of social forces, and everything they do as totally excusable.

Dhammarati: But don't we to some extent have to look at the whole spiritual bankruptcy, the culture ... ?

S: Well, that is true. Therefore I say an outpost, a fortress, of the Dharma like the LBC should be going all out to bring something more positive to the people in the area. And this is why I say a lot of our own Friends and Order Members don't seem to be possessed with that sense of urgency. They don't seem to really feel it - that here are people on their very doorstep who are living in this wretched sort of way. They don't seem to feel it very much. They've got a sort of immunity to it.

Dhammarati: I see the urgency more than I see what I can do about it. The actual practical ways of bringing about a change are much less clear.

S: The basic thing that one can do is very, very clear. You need to establish contact. And if people won't come to you you've got to go to them. In India, you see, we're in a lucky situation from the point of view of our work, that the people come to us. They come to us in droves. We can't cope with them. But in England one has got to go to them. One either has

got to draw them through advertisements or one has got to just go off and try to contact them personally, if they don't contact you.

Dhammarati: Even then I think you've got to find a way of contacting them that doesn't alienate them before you ...

S: Of course; I take all that for granted.

Padmapani: I think you've got a particularly difficult set of circumstances being in the East End, you know, from maybe the -

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S: I wouldn't say that. People have been saying this recently. I think it's an excuse and a rationalization. I functioned for two years in Hampstead - Happy Hampstead, intellectual Hampstead, the intellectuals' paradise etc. I functioned there for two years. And this was quite interesting to me, because when I was in India, when I was in Kalimpong, I heard that the Sangha Trust had purchased this building for a Vihara in Hampstead; and I inquired why Hampstead? - because I didn't know Hampstead before I went abroad. I knew only London south of the river, and central London where the bookshops were. I didn't know north London at all. So I was told that it had been decided to have the Vihara in Hampstead because that was where all the intellectuals lived, and intellectuals are likely to be very sympathetic and open to Buddhism - you know, Buddhism being a religion for the intellectual - and by having the Vihara in Hampstead you will attract lots of these people because there would be the Vihara right on their doorstep. It didn't happen. A few intellectuals came along, but I very quickly formed the impression that the Hampstead intellectual was about the last person who was suited to Buddhism, because there was so much of intellectual arrogance, and so much of pseudo-liberalism; well, just so much of a rather unpleasant kind of conditioning.

So I certainly don't regard sort of highly educated people as more suitable material for the Dharma, or the sort of people that you find in Hampstead as more suitable material for the Dharma than people you find in Bethnal Green. So I think some people recently have been trying to account for the fact that maybe the LBC has not been as successful as we had hoped so far - 'It's the difficulty of the area, it's the people there' - I just don't accept that.

Padmapani: I meant it actually more in the sense of aggression. I meant it in the sense that - in a way it could be a good thing but I think people, even in the context of the Movement, have a fear of aggression, basic aggression. They don't like to meet it head on, possibly.

S: I don't think that, for instance, people in Bethnal Green are more aggressive than those in Glasgow.

Padmapani: Well, no! I mean Glasgow seems to be [more receptive (?)].

S: Well, are people in Bethnal Green all that aggressive? I can't say I've particularly noticed this, going around Bethnal Green. I don't think so.

Atula: I think they're just quite straightforward.

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S: They may be a little rough in their speech, but that's another matter altogether. You could probably gather statistics about the incidence of violence in the different parts of the Metropolitan Police area of London.

Atula: I think we've got to find other ways to actually attract...

S: But I do notice this rather, in a way, dangerous tendency recently on the part of some people connected with the LBC to blame the area, to say that 'There are special difficulties here, we're in Bethnal Green, it's more difficult here, Bethnal Green people are more difficult; if we were in some other part of London we'd be doing much better.' That seems to be a tendency on the part of some people. I think it's quite dangerous.

Padmapani: Ah. I'm not actually saying it's the fault of the people. I'm saying it's the fault of us, because we're not making these connections. I'm not saying it's the fault of the people being in Bethnal Green.

S: I'm not saying that you're saying [it], but there is this tendency which I've come to know about, that the view has been expressed that the reason why the LBC is not doing as well as had been hoped was that it was in a particularly difficult part of London, in the middle of Bethnal Green, and that very likely it would have done better had it been situated in some other area, some other part of London. I don't agree with that. I mean one can't prove the point; it's not susceptible of proof, but I'm not convinced, and I think we should just make a more vigorous effort in the area where we are, where we already have fairly extensive facilities and contacts, and where we are, in a sense, quite well established.

Dhammarati: If you have a situation where there's a generally not terribly well-educated community, there's no actual interest in the philosophical side, meditation seems quite alien, what - ?

S: I question all those things, actually. I question all those things, because I've dealt extensively, say, with uneducated, i.e. illiterate people, in India, and usually one finds that the people who are non-literate, let's say, rather than illiterate, their minds are just as active usually and they are, very often, interested in these philosophical questions. I mean ordinary - you say uneducated people; but what does one mean by uneducated? Practically everybody has gone to school, surely, had basic education, elementary education. It is no more than I had, anyway. They've got a general interest in life, when you get them talking, surely?

Dhammarati: I do feel that it takes a certain sophistication before, in a way, Buddhism becomes a real option, or you see it as a real option. I think it's a narrower view of the options open to them, to some extent, [120] for the people in Bethnal Green. I don't say even that it's their responsibility...

S: I think there are two things. One is the narrowness of their vision, the fact that they envisage very few options - perhaps only one or two. Another factor is the strength of your impact on them. If you seem to be not very strong in what you're doing, you don't as it were hit them with it sufficiently forcibly, they're not going to take all that much notice of it. They have to feel that you are really convinced that you really are on to a good thing. They mustn't get the impression that you're just playing about with whatever you profess to be following, because they would feel that you're not taking yourself seriously, you're not taking it seriously

yourself. If they feel that, they are not going to be taking it particularly seriously. So it does come down to your impact on them. You have to find some way of having a strong impact on them. But they're not going to take you and what you believe seriously until you have managed to convey the impression that you are serious, you are dead serious, about it. If their impression is that you are just having a good time, just having an easy time, in the name of Buddhism, they are not going to pay much attention.

I remember, in what we already call the old days, people in Bethnal Green were very impressed by the work that was going on in Sukhavati. They were very impressed that here were these young men, living under quite difficult conditions, with no women to look after them and just working really hard almost day and night. And there was a lot of sympathy just on that basis. My impression is that there is less sympathy now. Not that people are unsympathetic, but they don't see the work going on in that vigorous way. Well, building work was something they could see and understand. But they don't see anything equivalent to that going on, with that sort of vigour; so they are less impressed. This is my impression.

Dhammarati: Would you see the main target in the East End as being the young men, for instance, that are involved in most Centres, or do you think we have got a bigger job to do in reaching the whole community?

S: Well, I think the young men are probably the key figures in the community - I mean key figures potentially, from our point of view. If you're thinking in terms of a community in the wider sense as it exists there, well, maybe the older men are key figures inasmuch as they exert their influence. But, yes, I think the young men are the key figures. The women are mostly pushing prams, the young women.

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Padmavajra: Do you think, in that sort of situation, the Centre should be more involved in the community at large? I mean you were saying that perhaps they would be attracted to meditation or that sort of thing, more like cleaning the streets.

S: All those things should be considered.

Atula: I don't think ... much more ...

S: Not sort of operating on their terms but operating on our terms and establishing contact with them.

Atula: Finding ways.

S: Yes. But I think why I made all this fuss was I did detect this quite dangerous tendency creeping in of blaming the area and saying that we weren't so successful in Bethnal Green because it was Bethnal Green - it was a particularly difficult area, the people there were particularly difficult, for one reason or another. But I think this is the wrong attitude.

Atula: I must say it's one of the best areas I've lived in London, ...

Ratnapani: From a dharmic point of view Purley certainly wasn't any great shakes. It was pretty opposed socially, it was...

S: Quite a high level of education, too.

Ratnapani: Very high, and an absolute dead loss. Just complete comfort and apathy.

S: Well, in India - to mention India - our best response comes from the most deprived people. It is quite noticeable that those ex-Untouchable Buddhists who do manage to get lucrative posts in government service tend to lose their interest in Buddhism. They become more interested in joining government officers' social clubs and spending an evening with their opposite numbers in other government departments, just drinking and socializing. They tend to lose interest in Buddhist activities. But the ragged majority, they're very much with us. It's they who demand the Dharma ... or who invite you to give lectures. With a few exceptions it's not the more successful, the more well off, or the more educated. It's almost becoming a serious problem that the more highly educated you are as an ex-Untouchable Buddhist, the less, it seems, your inclinations have anything to do with Buddhism. Well, no doubt the situation is very different for other reasons than are operative in England, but it is quite significant.

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Atula: Why do you think that is, that the more educated people become, - ?

S: Well, because in India the more educated you are the better the job and therefore the more money, so you just become more and more involved in ordinary life, etc.

Devapriya: And when one doesn't have those social opportunities maybe one can put more of one's time and energy into what is freely available.

S: So therefore it mustn't be assumed that because people are less educated they are less likely to be interested in the Dharma. That mustn't be assumed. Or that the more educated they are anywhere in the world, the more likely they are to be interested in the Dharma. In certain cases that may be so. One mustn't assume that it is so in all cases, by any means. I've not found it to be so in England, nor have I found it to be so in India.

Devapriya: I think maybe what does put people off a bit in the East End is that, dare I say it, the Centre and the cafes and the facilities that we have there have a middle-class feel to them. It's very nice, the Centre, and I think that's actually foreboding to some of the local people.

Dhammarati: Some of the pubs are really flash.

Devapriya: Sorry?

Dhammarati: The pubs are really flash, and the people in Bethnal Green make Buddhists look shabby.

Padmapani: We had a really hot discussion about this up in Glasgow three or four days ago. I think the general thing that came out of it - and Paul, Paul Lynch(?), put quite a strong argument, I think it was very well put - [was] it wasn't so much the standards of the place that put the working-class people coming along to the Centres off, but in actual fact the people. Because he was pointing out that quite a lot of the pubs and some of the clubs in the East End are the most flashy in London. It doesn't stop the people coming along, it's actual East Enders

meeting people of a different sort of background - which is, you know, it's difficult for them to make those connections.

S: That may be so, but also I think one should not confuse flashiness with as it were -

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Padmapani: ... middle-class ...

S: You see, the average East Ender won't be put off by flashiness. It'll be sort of modern. It'll be in very bad taste, probably, and clearly a lot of money will have been spent on it, so there's money around. That will ... But if something is in, say, better taste, more aesthetic, that may well put him off. He'll identify that with something perhaps more middle-class. Do you see what I mean?

Padmapani: I know what you mean, it is quite curious ground(?).

S: But, in a way, that is an objective difficulty, because around the Centre you don't want flashiness. You don't want just vulgar lavishness. You don't want that. You want a bit of refinement, a bit of genuine good taste. And that is going to be unfamiliar to most of the people in the area, and because it's unfamiliar it's going to put them off.

Tejamati: Well, maybe our businesses should be a bit flashy but the Centre should be refined. So if they came into contact with us through our businesses...

S: Perhaps that's why we should try and follow a middle path and be bright and colourful and attractive in that way, but not giving the impression of a sort of desiccated middle-class taste.

Tejamati: Yes, right. Now I think back, one of the best things we should have done is actually bought Vince's Cafe when it was up for sale. It was going quite cheap. If we'd bought that, that could have been very good.

Dhammarati: It's only if you stocked some bacon and sausage that people would...

S: There is that, too. There are certain objective incompatibilities between Buddhism and the good people of Bethnal Green, but I think one has to accept that and work along in spite of it. After all, that is part of what we have to offer - good taste and no bacon and no sausage...

Atula: You could have bubble and squeak, couldn't you?

S: But again I don't think people involved in the LBC generally realize, you might think you're all - well, many of you are - very middle-class compared with the people you see around Bethnal Green, but you should have seen people going along to the Buddhist Society, and maybe who are still going along there. In comparison with most of them you're nearly all down-to-earth working-class types, quite uncultured and rough!

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: Oh, no! (Laughter.) I've been trying for so long!

S: Yes. Really lacking in refinement in certain ways. So don't sort of go about around the

LBC with the impression that you are all very middle-class and with lots of middle-class culture. Not a bit of it. No. No.

Anyway, perhaps we'd better get back to the text, now you've all had your little say.
(Laughter.)

Atula: We didn't get very far.

Padmapani: Well, you were talking about alcohol.

S: Anyway, I think it is agreed that indulgence in intoxicants does cause infatuation and heedlessness, if not immediately then very quickly, and therefore people ought at the very least to be extremely cautious in their use of alcohol. And in Buddhist circles alcohol should be regarded as very much the exception, not the rule. For instance, I think that we should never serve alcohol at any official FWBO function. (Murmurs of concern.) I think that should be our official policy.

Tejamati: Would you include a benefit dinner in that, for the Centre?

S: If it's for the Centre - I think that's a moot point. I think one has to consider very seriously whether one could not have a no less successful benefit dinner with just non-alcoholic drinks.

Padmavajra: I think we could, actually.

Padmapani: If the food's good you can get, dare I say, almost ... food, which isn't included in this lot. You can get quite drunk on food.

S: Metaphorically speaking. No doubt people can become a bit unmindful, even quite unmindful, with regard to food. But eating food doesn't destroy your mindfulness in the way alcohol does. But I think as a general rule we should not serve alcohol, at official FWBO functions.

Devapriya: Would you see the co-ops, particularly the cafe, as being an official FWBO front(?)?

S: When I say FWBO, I mean the Centres. Well, it's certainly preferable if co-ops also follow the Centres. I don't want to be too strict about it.

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Devapriya: I think the discussion came up with the idea that we would accept corkage: in other words, people could bring alcohol but we would not be serving it.

S: This is the Cherry Orchard?

Devapriya: Well, this is the discussion last year about evening opening. But it still hasn't opened in that way, so that's not...

S: Well, discuss it again.

Padmavajra: We usually do that in Hockneys - let people bring their own wine.

S: What happens?

Padmavajra: They just bring their own wine, you provide them with glasses.

S: But, I mean, do they just drink in moderation?

Padmavajra: Oh, very much so. I think there's never ever been anybody really over the top. Never. It's very moderate, actually. It seems to work out quite well. They're not out to drink. They're out to enjoy a bit of wine with their meal.

S: Well, I personally think that perhaps a small exception could be made, to a limited extent, in the case of wine. But that might be only middle-class prejudice!

Anyway, let's go on. So 'indulgence in intoxicants which cause infatuation and needlessness' is one of 'the six channels for dissipating wealth' which the Ariyan disciple does not pursue. Then 'sauntering in streets at unseemly hours.' What do you think the Buddha is getting at here? What sort of social situation is he envisaging? What is 'sauntering' in the streets? What does one mean by 'unseemly hours'?

Ratnapani: I've got the sort of impression of young men kicking tin cans around and shouting at two in the morning.

S: Mm. Sauntering suggests that they aren't out in the streets on business, there's no definite purpose, they are just idling their time away in the streets 'at unseemly hours', that is to say, presumably, very late at night.

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Devapriya: The modern-day [expression] would be 'loitering' - just hanging about.

Ratnapani: Maybe with intent.

S: Streets or telephone kiosks.

Devapriya: With intent to mischief of some sort or another.

S: But the Buddha speaks of this as a 'channel for dissipating wealth'.

Padmapani: I suppose there is definitely a correlation; if you met somebody also in the street one might get into all sorts of things like gambling or seedy shady dealing.

S: But why do young men 'saunter in the streets at unseemly hours'? (Laughter.) What is the basic motivation, the basic sort of psychological state?

Atula: Looking for distraction.

S: Looking for distraction.

Tejamati: It's partly caused by rebellion, as well as ...ness.

Devapriya: Well, if their parents are letting them out at that time of night, there's nothing to rebel against.

S: That's not what they're rebelling against. They're rebelling against the lack of anything to rebel against.

Padmapani: Rebel without a cause.

Dhammarati: I always used to saunter when I'd nowhere else to go, when the streets were really ... and there was no place to...

Padmapani: It's also, in the case of quite a lot of young teenagers, sex, finding a sexual partner.

Devapriya: And also to find unlocked cars, easy telephone boxes open. It's theft as well.

S: So the mere fact that you're sauntering about in the streets at unseemly hours, the trouble has already started. You've already taken a step in the wrong direction, even though you're not actually committing any unskilful action overtly at that moment.

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Devapriya: You've set the conditions up where that's likely to happen.

S: Yes. You've started moving in that direction.

Atula: Just ... conditions are there's no purpose in life.

S: Yes, this seems to be the sort of activity, if you can call it that, of someone with no particular purpose in life.

Padmavajra: Looking at these six things - it's just something that came into my mind - I think it's like associations of a name of a hungry ghost, I think it's in the life of Padmasambhava, called the Wandering Everywhere - the whole suggestion of a hungry ghost, just sort of...

S: Well, you sometimes see those so-called amusement arcades, though why they are called amusement arcades I don't know; the atmosphere is decidedly purgatorial. And you just happen to look in and you see they are brightly lit and there are all those weird machines, and you see people, mostly men, old men and young men and boys even, just sort of hanging around and operating them. But they don't seem to be enjoying themselves. They really do seem like hungry ghosts. What are they doing there? Are they just whiling away their time? Have they nothing better to do, and if not how did that come about? No doubt it has something to do with the sort of break-up of family life. Presumably they've got families. Presumably the youngsters have got fathers. Perhaps the fathers don't take all that much interest in them. Perhaps they don't want their fathers to take much interest in them.

Padmapani: It also implies maybe an excess of leisure hours.

S: Yes. It does seem that people have had leisure thrust upon them before they really know what to do with it or before they've been educated into making a positive use of it. In Dickens' day they would have all been working, even if they were eight or nine. They wouldn't have had any leisure. But now they've got leisure, but they don't seem to know how to use it.

Devapriya: I suppose the situation is a bit more critical today and even now in other places in the world. If you didn't work, you didn't eat. It had a very definite consequence.

S: To some extent work is a positive activity, one might say.

Atula: You do actually come back to forces within the culture.

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S: You come back, I would say, to influences rather than forces; not that you are obliged to do this or obliged to do that. Surely there are more positive...

Atula: It does seem as though a lot of young people at the moment have a lot of time thrust on them by the economic situation, and there's no alternatives to that.

S: I would say there are alternatives but they might not see them as practical alternatives.

Padmapani: In actual fact, it's almost a great opportunity, in a way.

S: There are evening classes. There are even organizations like the Boy Scouts.

Dhammarati: You've got a - sort of support ... traditional culture, and a culture that you're actually starting to feel is inhibiting. Of all the options like the house that you live in, your friends' houses, the pubs that you can go to, actually don't give you, the Boy Scouts even, don't give you the openings that you need. I think to a certain extent...

S: I don't know about - we must be careful about speaking of what people need. Very often they don't know what they need. Or what they think they need is quite unrealistic.

Dhammarati: I was thinking back to my own teenage. A lot of drugs used to change hands in the streets, and after the pubs you used to spend quite a lot of time, after taking LSD and so on, on the streets, because you'd nowhere else to go. But in a way you were in touch with a society there but you weren't even in ..., so you had possibilities of finding something on the streets that you wouldn't have in another situation. In a very traditional culture, OK, there should be structures that young people actually do something constructive, but when you've got a culture that really isn't trying to support healthy growth then you've got a different situation.

S: Well, it isn't. On the other hand, still there are sufficient - presumably - reasonably aware individuals in society who could be doing more than they are actually doing, including even the young people themselves. But I think where society is most at fault is that it stimulates people's desires with all sorts of ambitions and pseudo-needs which in fact they are probably never going to be able to realize. It's economically impossible. For instance, you're dangling the spectacle of big cars and beautiful apartments and a life of leisure and luxury, you're dangling those sort of pictures. They haven't a hope of ever realizing that, but [129] this is

what you're actually holding up before them. So that is where society is at fault, I think the greatest.

Atula: I was thinking, when we had the riots the other year, it was quite noticeable that all the damage that was done was to properties that had goods, luxury goods, in them.

S: Oh, yes, in Brixton. It wasn't the food stalls that were looted. It was the TV shops and...

Atula: It's constantly being held up in front of you, and you can't reach it.

Ratnapani: Well, these machines, actually, where at least people can succeed at something: you know, there's their football team which can win, or they can score high numbers on these machines. And it's a whole lifestyle for some people. We've got them coming to classes, people who are really into these machines. And there seems to be quite a, I won't say lifestyle, but a cult built around it.

S: Then there's bingo. These vast places - I peep into them sometimes - they are really lit up and made - the idea seems to be to make them look like Aladdin's magic cavern, all the riches of the earth piled up inside. You get some miserable tawdry prize, and that is what you are spending your evenings after. And this is a whole sort of way of life; and then one sees that church halls have been turned into bingo palaces, and the church itself is running the bingo as a source of income. How much lower can you sink than that? It's almost preferable to run a brothel, which at least might give some genuine pleasure. (Laughter.) Don't take me too literally (loud laughter) - don't try and do things with the Cherry Orchard, please! (Inaudible comments.)

Prasannasiddhi's got it all(?)!

Prasannasiddhi: It seems as if we've got a surplus of material things in society, lots of more material things than you may actually use. You have kids going around vandalising and destructive, in a destructive mood, of all these objects...

S: But I've seen children in India, and I've seen children in England - I've seen teenagers in India and teenagers in England - and the children and teenagers in India, who've got very little, are much happier all the time. The children and teenagers here really are very spoiled, and have got all sorts of things, all sorts of facilities. I mean the Indian child would give his eyes, almost, for some of the facilities that a child has in England. He can go to school. He's allowed to go to school. His parents don't [130] have to pay. He gets his textbooks, he gets his paper, his pen and ink free. They are not free in India. For the Indian child this would seem almost like heaven on earth. Free education! Do the little buggers here appreciate it? (Laughter.) In many cases they don't. They play hookey...

Devapriya: They do all they can not to go.

S: - or they get discontented and frustrated, and they spend their evenings vandalising other people's property. Well, isn't it so? So clearly something has gone wrong somewhere. It's not that people here are deprived. No. The trouble is that they're spoiled, they've got too much, not that they've got too little. In very few cases have people got too little. Very few. And certainly society as a whole has got far too much. Every society in the industrialized West

ought to be ashamed of itself, the way [they are] sort of plundering other countries, and upsetting the economic balance of the whole world in a completely selfish, unthinking way. [Not] to speak of the ecological balance.

Devapriya: I think the whole idea of social equality is false. Because people don't actually want to be equal, they want to have the edge over the Joneses. There is no point in having equality, because it's meaningless, in a sort of social status way. You always want to have that bit more than them. And they are always going to want that bit more than you.

S: That is why you will go to the pub that's a little bit more flash than the one you've been going to - that puts you in a slightly higher notch, that you go to that sort of pub, a more flashy sort of pub, and so on. But I think it's no use saying that people in England are deprived. If they are deprived of anything it's of spiritual nourishment and that's what you should be concentrating on giving them, as far as you can. Not sort of think, oh, those poor people, they are deprived, they haven't had an education. I think that's almost meaningless, almost irrelevant. Look at them - they've usually got decent clothes on, they've come from a reasonably decent house or flat. They've got money in their pockets - even kids have got several quid in their pockets usually. They can do anything they want, within reason - well, they can't go and buy a car, but they can certainly go to the cinema whenever they want to. But they are educated (if you can call it that) into desiring much more than that, and they consider themselves hard done by, apparently, if their desires are not fulfilled. So I think we have to tackle it head on and question the whole material society, and attack it as vigorously as we can.

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Tape 6, Side A

Devapriya: ... jobs and housing. I think it goes into it later about the dangers of idleness.

S: Well, most people are brought up to believe that leisure is a blessing and that you ought to have more of it. The trade unions have been fighting for more leisure for the worker for years, but they don't seem to have concentrated on teaching the worker how to use his leisure; no one seems to have done much about that. Some - yes, various educational authorities, with evening classes and so on. But perhaps they don't advertise their facilities sufficiently, or in a sufficiently colourful way. It's all rather dull and drab. You get the impression that these evening classes are aimed at rather dull, drab kind of people who just want to spend an evening very quietly. Maybe there should be more vigorous advertising campaigns for these sort of things.

Dhammarati: But it's far more than that, isn't it? That's just like a space-filler. If you've got a culture now where people can't work if they choose to, then in a way your whole experiencing of yourself as a productive human being is undermined.

S: Because the work that most people were doing was not truly productive anyway.

Dhammarati: No.

S: I think people have got, in this country - it doesn't apply to other countries to the same extent - to be educated out of this idea that if you don't work there's something wrong with

you as a human being.

Devapriya: Yes. There was a documentary on recently where they were interviewing people who had been working for most of their lives and now were out of work, and that was predominantly the view - that all those people felt that they were somehow diminished as human beings because they were out of work now.

S: You do need to work - not necessarily in the sense of being gainfully employed - but you have energies and you need to use them. But those energies need not be harnessed to any economic purpose. (Murmurs of agreement.)

Atula: But something needs to be, work needs to be replaced. If you're not doing it for a wage you need to do something, some work.

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Devapriya: Like the example you've just given which seems to demonstrate that they didn't really have any purpose beyond just [holding] the job down.

Atula: Well, we do live in a society that developed the mostly materialist values ... Most spiritual values, when I was a child, were just paid lip-service to.

S (interrupting): Well, that is still the case. To the extent that people do have spiritual values, ethical values - well, to some extent at least - they are only paid lip-service to. But I think that one can't just go on blaming conditions. One has got to take some action oneself. One has got to do something oneself. One can't go on making excuses for people's unskilful behaviour. They are human beings after all. They do have some sort of responsibility for themselves or for their own actions. They are not just at the mercy of impersonal forces.

Dhammarati: It's the weakest and the stupidest that end up in that sort of situation, that see least clearly what they can productively do. In a way you can't excuse them, but what can you expect? - they're so terribly ...

S: I wouldn't say that many of them are noticeably mentally inferior to other people. The intelligence is there, they should be able to use it. In a way I expect them to use it and not just look for excuses.

Atula: It does take a long time to actually see that you have a choice. I suppose that's what we should be working harder at, so (two voices at once) ... choice.

Padmapani: I'm losing ground here. I'm not quite sure - are we talking about society in general...

Atula: Yes.

Padmapani: - or are we talking about within the context of the Movement?

Atula: More generally.

Padmavajra: Has there been a change over the last so many years? Because I was talking to

my father when I last saw him and he was saying that he feels there's been - maybe he's a bit old-fashioned but he feels - he came up working through the '30s and things like that, and he is of the opinion that even if you are out of work or whatever you've still got a responsibility to make something of yourself. He's working class, he [133] has a working-class background. Well, I wonder if there hasn't been a change in people's attitudes. That people feel that they're actually owed something by society, that it has to be something actually given to them. I think there's a real, a real, a real, er...

S: This is something which I have noticed. I noticed it in the very early days of the Movement at Pundarika. Many of the people coming along seemed to expect that everything should be laid on for them and that therefore they shouldn't have to pay for anything - classes should be free, for instance, even retreats should be free - that everything should just be provided. So I think there has grown up in Britain, perhaps as a consequence of having the Welfare State, that people do expect everything to be provided. This sort of expectation seems to stifle their initiative, and not only that, to make them feel not only frustrated but resentful when what they want is not provided. Especially when, of course, these visions of the ideal life and home and all that are dangled before them. 'Why shouldn't I have a big car? Why shouldn't I have holidays in the Bermudas? Why shouldn't all these things be provided? Why should society not provide them?' This seems to be the current attitude.

Dhammarati: But unless for instance you have contact with a movement like the FWBO where you get very clear ideas that say, 'Look. You actually do have the capacity to change your own situation,' for most people that's nothing more than the very most rudimentary glimpse. So I think people are to a large extent the victims of their conditionings and their circumstances.

S: Well, I think people think that they are, but I think that they are mistaken; that they're not so much the victims as they think. To a great extent it's their own individual personal sloth and torpor, for which they are responsible. They could do more, even leaving aside the Dharma; they could do more as regards, say, the use of their leisure than they do. They don't have to just roam around the streets at night if they're young men. They don't have to just mope at home. There are a lot of things they can read, they can study; there are free concerts; there are all sorts of things they could find out about quite easily, if they just bestirred themselves a little. I think I feel less and less sympathetic to the plea of people not knowing or not being able, and they're victims. In a few cases that may be, but I think in the majority of cases, not.

Padmapani: I think it would help, for instance, if people coming along to the LBC - if you saw that person who is basically a by-product, as Dhammarati was talking about, of society, in actual fact totally passive, and then he expects everything to be paid for - if you understand that attitude you can over a period of time coax them and reverse that [134] attitude so he starts like thinking and feeling for himself, and then he starts acting in a responsible way.

S: I think it is why working in the co-ops and those quite difficult situations has been quite good for some people, because it has helped to reverse their attitudes. It has helped to get their energies going, in some cases.

Padmapani: One seems to be definitely, a passive attitude towards things - allowing things just to happen - and the other one is actually, it's a much more active, outward-going attitude

which is very much you are the centre ...

S: Well, some people seem to think that if you only open your mouth wide enough in complaint whatever you want will be dropped into it. (General agreement.) I hope I'm not being too harsh but that is the impression that I do sometimes get, and I think we shouldn't encourage that. But the need for the Dharma is a quite different thing because, yes, there are sort of social and cultural facilities that people can take advantage of or could take greater advantage of if they just made a little bit of effort, but to come in contact with the Dharma, that is a quite different matter. There we become much more responsible. Since we are ourselves already in contact with it, it becomes our responsibility to go out to those people who may not even think of coming to us.

Atula: We certainly don't condone that sort of thing but I think I do try to understand what's happening ...

S: Well, I think one must beware of sympathizing with the victim so much that you deprive him of his individual human responsibility and attribute everything, his whole state, his whole condition, just to circumstances, which is the tendency among what I call pseudo-liberal people, who think in pseudo-liberal terms. The criminal is the victim - if you commit a crime, it's because you're a victim of society - you're not really to blame, you're not really at fault. That sort of attitude just ceases to regard the individual as a responsible agent.

Devapriya: What comes to mind here is - I think you probably wrote it quite a long time ago - your article on 'Rights and Duties.'

S: Yes, I wrote that in 1951 probably.

Devapriya: Well, that's a cry nowadays - people want their 'rights' and they want their freedom from, and yet you get freedom -

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S: Yes, but not freedom to, so much. They don't think so much in terms of their duties. Duty is a dirty word now. It's the sort of word that people rebel against, they don't like you to use it, they don't like to hear it - 'they've got a duty'. They don't want to hear about duty, they want to hear about their rights. That's the way to win popularity with people. Tell them they've got rights that they didn't realize they had, and you're going to fight for their rights. That's the way to become a social and political leader these days, it seems, at a certain level. So you've got movements like 'Children's Rights'. Children have got the right to be free from their parents, they've got the right to stay out late at night if they want to, they've got the right to go to university if they want to even if they haven't passed their examinations, they've got the right to go there; etc., etc. They've got the right to decide what they should study, got a right to decide whether they should go to school or not. So you declare that children have these rights and you draw up a charter of children's rights and you proclaim yourself as the great fighter for children's rights. This has actually happened, a few years ago. I don't know what happened to the movement, but someone did start doing something of this sort.

Ratnapani: I think the kids vandalized it.

Padmapani: It's quite interesting - I had this experience of how social workers have infiltrated

the structure of society and what actually happened was that some mural painters came to see me. They really liked the Windhorse mural, and they couldn't understand how I'd managed to get away with it because they said that in their particular area they had to conform with certain stringent regulations before they could get the money, the grant, to do this, and they had to allow the kids to have a part in it, in certain sections of the wall. And I said that if that had happened to me I'd never have been able to paint what I wanted to do, the Windhorse. So there's a very interesting sort of dichotomy between the artist's right, painting his vision in a sense, and the social system which was set up whereby everybody had a go, which I felt personally would have lowered the level of the overall vision.

S: Supposing someone had said, 'Children shouldn't only have the right to take part in painting it, but they should have the right to destroy parts of it if they wanted to, because they've also got their rights. It's not only your rights as a painter that have to be considered.' That would be the attitude of some people.

Padmapani: It's quite interesting, this, because I had a chat with Durangama about it, who is very interested in social welfare and he's actually managed to incorporate really skilful means. In his paintings he might have a lot of pipes and things at the bottom of his paintings [136] and stuff. He has to allow an area, it might be ten feet high, for the kids who can't get on the scaffolding to paint what they want, graffiti, so he incorporates that in his pictures.

S: That sounds absolutely maniacal.

Padmapani: It's quite interesting, though, how he managed to do it. So he did get to paint what he wanted, within reason.

S: Well, I mean the requirements, not Durangama's efforts to cope with them.

Padmapani: I think Durangama actually doesn't mind that attitude, but I find it difficult.

S: That's another example of what I call pseudo-liberal thinking.

Ratnapani: You have a wall for the kids to paint or you have a wall for an artist to paint. They could both be good, couldn't they?

S: Yes. I mean I have no objection to children being let loose on a wall if that seems to be a good thing.

Padmapani: So the epitaph to this, if epitaph is the right word, is that the kids have really liked the mural and we haven't had any pots of paint on it yet, which is really good; so it does show that the artist can do something which the kids actually like. So I think it is a poster, an advert, for the artist doing his own vision without interruption.

S: Which one would have thought was one of the basic requirements of any truly civilized community. Perhaps we're not truly civilized, after all.

Anyway, let's go on - well, let's stop and have a cup of tea.

(Break in transcribing during tea break.)

S: So, another channel for dissipating wealth. Let's take it we've dealt with 'sauntering in streets at unseemly hours' - I think we've turned that one well over. 'Frequenting theatrical shows.' Now, what's that? (Long pause.)

Padmapani: Would that be also a form of - well, it is a form of distraction, possibly.

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S: One could say that in the Buddha's day the theatre in the modern sense had not developed - the theatre as a meaningful art form, communicating a sense of, not human courage, one might say, even communicating a philosophy - that hadn't developed in the Buddha's day. What one had then was a rather maybe primitive sort of entertainment, or knockabout farce or something of that sort. Nothing very elevating, nothing very inspiring.

Atula: What would be the modern-day equivalent, like, - ?

S: Well, Whitehall farce or soap opera on the radio or TV. In other words, the greater part of modern entertainment. Most of the things that you see advertised in Time Out, including films, would come under this sort of heading. There is this well-known episode of Talaputo in the Pali Canon. I think I've touched upon this before. Talaputo was a sort of actor-manager, and he appeared before the Buddha, came to see the Buddha, and he put it to the Buddha that he had heard a tradition that those who were actors, when they died, went to heaven, went to the heaven of the Laughing Gods, because they made people laugh.

This may throw a little light on the nature of theatrical entertainment in the Buddha's day. It refers to actors as making people laugh; maybe they were not much more than clowns. So he asked the Buddha to confirm this - that actors, those who made people laugh, went after death to the heaven of the Laughing Gods. So the Buddha refused to do this; and, on being pressed by Talaputo, he said that actors on death went to a state of suffering because, he said, being yourselves overwhelmed by greed, hatred and delusion, by your acting you stimulate these things in other people. So that is a very serious matter: the sort of mental state to which your acting gives rise in the lives of other people. So if one asks oneself what sort of mental state does the average play or film etc. give rise to, it is not usually very positive and therefore the people responsible for the production of these things bear a very great moral responsibility.

Padmapani: What about the actors or actresses themselves?

S: Well, even to simulate an unskilful mental attitude cannot help but have a deleterious effect on you. You experience it to a certain extent - at least according to one school of acting: I gather that one school of acting maintains that the actor or actress should actually try to experience the emotion which he or she is expressing. Well, even to experience it to that limited extent must have some effect upon you. At least you are associating with it, coming into close contact with it.

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Dhammarati: So does that mean even good drama is going to have influences on the actors that - ?

S: Oh yes, I'm sure that if the play, the drama, is a noble and inspiring one, the actor or actress will be carried away by that and will feel inspired himself or herself. I imagine that would be

the case.

Ratnapani: But I mean to say, playing Macbeth, which is supposed to be good drama but at the same time he is tortured, going through that - would you think that was going to damage the actor of the Macbeth, or - ?

S: I think it would depend mainly upon the overall effect of the play, as a whole. The actor surely cannot be unaware of that and can contribute to that. So if the actor is aware of the overall effect of the play, and if that overall effect is positive, the actor presumably will share in or participate in that positivity, even though the particular character he plays may not have been very positive.

Devapriya: I heard something quite sad but quite interesting in this respect just after Christmas. A brother of a friend of mine was making a film about John Lennon's killing, and he had been into that sort of film-making generally; and it happened to him, he got shot on Christmas Eve. And that made me think that his entering into that sort of world possibly brought that sort of consequence on him.

S: That's very interesting.

Devapriya: And there was Polanski and Sharon Tate. He was into very macabre film-making and seemed to create that in real life.

Padmapani: Oh, yes, that's right! There was an interview on the television about a year and a half ago. There was a guy doing an appeal for Christian Aid, and he used to play in these horror films like Hammer Films. It wasn't Vincent Price; I think it was Christopher Lee, possibly. And the person was absolutely scared to death, a complete shell, a nervous wreck; and you got the impression - because I was quite concentrated, I'd come off a solitary retreat - and I looked at it and thought `that person's suffering from tremendous inner tensions'; and I got the direct impression it was because of all these films he'd been making over the years to do with really unskilful things, horrors, and...

S: So therefore you have to be very careful what you go and see. You have to be very careful what you expose yourself to. I think people are really very incautious and very unmindful in this respect. I've seen, say, at Sukhavati, people flicking through the pages of Time Out looking for [139] something interesting to go and see, but not really considering things from this point of view very much - what might be having a positive effect on them or a negative effect. Some people do, but some don't sometimes. So there's not only the question of expense which the Buddha is considering here - the expense of attending these performances, theatrical or otherwise - but, even more importantly perhaps, their overall psychological effect upon you. The same with watching TV.

I think as an aspect of one's spiritual life generally one has to be very careful what influences one permits oneself to be exposed to. The film, or even the stage play, is a very powerful medium, has a very powerful effect on you. I mean some people say that after going to see a film or a play, but I think especially a film, their dreams revolve around this film, their dreams are influenced by the film. The film enters into their dreams perhaps for several nights running, sometimes disturbs their sleep, sometimes they can't meditate because images from the film keep invading their minds. So surely one must give some consideration to these

things.

Dhammarati: To think of an analogous situation with painting or something - I think I find it really difficult to decide perhaps - a painter for instance like Edvard Munch, his famous work, 'The Scream'. If somebody [is] in that state of mind, aware enough to both experience it and describe it - is that a productive activity or is that a damaging activity - would it have been better not to bother?

S: Well, it might have been a therapeutic activity for the artist inasmuch as by painting that particular picture he may have enabled himself to come into conscious contact with an aspect of his own consciousness, one might say. He might have been able to bring up the fear that was in him into consciousness; so that would have a therapeutic effect for him. Whether that particular production has an artistic value, that's another matter. Whether it's very helpful for other people to look at it, that again is another matter. I think when one is looking at paintings in an art gallery - assuming they've all got some aesthetic value - one might as well look at those that have (since you can't look at them all, not intensively) a positive and inspiring effect upon you; not linger over macabre or sadistic images, even.

Dhammarati: Wouldn't [you say], for instance, that if part of your own experience is close to Munch's, that by the artist managing that catharsis he actually makes that experience more of a conscious possibility for [you] ?

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S: It might be so, but I'm thinking - just looking at a work of art, very often you're as it were so passive that a cathartic experience can't be produced. You're just registering someone else's experience.

Atula: To the extent, then, that you're passive to art anyway, it wouldn't be valuable that much, [would it?] It would have a negative effect, would it?

S: I think you can over-saturate yourself with art. I think you have to be careful not to see too much, or even to read too much. Just as with the alcohol, use it in moderation, if at all. Don't use it to stifle your own creativity but to spark off your own creativity. Otherwise you become like the man in Tennyson's poem The Palace of Art: you become a mere aesthete in the narrow sense.

I think there is such a thing as active enjoyment of a work of art, but I think one has a limited capacity for that; as well as an active enjoyment, a sort of participatory enjoyment. You don't merely passively enjoy the work of art but you almost participate in the artist's creative process, at least to a limited degree. You're really grappling with the issues which it would seem the artist was grappling with at the time that he painted that picture. You're not just admiring it as a pretty piece of work.

One useful thing that one can sometimes do - one might even try this as an exercise - if you admire a painting very much, [is] to try to describe that painting in words. In other words try to recreate whatever the painting is about in another medium. Do you see what I mean?

Voices: Yes.

Ratnapani: So you are actually engaging with it and not just passive to it?

S: Art critics do this - at least, they did this in the old days to a great extent. Ruskin did this, in the days before you had very adequate reproductions of paintings. You were dependent upon someone's word painting, as it was called, to communicate to you some feeling of what that painting was all about. Certainly Ruskin was very skilled in doing this sort of work, very ...ismic, had a great capacity for language and a strongly ... temperament. So one could try, maybe in a letter to a friend, to describe a painting that you have seen that has impressed you very much - describe it in detail, so that reading your letter this friend gets a very vivid picture, so to speak, of the picture or work of sculpture. Don't just write: 'Oh, I saw a really nice painting by Picasso the other day, really amazing - oh, it was fantastic.' That doesn't really tell your friend anything. Sthiramati has just written an essay which will be the [141] concluding Mitrata of the present series - that is to say, the series in the present format - and he describes two works of art in this, or two drawings in fact, or it might be engravings - one by Durer and one by Picasso. He goes into a considerable amount of detail in this way which is quite interesting.

Padmapani: While we're on the subject of visual arts, Bhante, do you feel when one's doing, say, a painting like Chintamani's at the LBC, that the painting should not startle the person too much, should not in actual fact engage them too much, but should be fairly sort of passive in, say, the context of a Meditation Centre like LBC?

S: Well, I think a painting shouldn't assault them, if you see what I mean. For instance, for the sake of argument, supposing, say, when you entered the Meditation Centre, there was a mural and it was Superman jumping out at you. Well, would that be suitable?

Padmapani: Well, personally, no.

Ratnapani: Some people would say yes, I think. (Some laughter.)

S: I would tend to say no.

Padmapani: I suppose one has to accept the fact that it's a public Centre, isn't it? It's a public place where you're going to get all different types of people. At the same time, the argument against that is the fact that that shouldn't dilute the experience.

S: What shouldn't dilute whose experience?

Padmapani: The artist's experience of trying to communicate something to the person, because it's a public place.

S: Well, the artist has to remember that his art is a functional art. His image is a private ... ; he is fulfilling a public function. And he should be clear what that function is, and the people who commission him, that pay him, it should also be clear in their minds what they're asking him to do. Are they giving him that wall, say in this case in the Centre, in the reception room, to let loose his private fantasies upon, or are they asking him to bear in mind the function of the place, and - in accordance with his own inspiration, no doubt - produce something which is suitable to the place? In the old days in Europe, in the Renaissance - well, even before that - the patron told the artist very exactly what he wanted. He said: 'I want Venus to be included

and, yes, I want the Three Graces to be included. I'd like some myrtle trees, please, and my favourite flowers in the grass.' And the artist had to carry out that commission and do the [142] best he could. And sometimes the artist found those limitations, or the problems that those limitations set, quite stimulating. Sometimes he'd have a very odd-shaped wall to decorate and he'd find it quite stimulating solving the problem, how to accommodate a painting with certain figures within that particular space. Those who are given a public commission have to bear in mind the purpose of the building or whatever it is that [they]'re being called upon to decorate. If it's a Meditation Centre, bear it in mind - it's a Meditation Centre; what would be suitable? What kind of mural would help to meditate rather than otherwise? That's what you've got to ask yourself. It's not a question of just indulging personal fantasies.

Dhammarati: You've also got the nature of the experience to consider.

S: Yes, obviously you have to consider that.

Well, anyway, coming back to the text - 'frequenting theatrical shows'. The Buddha speaks of that only in terms of a channel for dissipating wealth, but there are at least two other points that one has to bear in mind, we can see nowadays: one, the effect of the theatrical performance upon your mental state, and also the fact that if you see too many theatrical performances or their equivalent, even though the effect may be positive, you may sink into an unduly passive attitude.

I know some people have the experience going into, say, a bookshop, of being completely overwhelmed and even coming out feeling rather sick. I had a friend once, years ago, who used to just sometimes have to leave a bookshop. He just couldn't stand it, the feeling of all these books around him. He found it quite oppressive because he so much wanted to read them all but then he felt he couldn't, he'd never have time to read them all. So he felt overwhelmed, and it made him feel completely passive, sort of impotent almost, so he'd experience a sort of nausea, he'd go out and wait in the car until I'd finished having my look round.

But again it calls for mindfulness. This seems to be a note which is recurring. Just think before you go. Don't just unthinkingly switch on the TV or idly pick up a copy of Time Out and just drift along as it were, not really knowing what you're going to see or what sort of effect it might have on you. This is what often happens. Nowadays in modern [surroundings] we're exposed to all sorts of powerful inputs. We're being bombarded by them all the time, so we should try to screen some of them out; not expose ourselves to them in a random, foolish way that will undo whatever we are trying to achieve or accomplish, say, through our meditation or our study of the Dharma.

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Prasannasiddhi: This can be a bit of a problem sometimes. Sometimes I sit and find [that] you get caught, you get carried away with the situation in which you find yourself, you don't maintain your mindfulness. You start out the day quite clear, you get up out of bed quite clear, but different things happen and before you know it you've lost yourself somehow.

S: Well, one must be very careful about allowing oneself to enter into those situations where you know this is going to happen, that you are going to be bombarded by one thing after

another in such a way that your mindfulness is going to be entirely destroyed.

Padmapani: That brings out a question I wanted to ask you, Bhante; I've been thinking about this. This obviously has to be tailored to the individual, but can one have a pace which is faster than what your mindfulness will, can, take in? If you've got so many things that you have to do and you know you've got to do them in a certain time, can one be mindful and do them all?

S: I know what you're asking. You can be. I don't think that is the danger. I think very often you can do a number of things, one after the other, quite quickly and remain quite mindful and know what you are doing. I think the danger is that you lose contact with your feelings by operating in that way, rather than with your mindfulness.

Padmapani: Ah!

S: Though it is possible that some people can function with that degree of mindfulness, one thing after another very rapidly, even successfully, competently; but they lose contact with their feelings. Because it may be that a certain feeling is appropriate for one activity, a certain feeling appropriate for another, and they can't switch over quick enough. Mindfulness can continue but the continuity of feeling is not there.

Padmapani: So it would be better for somebody who, especially in their past, has gone through a period of alienated awareness, not to do too much so that they can be mindful without losing their feelings?

S: Or do it too quickly.

Padmapani: Yes.

S: And that can happen without your really recognizing it, or really being aware of it, though you're functioning quite well, you're doing things, you're keeping up; but at the end of the day you feel strangely dissatisfied, a bit empty. It's because you at some point along the line [144] got out of contact with your own feelings. You've been functioning in an unfeeling or non-feeling way, quite successfully, quite competently, quite efficiently, but nonetheless without feeling.

Padmapani: If that keeps up, after a few weeks, a few months, that would have quite a bad effect on himself or herself.

S: It would be quite bad.

Devapriya: Surely one could only operate like that in certain areas and still be efficient? Because I find that if I lose touch with my feelings...

S: Yes, you can't meditate like that. I'm thinking of external, as it were, organizational, business, administrative activities.

Padmapani: Sorry, you can't what?

S: You can't operate in that sort of manner, that is to say maintaining your awareness which will be an alienated awareness, and be out of contact with your feelings.

Voice: Ah, that's quite interesting.

S: Well, in certain areas you can't; in other areas you can continue like that for quite a long time.

Devapriya: I just find, in important meetings, if I'm not in touch with my feelings then my mind might be on the ball but somehow it doesn't connect.

S: Mm. Anyway, let's pass on. We're still occupied with these six channels for dissipating wealth. We've dealt with `intoxicants, sauntering in the streets, frequenting theatrical shows,' so now we come on to `indulgence in gambling which causes heedlessness.' I think gambling is not much of a problem in the FWBO, not even in the Order! (Laughter.) I don't think it's ever been a problem in the ... that I know of. But it is a problem for a lot of people; a lot of people are given to gambling. I don't know why it hasn't crept into the FWBO.

Ratnapani: Too broke!

S: But then you might say all the greater the temptation to gamble and try to raise the wind in that way. I mean poverty never stopped anyone from gambling who really wanted to; he borrowed the money. But there's gambling and gambling. Bingo, I suppose, is really gambling; it's chance, isn't it, mainly? I don't think there's an element of skill in it, [145] judgement or knowledge? No. I wouldn't have thought so, looking at some of the people who...

Tape 6, Side B

Devapriya: ... in my family, people I know well, sort of literally gambled away everything.

S: Well, one reads about such things, though I can't say I've come personally into contact with them, but obviously gambling is...

Voice: It's a terrible disease, they literally can't stop and you always chase the money that you've lost - next time you'll get it all back - people getting their wages on Thursdays and taking it all into the betting shop and literally the wife and children have got nothing.

S: Yes, one does see these betting shops all over the place. Sometimes you get - which I didn't see while I was away, which was comparatively recently - sometimes you just get a quick look in as you pass by if the door happens to open and you do get a definitely, again, hungry ghost type in there, you really do.

Voices: Ah!

S: Yes, you do.

Padmapani: I've noticed a definite correlation between bookie shops and smoking.

Voice: And drinking.

Padmapani: Definitely the smoke you get in there is really incredible. When you just walk by, you see the smoke wafting out on to the street. Maybe they've got ...

S: So maybe it isn't a great evil within the FWBO; maybe we need not go into it very much, but briefly, what is it that makes people gamble?

Voice: Greed, I think.

S: I suppose one can say basically greed - neurotic greed, perhaps.

Padmapani: Making some of the connections which they see through the media, you know, the Martini Bianco advert, the fact that one can take oneself away or something.

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Voice: Or 'You can be a winner'. People very often feel they're ...

Atula: The way to success.

Prasannasiddhi: Neurotic pick-up(?).

Devapriya: I like to have a dabble on fruit machines every now and again. When it's on that neurotic basis I don't win, but every now and again I put 20p, 30p in - I win!

S: Ah - that's Mara. (Loud laughter.)

Devapriya: I don't get caught in it; I have a little splash every now and again. Sometimes I've done the football pools and I've won more money on those than I've ever spent on it. But I think maybe I'm unusual in that way, because you do see schoolboys from the East End putting all this money in fruit machines, a compulsion to do it somehow.

Voice: Maybe I ought to give you some money to ...

Devapriya: No, it doesn't ...

Voice: I think it's something to do with a kind of stifled adventurousness. It's like people are not free to take very much of a chance. And going gambling enables you to...

S: You don't really take much of a chance.

Same voice: No, but you stand to lose quite a lot.

S: You can gamble your shirt away - well, even that isn't much of a chance, because you get the dole money or whatever.

Ratnapala: But it is a thrill, it is a thrill and a real tense stomach and sweating and adrenaline rushes and what have you; they say...

S: I think this is what the confirmed gambler probably goes after. This would seem to constitute a really neurotic element of gambling. I suggest that you don't find life exciting, that you need that false artificial stimulus.

Voice: The junkie's rush, isn't it called?

Ratnapala: You get the same thing with fairgrounds. If you never feel anything, well, at least you can feel fear. It's better than nothing.

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S: Or expectation, I suppose.

Dhammarati: I think with Ratnapala a lot of it is tied up with a feeling of impotence ...

S: Well, perhaps some research could be done - whether people who indulge in prolonged gambling are impotent in the strict sense. Anyway, it's not a very positive subject, so perhaps we could pass over it and press on. It's not very relevant to people within the FWBO, but it's pretty clear that gambling is out as far as Buddhism is concerned.

And then, 'association with evil companions.' This is a channel for dissipating wealth. Does anyone have any comments on this?

Devapriya: That is quite in accord with my experience. When I've been in the wrong company I get into trouble. It's like you're setting up the conditions.

Ratnapala: Is it as strong as that in the Pali - 'evil companions'?

S: Papami - papa, evil friend, evil companion.

Padmapani: Does that imply, then, that there's an element of you that must be attracted to them, otherwise they wouldn't be friends?

S: Yes, to the extent that friendship is possible between such people.

Dhammarati: It doesn't mention the six evil ... consequences.

S: Mmm?

Dhammarati: It says there are six evil consequences; it doesn't mention these.

S: Oh yes, we've got on to the - yes, I didn't actually intend to do that. We've got on to the headings, we've been discussing the headings, but we haven't discussed in detail what is included under the headings. Anyway, perhaps we'll go on to that. (Pause.) Yes, because each of those again indeed is subdivided, but we'd get rather lost in those subdivisions. Association with evil companions is definitely a channel for dissipating wealth. Evil companions make you spend money, you spend money on account of them, sometimes you spend money for them, they borrow money from you.

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Padmavajra: Is there, the six 'channels for dissipating wealth,' does he mean just material wealth or do you think he is also meaning spiritual wealth in some way?

S: I think he is referring simply to material wealth, though one could certainly extend it.

So I think it's pretty obvious that association with evil companions is a channel for dissipating wealth, besides the other ill effects of associating with evil companions. No doubt we can go into those under the more detailed headings.

Let's go on, then, to 'a habit of idleness'. Idleness is clearly a channel for dissipating wealth because, if there's a habit of idleness, whatever wealth you have accumulated will be dissipated if you don't renew it.

Anyway, these are the six channels for dissipating wealth. We've discussed them in general at some length, so we now have to go on to discussing them in detail from at least the point of view of the Buddha or the point of view of the Buddha's own time. I don't know if that will take us very long or not - we'll see. Some new questions do arise, I think.

All right, first of all we're going to discuss in detail 'indulgence in intoxicants which causes infatuation and heedlessness'. First of all there's 'loss of wealth'. Well, that's pretty clear, we've really covered that already, haven't we? Indulgence in intoxicants is a channel for dissipating wealth partly because the intoxicants themselves cost money and also you may incapacitate yourself for work while drinking.

And then there's 'increase of quarrels'. This is another ill effect of indulging in intoxicants - 'increase of quarrels'. This reminds me of an experience of mine in Kalimpong. In Kalimpong one of my friends was what was called 'the civil surgeon'. The civil surgeon meant the doctor who dealt with police cases; if someone was stabbed or someone was murdered he'd have to examine the dead body or examine the wounded person's wounds and so on, for police purposes. So, since I used to see quite a lot of him, I found that every week he'd have two or three cases of stabbing to deal with in Kalimpong. And these were almost always among Tibetans, and almost always as a result of drink. This gave me a sidelight on Tibetan character which I hadn't gathered from books on Tibetan Buddhism or on Tibet. And I was told that most of these fights which resulted in serious stabbings were friendly fights. They were fights between friends - companions at least - who'd got into an argument when they were a bit drunk and then just lunged out at each other and seriously hurt each other.

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So this is the sort of thing, presumably, that the Buddha has in mind: that indulgence in intoxicants leads to an increase of quarrels, and one does indeed find this, especially at a certain level of culture, drunken brawls in pubs and so on. I mean, yes, social inhibitions are decreased, but beyond a certain point one's self-control is diminished, too. And if you are of a quarrelsome nature or even an argumentative nature, you may well get into a fight under the influence of drink.

Padmapani: So it's excess of liquor, really?

S: Oh yes, but of course what is not excess for one person may be excess for another. Some people may become quarrelsome after a very small quantity of alcohol indeed, as though the

quarrelsomeness is just bubbling below the surface, ready to break out. So indulgence in intoxicants does cause increase in quarrels, very often. People do become infatuated and unmindful. Perhaps when you are under the influence of alcohol you say something which upsets someone, which you might otherwise not have said. And perhaps they retort, or even retaliate, and you get into an argument, or a quarrel maybe, even a fight, in an unpleasant way.

Tejananda: Most people have the idea that there is something manly about alcohol, this image. When people are very drunk there is this tendency to see it in that wrong-view sort of way.

S: The image of the drinker being a real man is carefully fostered by the advertising agency, and by the brewers. You see these advertisements, these great big posters on the hoardings - a big hefty chap, you know, open-necked shirt, big muscles, lifting his pint - he's a real man, sort of thing. So, if you want to be a man, obviously that's the sort of thing you've got to do.

Atula: If you don't keep your end up you ..., as it were.

S: Anyway, I think that point is sufficiently made - that, as a result of indulgence in intoxicants, there is an increase of quarrels.

And then, 'susceptibility to disease'. Is this true? Is this so? Is there medical evidence for this?

Voices: Yes.

Atula: Certainly where you get people drinking heavily.

S: Yes, well, you get cirrhosis of the liver, don't you, things like that?

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Padmapani: You must have also susceptibility to accidents.

S: Yes; yes. Especially in modern times with all this traffic about. A man who is only a bit under the influence of drink may get knocked down by a passing car more easily - he may cross the road less carefully - or he may drive less carefully. A lot of accidents are caused by drink. Not exactly drunken driving but by people at least to some extent under the influence of alcohol and whose judgement, therefore, is impaired. To drive when one has been drinking is an absolutely anti-social action.

Then 'earning an evil reputation'. What could one say under this heading?

Padmapani: Being socially seen as a bit of a slob.

S: Well, in ancient India, and even in modern India, the drunkard would not be regarded as a suitable bridegroom. And that would be a quite serious matter. It is said that no one would like to give his daughter in marriage to a drunkard because he might not be able to support her properly. So a drunkard would experience difficulty in finding a wife, on account of his evil reputation. He might find difficulty in finding work. Sometimes that does happen, doesn't it, in certain levels of employment? A man gets a reputation of being a bad worker and under the influence of drink, so he doesn't find it so easy to get work.

Devapriya: It self-perpetuates that you're with other people in that same situation, you drink together.

S: Yes. 'Earning an evil reputation.'
All right - 'shameless exposure of body.' What is meant by that?

Ratnapani: If you're wearing Indian garments and you're drunk, surely they more or less fall off you.

S: Yes, indeed. The Indians traditionally regard exposure of that sort of quite indecent. Therefore if you are under the influence of drink you're more likely to behave in that sort of shameless way.

The Indians had, and still have to a great extent, a different attitude to exposure of the body than, say, the ancient Greeks. In the Pali scriptures certain lay people are represented as saying: 'Nakedness, O Lord, is disgusting,' and asking the Buddha to prohibit it within the Sangha on certain occasions. But you note it is said here 'shameless' exposure of the body. So perhaps one could make a distinction between exposure of the body which was not shameless and exposure which was shameless due to drunkenness. An Indian, even, would agree that in the case of a yogi who was meditating, say, in the nude, this would not be considered [151] a shameless exposure of the body. It would indicate the yogi's indifference to all worldly values. But if a person who normally kept himself decently covered was not to do so because of drunkenness, well, that would amount to a shameless exposure.

So 'shamelessness of body'; then 'weakening of intellect'. Do you think that the regular use of alcohol does actually weaken the intellect?

Ratnapala: I read in an article in the paper once - I forget the exact details - something like if a person goes out on a Saturday night and drinks, say, four or five pints of beer his intellect is impaired for a couple of days. Should he drink one or two pints a day every day it has no effect. (Presumably if he drank more than that every day it would.) But, yes, it does seem to affect intelligence.

S: It didn't define intellect?

Ratnapala: Oh, intelligence, tested by IQ tests.

S: Ah. So it would seem that the Buddha's statement is, I won't say scientifically based, but susceptible of scientific verification. The word is *dupanna*, ill understanding, one could say. Just let me check that. Yes, *pannayaadhu balikarani*(?), his wisdom becomes weak or his understanding is made weak.

Atula: It certainly is immediately ... I'm not sure what ...

S: So the Buddha is saying that, apart from 'indulgence in intoxicants' being a channel for dissipating wealth, as a result of dissipating wealth there is not only loss of wealth, which itself is the subject of a subdivision, but also an increase of quarrels, susceptibility to disease, earning an evil reputation, shameless exposure of the body, and weakening of intellect. So they seem to add up to a quite serious indictment, as it were. And therefore, as I said when we

discussed the point generally, it would seem that, except under very exceptional circumstances, alcohol should be out so far as the FWBO is concerned.

Anything further about alcohol? Or about indulgence in intoxicants which causes infatuation and heedlessness?

Ratnapala: Only one point. These six points made here do relate exclusively to quite heavy drinking.

S: Yes, except that 'heavy' is a subjective term, and it's a question of what amount of alcohol is required to upset a particular person's mind to such an extent that one can speak of infatuation and heedlessness.

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Padmapani: I've got a bad liver because I've had hepatitis, [and] if I drink one pint of heavy or Newcastle Brown or some beer like that - stout - it's equivalent to drinking about eight pints by someone who hasn't had that disease. It varies a lot. And there's a lot of 'hep' around in ...

Ratnapala: Well, I mean I drink beer fairly regularly but I don't really think any of these, being quite honest, looking back, I can't really see any of these applying to me particularly - apart, perhaps, from loss of wealth. As you say, it does cost money...

S: Increasingly so.

Ratnapala: Well, that's right. I don't think I've ever shamelessly exposed my body in that way.

Padmapani: Do you think, Bhante, the body gets used to [it] - the system - to a certain degree? I mean, if you take - it's like jogging, if you take jogging regularly, if you take a pint regularly, do you feel the body assimilates it in a way and it ceases to have the meaning that [it would have] if you just took it once a year?

S: It does seem that, as was said, if you take alcohol, say for instance for its euphoric effect, your system does get used to it in the sense that it requires more alcohol after a time to produce the same euphoric effect. Therefore you take more to produce the same effect and inasmuch as you take more, inasmuch as alcohol is strictly speaking a poison, your system does become more and more affected by that poison, because you are taking more of it.

Padmapani: Maybe that's the same with cigarettes.

S: Yes. Yes, this is perhaps why the chain-smoker chain-smokes. Because just one little cigarette or two little cigarettes a day doesn't produce the necessary effect. It doesn't last, it wears off very quickly; perhaps all the more quickly the longer you've been smoking. So you have to keep it up, and maybe smoke more and more to produce the same effect. All the while, nicotine, which is a poison, is damaging your system more and more till you end up with these lungs which are almost black apparently, thickly coated with whatever it is, nicotine...

Ratnapala: Tar.

S: Tar. Anyway, let's leave the subject there and go on to the 'six evil consequences of sauntering in streets at unseemly hours.'

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"(b) There are, young householder, these six evil consequences in sauntering in streets at unseemly hours:

(i) he himself is unprotected and unguarded, (ii) his wife and children are unprotected and unguarded, (iii) his property is unprotected and unguarded, (iv) he is suspected of evil deeds, (v) he is subject to false rumours, (vi) he meets with many troubles."

Well, this is from the ancient Indian point of view. It may still be true. So 'he himself is unprotected and unguarded.' Well, this still does apply, doesn't it, very much? - especially in the streets of American cities. If you're wondering, if you're sauntering there at unseemly hours, you might get mugged. Manjuvajra was telling me that there were certain parts of Boston where, if you drive through late at night, you have to accelerate so that you are not intercepted and robbed. You have to be very careful to drive extra fast through those areas. So, yes, this is very up to date, one might say, very relevant: that 'he himself is unprotected and unguarded', under certain conditions; maybe not in Surlingham but possibly even in Norwich after certain hours. One does hear of people being attacked and robbed, or reads about it in the local paper.

Anyway, this is all as it were worldly wisdom; nothing very profound or spiritual. Perhaps we need not dwell upon it. Then 'his wife and children are unprotected and unguarded'. They're at home. There might be a robber, a thief, a burglar. That was all the more likely, perhaps, in the Buddha's day than in this, but it is still a possibility - that your house might be broken into.

Padmapani: In India it's very easy to break into some of the shacks.

Prasannasiddhi: So 'sauntering in streets' doesn't just refer to children and such things?

S: No. It's the young man, apparently, with a wife and children.

Prasannasiddhi: Ah, the young man.

S: Yes, or even older man.

Voice: Sigala was young.

S: Yes, Sigala, we're not told much about him; we don't even know whether he has himself a wife and children, but it applies apparently to the average Indian male who is, normally, married and who has children. [154] I think in ancient India as in modern India, little children wouldn't be allowed out in the streets after dark, people would be much too careful of them.

So 'his wife and children are unprotected and unguarded' and 'his property is unprotected and unguarded'. Someone might run off with his cow. All very simple and basic sort of advice. And then 'he is suspected of evil deeds,' and the note says 'crimes committed by others'. This is still a possibility. If you are roaming around at night, if you are known to be roaming around at night regularly, the police may take note of that and if a crime happens to be

committed in that vicinity you'll be one of the people that the police haul in for questioning.

Tejamati: Even if a crime hasn't been committed you'll still be suspected ...

S: Under surveillance. Loitering with intent.

Then `he is subject to false rumours'. If he's sauntering about the streets at night what's he up to, what's he doing? Maybe he's involved in some criminal activity. In this way he is subject to false rumours. Maybe that need not be elaborated on. And `he meets with many troubles'. He may bump into all sorts of things. Maybe some fights, getting involved with some gang. He may catch cold, might even be run over. So there are these six evil consequences of sauntering in the streets at unseemly hours. These seem to be urban problems, urban social problems anyway, in the Buddha's day.

Anyway, let's go on to the next one, the detailed discussion of `frequenting theatrical shows'.

"(c) There are, young householder, these six evil consequences of frequenting theatrical shows:

He is ever thinking:

(i) `Where is there dancing?' (ii) `Where is there singing?' (iii) `Where is there music?' (iv) `Where is there recitation?' (v) `Where is there playing with cymbals?' (vi) `Where is there pot blowing?'" (Laughter.)

S: Well, blowing the froth off the top. But then I think, leaving aside the details, the significant phrase is `He is ever [155] thinking.' He is ever thinking. So what does that suggest? He's always looking for distraction. I mean it's not just theatrical shows in the modern dramatic sense but `Where is there dancing?' Dancing is not sort of ballroom dancing, I think, but just watching female dancers performing. `Where is there singing? Where is there music?' Then `recitation' - maybe recitation of ancient ballads or something of that sort. The other things we're not very clear about - playing with cymbals or pot-blowing. We don't really know what that was - some kind of amusement - something maybe that different people did on a stage and other people maybe betted on it; but something to watch, something amusing, some form of entertainment.

So here the person is imagined as always thinking, `Where is this? Where is that?' We'd say, `Where is there a film on tonight?' or `Where is there a play on tonight? Where is there a concert?' Maybe on a higher cultural level; but if we are not careful we can adopt or develop the same sort of neurotic activity or attitude towards all those things.

Padmavajra: It doesn't really matter what it is as long as it's something.

S: Yes. It's like with some people's reading; they get into a habit of reading which is quite indiscriminate. They don't care what they read - yesterday's newspaper, last week's newspaper, last month's, the telephone directories! They'll read anything.

Tejamati: Last month's Time Out.

Padmavajra: Do you think you can be pretty sure, if you say to yourself, `I feel like going to a film tonight,' but you don't really care what it is, you sort of go to something...

S: Well, what do you mean when you say: 'I feel like going to a film tonight'? What do you feel like going to? What is a film? What do you mean by that magic word 'film'?

Devapriya: Passive, colourful distraction.

S: Passive colourful distraction - possibly. But if it's any old film it must be a distraction.

Padmavajra: I was thinking more, I mean I've noticed in myself that attitude of just thinking: 'I want to go out tonight. I want to go and do something.' But it doesn't really matter what it is. I'm not definitely going to see something that I know -

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S: Well, 'going out' - it could be said that you're a bit bored with the existing situation, perhaps understandably bored; you want a change. That's not necessarily neurotic desire, by any means. But perhaps it's significant and interesting what one decides to do when one goes out. Why does one think in terms of going out to a film? I mean, sometimes I've heard - again, this has been down in London, at Sukhavati; I mention Sukhavati simply because I'm more familiar with that situation. I've heard people say, 'Oh, I'm getting really tired of being surrounded by all these people. I want a change. I want to be on my own.' So they go off and see a film. (Laughter.)

Well, again, one needs to watch oneself at every step; why one does this, why one does that. Not to a neurotic extent, obviously, but just being reasonably aware and mindful of what one is doing and why, and how it ties in with one's overall objective in life.

Padmavajra: I think sometimes culture - using that word; I mean higher culture - can be a bit of a rationalization for the same sort of activity. You see people sometimes and they're like a culture vulture. They're grabbing after anything which - you know, going round galleries, listening to as much music as they can - but really it's the same kind of thing, the same kind of attitude.

S: Or maybe it just means half an hour just looking at the pictures and an hour in the museum or art gallery cafe. Reminds me again of some of my Tibetan friends [who] used to in Kalimpong announce their intention of going off on a three months' pilgrimage to the holy places, mainly Bodh Gaya, and when they came back you'd come to know that they'd spent maybe two days in Bodh Gaya and the rest of the time, the rest of the three months, in Calcutta. Not at all on pilgrimage, but officially it was all pilgrimage. So I think if we're not careful our cultural activities and pursuits can be a bit like this.

Padmavajra: The cultural pilgrimage, you could call it.

Devapriya: I find, though - well, I don't very often go, but when I do go to a museum or a gallery I can only take very little of it in, and often I'm going with company and it's quite enjoyable to spend maybe half the time in the tea shop.

S: Well, fair enough, if communication is part of the deal, so to speak. But again one would just be aware and mindful of what one is actually doing, and if you can assume that what you are doing must be valuable and must be positive because it's labelled cultural. So that's your sort of escape -

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Voice: Your hinge.

S: - that's your excuse, that it's cultural, that you are going up to London to visit an art gallery; that's OK, that's acceptable.

Prasannasiddhi: Perhaps people don't generally think more in terms of films in our society at the moment. Perhaps you just think that you want to experience some sort of art form; most people think in terms of films.

S: Well, the film is an art form, quite definitely, a quite important one, one might say. But I was going to say there's good art and there's bad art - well, perhaps there isn't such a thing as bad art - but one needs to consider the overall effect of what you see in the way of films etc. on your mind.

Padmapani: It seems to be a much more immediate hit, in a way, for the person, seeing a film than, say, participating in an opera.

Voice: Hearing an opera?

Padmapani: Well, you hear an opera but you see a film.

S: Well, first of all, there are more films than operas on - unfortunately.

Padmapani: Well, I mean there's the connection with something live as opposed to the film medium which, although it portrays life on the screen, somehow it's divorced from a living spectacle. In actual fact, you are participating in the spectacle, it also includes this.

Atula: Such a powerful medium, isn't it, the film?

S: I think you should be very careful about exposing yourself to films. Inquire very carefully what film it is you are going to see. Other people just walk in, hardly knowing what it's all about. They might be confronted by scenes of rape and violence and death and murder; blood all over the screen - suddenly confronted by all that. It's quite possible nowadays.

Padmapani: They walk out, they look as if they'd just had a six-course dinner - or, well, not even that - just had a snack or something, as if nothing had happened.

S: Well, something must have happened. If it didn't, you're probably hardly human.

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Tejananda: I saw a film the other day, 'The Draughtsman's Contract', and Sthiramati and I were standing outside while the first lot were coming out, and we'd heard various quite good reports of this film. As we saw them coming out we couldn't help picking up the fact that they looked kind of dull and confused, and it wasn't till we saw the film that we saw why; although it had a very good review it was quite a negative film.

Padmapani: I thought you were going to say that you turned round and went home.
(Laughter.)

S: They're bolder than that. `All those people must have been wrong ...'

Anyway, perhaps that's as far as we can go this morning. We've not really gone very far, in a way, but perhaps we are getting on reasonably well. We haven't risen to any great heights, we've remained on a rather humble level, but perhaps that's the level that we need to examine and explore in some detail, if not for our own benefit at least for the benefit of people who may come to us with all sorts of questions. We should know where, as Buddhists, we stand. I do remember hearing that one of our Friends from New Zealand was really quite surprised, not to say shocked, on the very day of his arrival in England: I think it was two Order Members invited him along to the pub for a drink. He really wasn't expecting that sort of thing. So I think we have to be quite cautious about our behaviour in this way. I believe he thought at first it was a joke.

Prasannasiddhi: No, he didn't quite know what to think, Bhante.

S: He didn't know quite what to think.

Atula: Well, there has been the thing that quite a lot of contact has been made, after a class, in the `Black Horse', with people just going in there for half a pint or something.

S: Well, if that does happen I hope people do it quite awarely and mindfully as a skilful means, considering all the implications.

Atula: Well, they certainly...

Ratnapani: I couldn't go into a pub after a class. It would do me in completely. I just wonder where people are at when they come out of a class, that they could go into any pub!

Atula: Well, it's a beginners' class.

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Dhammarati: You haven't seen the `Black Horse.' The `Black Horse' is quieter than the Centre.

Ratnapani: Any pub.

Dhammarati: It is true, because often after a course you get people who wouldn't enter into discussion on the course bringing up points in the pub.

S: Then why doesn't one go to a coffee bar?

Extra bit on Replacement Tape 7

Voices: (indistinct)

: Seems there's no suitable places to take people, that's the impression I have, round Bethnal Green. You couldn't; even the local Burger Bar, it's just...

: It's terrible.

Voices: (indistinct)

S: That's why I had suggested at one stage, when there was some doubt as to what to do with the basement, that it was made into a sort of coffee lounge where people could just take new people after classes for a chat. But I think one would have to be careful, if one ever did anything like that, that it didn't just become a social centre in the wrong sort of sense, especially if it was mixed.

Devapriya: You've got another alternative in a way. If your community is your home and it is close by, then you should be able to come back for a late night coffee.

S: Yes.

Devapriya: Extend your hospitality.

S: Right, yes. In a community like Sukhavati there could even be an area set aside for that purpose, or it could be understood that people from the community, taking part in classes and wanting to bring new Friends up just for a chat, could do that.

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Atula: I think that goes a little bit further than taking somebody to the pub or even to the coffee bar. You're actually inviting them into your home, into your life a bit more. That could lead to...

Devapriya: In some ways that could almost be as bad, because it might be even more kind of your own particular style of living, so they might find it a bit of a - because they might find that they're uneasy in the Centre because it's just a bit different, the situation, whereas a pub is a more - that's perhaps going more totally to their side.

Padmapani: There's also other factors in a community, isn't there, like other people in the community? If you've just come back with one or two people...

Atula: It does need something like a coffee bar. It would be really good to ... afterwards.

S: If you took them to your own room they might see that you didn't have a bed, and all sorts of strange Tantric images and pictures which they perhaps haven't seen in the Centre (sounds of agreement). Not to speak of books on Greek love and things like that ... (Laughter.)

Voice: Adolescence and Problems of Puberty!

S: I was talking in terms of just maybe the sitting room at Sukhavati, say; the possibility of taking people there for a coffee, not so much to one's own room.

Padmapani: Pity the Cherry Orchard isn't open of an evening. It's a facility. We've got [just to go] downstairs and disappear into a corner with someone.

: That might happen, though, it might happen.

S: Perhaps it would be a good idea if the Cherry Orchard could be open, if not for meals at

least for a coffee.

Ratnapani: [Isn't there a] coffee machine on order?

Tejamati: Well, it's on the cards but it's getting the people to do it which is ... (brief break in recording)

S: I'm not too happy about coffee machines, for obvious reasons.

Ratnapani: No, I don't mean a slot machine, I mean one that keeps the coffee hot, real coffee.

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S: Ah, yes.

Ratnapani: That's what they do in F... on the ...

S: Yes... should have ... Then you wouldn't have all that congestion in the reception room at the Centre. People could distribute themselves around a bit more easily...

A general point is - and then we really must carry on - that we need to make full use of all our facilities. We should surely use the Cherry Orchard in some way or other. I would have thought it would be well worth while having it open for coffees... (break in recording)

Atula: ... somehow feel inhibited by the Centre in some ways ...

S: But it's not only that, but you need to get together with someone individually, not try and conduct a personal conversation in front of the class, so to speak.

But another point that occurs to me is that we must be quite careful that we don't, in a wrong sort of way, try to show people that we are just the same as they are. `You go to the pub; well, I go to the pub, too, mate!' That sort of attitude. (Laughter.) `I'm not any different really from what you are!' That was a syndrome that I found at the Buddhist Society, and I certainly do not want to see it appearing within the FWBO. You go out of your way to show that you're just the same as the next bloke and try and give him that sort of impression, that you are no different really from what he is; you're just a Buddhist but in other respects you're much the same. I think you may create that impression if you're not careful, if you take people along to the pub and so on, so therefore you need to think carefully before doing such things. He may be under the impression that being a Buddhist doesn't really make much difference after all. You're doing much the same sort of things as he does - in some ways, anyway.

Ratnapala: So why become a Buddhist?

S: Yes, indeed. On the other hand you don't want to give the impression, and this is the opposite extreme, that you're something so totally different that you've just got no point of contact with them at all.

Ratnapani: Because one big question with people, especially with beginners, is `What can't you do? What can't Buddhists do?' So you want to - (Padmapani laughs.) They're really ready to believe that it's a -

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S: It's no good probably ...ing: 'We can do this and we can't do that.' Say: 'The whole principle is different.'

Ratnapani(?): Right, yes. We're asked to be responsible; we're asked to be mindful. That's the first thing. There are only rough guidelines which represent the things that people in a state of mindfulness generally do or don't do. But the basic emphasis is upon becoming an individual, accepting responsibility for one's own life and exercising constant mindfulness, and being skilful in your dealings with others. That is where the emphasis lies. But not that you've got even a short list of don'ts, really. You don't have a list of don'ts in that sense at all; nor a list of do's, nor a list of commandments. You don't think in that way. That is not the kind of attitude that Buddhism represents or encourages.

Ratnapani(?): We've got quite a keen beginner who has been coming along for some months now, once or twice every week, and he was first contacted in a Streatham pub by one of the Friends who had just moved into our community - they got talking and he's been coming ever since. Some people can do some good in there.

S: Well, one mustn't over-generalize from that. I'm sure Padmaraja's not going to do that. I won't find Padmaraja hanging out in pubs every night just in the hope of chatting up someone and getting them to come along to the Centre, I'm sure!

Ratnapani: I'm sure not.

S: The milk bar, yes, but not the pub!

Padmavajra: It's interesting, though, that that beginner is now stopping going to pubs.

Ratnapani: Is he? Ah. That's two of them we've cured in the last year - two semi-alcoholics.

Dhammarati: That's putting it strongly.

S: All right, then, let that be that.

Voices: Thanks very much, Bhante.

S: People seem to enjoy themselves more when I say less and they say more!

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Day 4 Tape 7, Side A

S: All right, then. We come on now to the six evil consequences of indulging in gambling. We've talked about gambling in general, this is more specific. Would someone like to read, then, that section D?

"(d) There are, young householder, these six evil consequences in indulging in gambling:
(i) The winner begets hate (ii) The loser grieves for his lost wealth. (iii) Loss of wealth. (iv) His word is not relied upon in a court of law. (v) He is despised by his friends and associates. (vi) He is not sought after for matrimony; for people would say that he is a gambler and is not fit to look after a wife."

S: So 'The winner begets hate,' or at least envy. Would you say that this did happen nowadays under modern conditions?

Atula: Yes, it seems to happen quite a bit when people are quite successful.

S: Presumably this is all the more the case when the gambling in question is not just a lottery-type gamble, but when you're directly pitted against one or more other people and it's either you or them. Either they win your money or you win theirs. Then it could be that the winner begets hate.

Atula: Dice and things like that, cards.

S: Yes. And 'The loser grieves for lost wealth'. This is almost certainly the case, that the loser grieves for lost wealth but nonetheless continues gambling. And then 'Loss of wealth'. I'm passing over these a little quickly partly because we have discussed gambling in general, and, two, because gambling doesn't seem much of a practical problem, within the Friends anyway. At least one vice doesn't prevail within the FWBO.

And then, 'His word is not relied upon in a court of law.' Why should you think that would be the case? Why should a gambler's word in particular not be relied upon in a court of law? Why should it be considered unreliable?

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Padmavajra: I would think in certain forms of gambling one has to be fraudulent to a certain extent. Perhaps playing cards or something, or cheating or something.

Tejamati: I would think that if you're a gambler, you wouldn't be able to stop gambling outside of, say, a gambling situation, like you'd be gambling all the time in your life and pitting yourself against other people.

S: But even so, why would your word not be relied upon in a court of law?

Ratnapala: Is it the idea that gamblers are often 'floating' people, you know, they are not householders? They move from place to place, and very often in legal systems [it's] only people who own houses whose word is believed...

S: I don't think there was that sort of provision in ancient India. It seems to me that the gambler was simply regarded as a very unreliable character, as though the fact that you were a gambler indicated some inherent flaw in your character, that you couldn't be trusted, that your word could not be relied upon, that you might tell a lie, bear false witness. But why do you think that should be, if that is in fact the case?

Atula: Because you're betting yourself on the best odds, you're not so much concerned with right and wrong, or with the ethical.

Devapriya: Well, you're living a very precarious life. You are, in a sense, directionless.

S: Yes, you're not a solid citizen. Perhaps you've no regular means of livelihood. You're just not reliable, you just can't be trusted. People don't know where they stand with you, perhaps.

Also a gambler is always in need of money. A gambler will do anything to get money. Perhaps he'll tell lies, even in court, if someone promises him some money so that he can carry on gambling. There is that possibility. I have mentioned in my memoirs, in *The Thousand-Petalled Lotus*, an experience of mine in South India with these hired witnesses - witnesses standing outside the courtroom, just waiting to be hired, willing to swear to anything for eight annas.

Ratnapala: But it wasn't considered too bad because you're only allowed eight witnesses on each side!

S: Yes. The lawyers had a sort of mutual understanding not to call more than a certain number of witnesses, or it would just become too [165] expensive for all parties concerned. And they were - I think I make this point - villainous-looking characters, I remember. I don't know what had driven to earn their living, if you can call it that, in that way. Some of them might have been drunkards, some of them might have been gamblers. Of course - this is on a more humorous note - Dr Johnson said that a married man would do anything for money! So if you accept that ... you shouldn't take the word of a married man in a court of law! But maybe that is taking it a little too far.

Prasannasiddhi: Married men do ...

S: Well, he(?)'d been a married man himself for 20 years. What he meant was, if your wife and children are hungry, even an honest man will be driven to do anything to feed them; so a married man will do anything for money, he said. So a married man is not to be trusted, apparently.

Yes, it would seem that the fact that you are a gambler indicates general instability of character, general unreliability, so that your word cannot be trusted and least of all in a court of law, where it is important that one [should] speak the truth.

All right: `v) he is despised by his friends and associates.' Why do you think they despise him? Is a gambler a despicable character? I mean not everybody might agree. Is he not a nonchalant, adventurous, sporting, carefree, open-handed type of person?

Ratnapani: There's the Wild West type of image, the soap opera [horse opera?] image of the gambler, isn't there? Stepping off the river-boat, too smartly dressed, makes a couple of thousand dollars in saloons, wanders off to the next town. He's a romantic figure. But they're always unreliable, even in Westerns - always ready with a gun, and able to sneak out the back door if things get too difficult, just looking after Number One. The romantic vision, that's ...

S: Yes, that's another aspect of things as regards the gambler. He is a loner, isn't he, more often than not? - in a not very positive sense.

Ratnapala: Perhaps he's a loner because he's `despised by friends and associates', forced into that position.

Padmavajra: Presumably he hasn't got friends, is despised by friends and associates because he's used them to a certain extent to get money out of them.

S: Yes, yes.

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Padmavajra: There's quite an interesting film that I saw - I think it was called *The Gambler* - it was a modern film where this gambler even extorted money out of his mother so that he could gamble. He just had this incredible gambling passion which he couldn't control. He even cheated his mother, lied to his mother to gamble.

S: Well, if you can lie to your mother, presumably you will lie in a court of law. Hence the general feeling that gamblers are untrustworthy. Also you'll gamble with anybody. You'll win off anybody. Presumably, in some cases, perhaps you'll cheat anybody. So it's not surprising that a gambler is despised by his friends and associates. I think in all cultures, even where gambling is quite widespread, gambling is regarded as somewhat reprehensible. Some cultures try to limit it to particular occasions. Tibetans are very great gamblers, they love gambling - even monks like gambling - but it's all limited to the three days of the New Year celebration. Then monks are allowed to gamble, you have gambling in the monasteries. I've been up to the monastery in Kalimpong, the Pa..., and seen them all gambling for three days, from the abbot downwards (laughter) - yes, different forms of gambling - and having a thoroughly good time. But just for three days, then, for the rest of the year, no: for monks at least gambling is absolutely out.

Tejamati: What do they gamble with, in monasteries?

S: They've got all sorts of gambling games that I really don't know about. I noticed that they gambled in much the same way that they conducted their ritualized debates, slapping their cards down like that, and letting out a great shout (loud laughter) as though 'That's got you!', you know. A lot of drama attached to it.

Padmapani: Why do you think they do that, Bhante? Why do you think they do the gambling for the three days a year? Is it a sort of let-out?

S: Well, I think the three-day New Year festival is a sort of carefree time, a time when usual restraints are lifted to some extent - a bit like the carnival in Catholic countries.

Padmapani: The Tibetan New Year, is this?

S: Yes, the Tibetan New Year, which is roughly in about February. Also I suppose that the Tibetan New Year was celebrated in that way before the advent of Buddhism and perhaps it represents three days of pre-Buddhistic culture, so to speak. You can't eradicate those older ways altogether, so you just give them a place in the calendar, as regards the monks, anyway; you allow people to indulge in those old-fashioned practices for three days. Lay people often, of course, gamble - I won't [167] say all the time, but there are certain Tibetans, especially among the aristocracy, who just spend most of the day gambling. It's quite common.

Padmapani: Do you think it seems to be a sort of hereditary thing, where a whole race of people are gamblers? For instance, it seems to me that the Chinese are incredible gamblers.

S: The Chinese are said to be great gamblers, yes.

Padmapani: I remember when I was in Nepal, in Katmandu, the only gambling casino from here to Singapore or Bangkok was run by the Chinese. And there's a very small Chinese quarter, there didn't seem to be a large Chinese element in Kalimpong, but it was all centred around the gambling casino.

S: Anyway, regardless of the extent to which gambling extends in all cultures it is generally looked down upon.

And (vi) He is not sought after for matrimony, for people will say that he is a gambler and is not fit to look after a wife.' This looks pretty obvious, doesn't it? The poor wife suffers, the children suffer if there are any, if the husband is a gambler.

[There are] many, many instances of that in Western literature. Anyway, that's sufficient warning against the evil consequences of indulging in gambling. Would someone like to read e)?

"(e) There are, young householder, these six evil consequences in associating with evil companions, namely: any gambler, any libertine, any drunkard, any swindler, any cheat, any rowdy is his friend and companion."

S: We're still, of course, concerned with six channels for dissipating wealth. This is the fifth one, association with evil companions. So what are the evil consequences of associating with evil companions? 'Namely: any gambler, any libertine, any drunkard, any swindler, any cheat, any rowdy is his friend and companion.' As though the worst punishment, the worst consequence of having evil friends is just having evil friends; that anyone of this nature becomes your friend, your companion.

: What's a libertine?

S: A libertine is one who goes in pursuit of sexual pleasure.

Padmapani: Would that be equivalent to a rake?

S: A rake, yes.

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So if you don't care about the quality of your friends and companions, if you just welcome anybody, associate with anybody, the result will be that people of all these different types, anybody of any of these types, will become your friend and companion. What could be worse than that?

Prasannasiddhi: It seems that even though the Buddha had spent half his life in a palace, as we are told, and the other half as an ascetic and such things, he still had a very clear perception of the society which he was involved in; all these ins and outs.

S: Well, we don't know much about his life before he left home, but according to the usual traditional account he didn't leave till he was 29, so that gave him quite sufficient time to garner quite a lot of worldly experience. Kapilavastu was a town - a city, even.

Padmapani: But wasn't he sheltered, Bhante? I mean maybe not from pleasures, but wasn't he sheltered from the harsher - ?

S: This is what some of the later legends tell us, but that isn't mentioned in the earliest accounts. The earliest accounts simply mention that the Buddha reflected in this way and in that; not even that he saw the Four Sights, literally. We don't know, he could have even visited Benares as a young man, as a layman; we don't know, it's not impossible. But he doesn't seem to be lacking - anyway, in the Pali scriptures - in worldly knowledge or worldly acumen.

Prasannasiddhi: You get from this a feeling of Vimalakirti - the way he can get right to the heart of the matter. He seems well acquainted with all these various things, yet he manages to stay quite removed from these ... activities.

S: Yes. Also there is the point that if you associate with evil companions, they've got their own companions, and to them you will be associated with those companions of theirs. There is no need to dwell on this; the Buddha does revert a little later on to this whole subject of friendship, and he does have quite a lot to say about good friends and bad friends, so perhaps we can take it up there.

Would someone like to read f), the sixth channel for dissipation of wealth?

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"(f) There are, young householder, these six evil consequences in being addicted to idleness: He does no work, saying, (i) that it is extremely cold, (ii) that it is extremely hot, (iii) that it is too late in the evening, (iv) that it is too early in the morning, (v) that he is extremely hungry, (vi) that he is too full. Living in this way, he leaves many duties undone, new wealth he does not get, and wealth he has acquired dwindles away."

S: Yes. These are all excuses, of course, that's very clear. The idle person makes all these sort of excuses, and so he doesn't work. 'Work' can almost be anything, it could be meditation. Sometimes you hear people saying it's too cold to meditate, or too hot, or too late, or it's too early, or they're too empty, or they're too full. It applies to all sorts of things. I suppose one could say that the idle person was the lazy person, but I've often wondered what laziness actually was; it doesn't really seem so clear what makes somebody lazy or idle. I'm leaving aside objective factors like tiredness, and so on.

Padmapani: It could be more subtle things like strong resistance to doing what somebody else says, because you don't particularly like that person, or don't get on with them.

S: That isn't quite laziness.

Padmavajra: Do you think it's a fundamental 'not caring' attitude, a fundamental sort of lack of care?

S: Care meaning for what, or of what?

Padmavajra: For yourself, for what you're doing, for anything.

S: But is that not rather indifference? Isn't laziness something a little different from that?

Dhammarati: Is it a sort of lack of perspective - where you're so satisfied with the moment that you ... the consequences?

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Atula: I went through a period where I just couldn't work - didn't feel like working. It was when I was really in conflict, the conflict of interests within me, and it really messed me up for a long time.

S: Conflict can immobilise one's energies, but that again is not the same thing, it seems, as laziness.

Tejamati: Is it a lack of motivation?

S: It could be - but is just lack of motivation laziness?

Tejamati: Isn't feeling lazy something like you can't be bothered to do anything, 'I can't be bothered to do it' - just can't be bothered sort of attitude?

S: Yes.

Ratnapani: Lack of inspiration. There's nothing within that seems - you're not in contact with anything that makes effort seem worth while, so you don't bother to...

S: Yes. You don't really see the reason for doing anything.

Atula: Lack of purpose.

Ratnapala: Lack of emotional involvement.

S: Anyway, perhaps we'd better not pursue the question: people might start yawning!

'Living in this way he leaves many duties undone, new wealth he does not get, and wealth he has acquired dwindles away.' So that deals with the six channels for dissipating wealth.

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So let's just go back a little bit. The Buddha has now explained to Sigala how to cover the six quarters. He says: 'Inasmuch, young householder, as the noble disciple has eradicated the four vices in conduct, commits no evil action in four ways, and pursues not the six channels for dissipating wealth, he thus, avoiding these fourteen evil things, covers the six quarters,' and eventually reaches heaven. So the Buddha has explained now the avoiding of these fourteen evil things.

But then he goes on, he sort of adds something to all that. It seems he comes back to the question of friendship which he's just touched upon under item e) - the fifth channel for dissipating wealth.

"Thus spoke the Exalted One. And when the Master had thus spoken, he spoke yet again:

One is a bottle-friend; one says `Friend, friend' only to one's face; one is a friend and an associate only when it is advantageous.

Sleeping till sunrise, adultery, irascibility, malevolence, evil companions, avarice - these six causes ruin a man."

S: Let me look at the original texts, perhaps they are interesting. They seem to sort of recapitulate what the Buddha has been talking about, but not in the same order and not quite point by point. Do you see that? (Looks up the texts.)

Yes. The Buddha seems, as it were, to go back to this question of friendship, and then he doesn't exactly recapitulate what he has just been saying in a systematic way but he does touch on quite a number of points which have been already dealt with, and then he goes on to speak about false friends and true friends in considerable detail. So I think we'd better take this next section just as a block.

"Thus spoke the Exalted One... `One is a bottle-friend; The man who has evil comrades and friends is given to evil ways; to ruin doth he fall in both worlds - here and the next.

Dice, women, liquor, dancing, singing, sleeping by day, sauntering at unseemly hours, evil companions, avarice...

These nine causes ruin a man.

Who plays with dice and drinks intoxicants, goes to women who are dear unto others as their own lives, associates with the mean and not with elders - he declines just as the moon during the waning half.

Who is drunk, poor, destitute, still thirsty whilst drinking, frequents the bar, sinks in debt as a stone in water, swiftly brings disrepute to his family. Who by habit sleeps by day, and keeps late hours, is ever intoxicated, and is licentious, is not fit to lead a household life.

Who says it is too hot, too cold, too late, and leaves things undone, the opportunities for good go past such men.

But he who does not regard cold or heat any more than a blade of grass and who does his duties manfully does not fall away from happiness."

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S: Yes. There is a sort of refrain here that comes up better in another version which I'll read you. That is Rhys Davids's `These causes six to ruin bring a man.'

The Buddha has already spoken of six avenues for the dissipation of wealth and he's dealt with them quite systematically. It would seem that the six causes that bring a man to ruin are much the same as the six channels for the dissipation of wealth, but here the Buddha seems to deal with them much less systematically but covering, as I said before, much the same sort of ground. It is as though it were an alternative version, and perhaps in this case the prose version and the poetical version have been sort of put together. They don't in fact quite coincide, they don't in fact need to, so we can just maybe quickly go through them.

First, though, the Buddha does say something about friendship before he goes on to speak about these six causes that bring one to ruin. I'll just read you the Rhys Davids's translation of that same section, which is in verse. He says [NB: this quote not checked]:

Some friends are bottle-comrades, some are they
Who to your face `Dear friend, dear friend' will say.

Who proves a comrade in your hour of need,
Him may you rightly call a friend indeed.
Sleeping when sun has risen, adultery,
Entanglement in strife and doing harm,
Friendship with wicked men, hardness of heart,
These causes six to ruin bring a man.
Is he of evil men comrade and friend?
Does he in evil ways order his life?
Both from this world and from the world to come
To woeful ruin such a man doth fall.
Dicing and women, drink, the dance and song,
Sleeping by day, prowling around at night,
Friendship with wicked men, hardness of heart...
These causes six to ruin bring a man..

Playing with dice, drinking strong drink, he goes
To women dear as life to other men,
Following the baser, not the Enlightened mind,
He wanes as in the darker half the moon.
The tippler of strong drink, poor, destitute,
Athirst while drinking, haunter of the bar,
A stone in water so he sinks in debt,
Swift will he make his folk without a name.
One who by habit in the day doth sleep, [173]
Who looks upon the night as time to arise,
One who is ever wanton, filled with wine,
He is not fit to lead a household life.
'Too cold', 'Too hot', 'Too late' - such is the cry:
And so past men who shake off work that waits
The opportunities for good pass by.
But he who reckons cold and heat as less
Than straws, doing his duties as a man,
He nowise falls away from happiness.

Padmapani: Seems to be better.

S: Yes. Although here the treatment is less systematic, there is this refrain 'These causes six to ruin bring a man,' but the six causes are of six different kinds, they're not tabulated or arranged together in the way that they were in the prose portion.

Padmapani: What's the book you're reading from there?

S: This is the Dialogues of the Buddha, Part III, Rhys Davids' translation of the Digha-Nikaya.

Atula: This sutta is from the Digha-Nikaya, is it?

S: Yes, it's No. 31. First let's go through that in Narada's prose translation - 'One is a bottle-friend'. Well, we all know what a bottle-friend is, a drinking friend. Is a drinking friend

a real friend, could you say? The suggestion seems to be someone you merely drink with.

Padmapani: He seems to imply that the friendship can only last as long as the liquor is there.

S: Yes. And then there is the one who says 'Friend, friend' only to your face; so what does that suggest?

Padmapani: Superficiality.

Padmavajra: They only call you a friend for what they want out of you.

S: Yes. We're going into all this in some detail later. But the friend who just says 'Friend, friend' to your face is someone who's not a real friend. Behind your back he may speak quite differently.

Anyway, then he says: 'One is a friend and associate only when it is advantageous.'

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Oh, there seem to be quite different translations by these two translators. Do you notice? Narada says: 'One is a friend and associate only when it is advantageous,' but Rhys Davids translates it as 'Who proves a comrade in your hour of need, Him may you rightly call a friend indeed.' (Laughs.) So let's see what the text says.

Padmavajra: It's implied, isn't it?

S: Yes, it is. (Looking for passage.) It's not easy to sort out the arrangement of the text. Both the translations make sense, but they don't agree with each other. (Still looking.)

Tape 8, Side A _

The difference arises from the same text. Ah, it's as though Narada phrases it in the negative form and Rhys Davids phrases it in the positive form. In the negative form 'one is a friend and associate only when it is advantageous', and in the positive form 'one proves a comrade in the hour of need.' 'Him may you rightly call a friend indeed' seems to be just added for the sake of the rhyming metre. Anyway, the general meaning is clear, isn't it?

All right, let's go on, then. As I said, the Buddha is covering much the same ground as before, but there are a few new points. 'Sleeping till sunrise.' What does that tell you about the ancient Indians - or even the modern Indians?

Devapriya: They were always up before then.

S: Yes.

Devapriya: Do they still do that today?

S: On the whole, yes. Sleeping until sunrise is regarded, well, almost as laziness, idleness. Oh yes! But, of course, don't forget they do go to bed, or did go to bed, more often than not, at sunset. And also had a rest, a siesta, in the middle of the day, very often. Even so, early rising

is very much the custom in India even today. So 'Sleeping till sunrise, adultery, irascibility'...

: What is irascibility?

S: Proneness to anger. 'Malevolence, evil companions, avarice - these six causes ruin a man.' We've dealt with adultery. Irascibility, I think, is pretty obvious. And malevolence. Evil companions. And avarice is excessive devotion to money, especially hoarding up money.

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And 'a man who has evil comrades and friends is given to evil ways, to ruin doth he fall in both worlds - here and the next.' We'll be going into this a bit more also, later on.

Tejananda: Why is it that the scriptures often refer to 'both worlds', rather than this life and the next life?

S: A difference of idiom. They might say why speak of this life and the next life? Why not of both worlds, this world and the next world? It is just the idiom that has developed in a particular language, a particular culture. Sometimes they simply say 'here' and 'there'.

And then 'Dice, women, liquor, dancing, singing, sleeping by day, sauntering at unseemly hours, evil companions, avarice, these nine causes ruin a man.' The note says, 'The Pali original has here six causes,' - there's two compound words and one double term phrase counted as units.

Padmapani: Bhante, what's the difference between avarice - hoarding up money - and accumulating wealth, which is seen as a positive virtue?

S: Well, what is the difference? What is the difference between a miser and a man who does earn and accumulate?

Padmavajra: Psychological attitude.

S: So what is that psychological attitude?

Padmavajra: A miser just accumulates money for money's sake.

S: Yes, he just enjoys the feeling of possession. He doesn't want to spend, like Scrooge in Dickens's Christmas Carol. I mean to earn and accumulate, and have money by you for investment or to spend is one thing, but to accumulate money, just to heap it up, just so you can count it all out every night ...

Padmapani: Is that a lack of investment, then?

S: Yes; a man who is avaricious has greed for money and possessions, but not with the intention of making as it were active use of them. He enjoys the sort of sterile possession of them.

Atula: Presumably in this sense the family man's always got his family in his mind; that's why he accumulates wealth. It's not only -

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S: Yes, one accumulates in order to spend, when spending is required. But the miser has no thought of spending. The miser only thinks in terms of accumulation.

Ratnapani: ... is just sensible, isn't it, sensible and necessary? The other one is greed. I think perhaps sometimes people have a bit of difficulty between their making money - about making money at all - you know, that that per se must be a bit wrong.

S: You're speaking now about people within the FWBO, presumably? Or mainly?

Ratnapani: Yeah - well, particularly quite new people. Isn't money always wrong - you know?

S: Well, money itself obviously cannot be wrong, because it is an inanimate thing, without any moral sense. It's only the human beings who use it or don't use it, in this way or that, who can be wrong or who can be right.

Padmapani: It is very funny stuff, though, isn't it, money? I mean it's inanimate in a sense but like it's a very strange phenomenon.

Ratnapani: People, perhaps, are very strange.

S: Well, money is simply the device that human beings have invented, to facilitate the exchange of goods.

Padmapani: It's somehow so different now from the idea of bartering before, you know.

S: Well, when there was barter there was no money. Bartering was a very clumsy process, so money was invented, not so very many thousands of years ago. The Spartans, for instance, wanted to discourage the use of money as much as possible. They recognized it as an unavoidable evil so, according to their law, coins were made of iron and so big and heavy it was very difficult to carry them around. (Laughter.)

Padmapani: Must have had a lot of muscle.

S: Well, no doubt it was a form of healthy exercise.

Padmapani: I suppose to show that you were wealthy you had a lot of muscle men to carry it around.

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S: But I think nowadays one doesn't hear very much of avarice. One doesn't hear much of misers. In past centuries, one might say the miser was a sort of stock figure of fun, wasn't he, like Dickens' Scrooge.

Ratnapani: There are in the Movement, though, a few notable misers; people who find it painful, almost physically painful, to part with money. (Laughter.) We've had many a giggle in the Movement about such people. You know, you go out for a meal with them by arrangement and they haven't actually brought any money with them!

S: Well, yes, perhaps it does show itself in small ways, not just in big ways.

A Voice: Meanness?

S: Yes, meanness, the unwillingness to spend. Yes, I know what you're talking about. I have encountered one or two such people who are reluctant to spend, even for themselves, not to speak of on others. This is what the Scots call 'being careful'. (Laughter.) Is there an objective difference between being careful and actually being mean, being miserly, being avaricious?

Devapriya: Is that what thrifty means, being careful?

S: Thrifty means being careful in expenditure: I mean tending to save and not to spend money unnecessarily, but not totally refusing to spend money. The classic miser totally refuses to spend money, finds the thought of spending money completely unbearable. Probably one of the most famous misers in history was Hetty Green. Have you ever heard of Hetty Green? Well, she was an American multi-millionaire in the last century, when enormous fortunes were made very quickly and easily if you happened to buy the right sort of, say, railway shares. I think she died worth well over \$30 million. But she allowed her son, apparently, to die for lack of medical treatment. She was so mean she wouldn't call a doctor in. And she herself lived on throw-away vegetables and covered herself with newspapers at night, she wouldn't buy a blanket; and so on. But she had all this money - and she knew that she had it, of course - and she was quite a sharp manipulator, and was increasing it all the time. But there's a biography of her which I read some years ago, which was truly extraordinary.

Ratnapala: What happened to all her money when she died?

S: Oh, it went to the state.

Ratnapani: She must have been up there, looking down, furious.

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Padmapani: There was a famous raja in India who was so miserly that he had jewels, a whole lot of jewels in his palace, and he used to go round after the servants had finished with their toast; he'd eat their toast, their crumbs and stuff.

S: That's true, that's the old Nizam of Hyderabad. He had this reputation of being - he was supposed to be the wealthiest man in the world, but he didn't like to spend money. I've seen photographs in an old magazine article of a very old car which had broken down in his palace courtyard, and apparently this car had brought quantities of rubies and diamonds from another of his palaces, and it happened to break down in front of this one, his main palace, in the courtyard, and he was so mean he wouldn't have it repaired or the rubies and diamonds removed. He just put a soldier there with a gun to guard it. And it had been there for years and years.

Ratnapala: Extraordinary, isn't it?

S: Yes.

Ratnapala: Paul Getty is supposed to have installed pay-phones in his mansion in case

anybody should use the phone and not pay for it.

S: So those people are so ex...

Atula: (interrupting) It's rich people, isn't it? (Laughter.)

S: Well, no, it's not only rich, it's poor people; it just shows itself on a grander scale, a more impressive scale, in the case of rich people. But, you know, you can have someone who is miserly who is not so very well off.

Atula: [I have] spent some time with, like, Americans who were particularly - they had money, quite a bit of money, certainly enough to keep them going for years and years, obviously, but they sort of live on, well, ferreting around markets, which I just can't understand. If I'd got money I'd rather get some ... Rather than ferreting around for something, I'd rather just go and buy something.

S: Perhaps they just enjoyed doing that.

Padmapani: Well, I think it's a sort of quaint English thing to do, somehow. They spend it on other things. I mean they spend it on cottages and boats and...

Atula: Well, this person didn't; he didn't spend anything.

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Ratnapani: Well, you can't generalize about all Americans..., can you?

Atula: No, well, I met two or three like it.

S: Well, all the Americans I have met seem to have been very generous. (Agreement.) But miserliness or avariciousness to the extent that we have been talking about does represent some kind of psychological attitude, a very abnormal type, even when it shows itself on a small scale; the reluctance to give, the reluctance to spend. It's the extreme opposite of dana or giving or generosity. It's the unwillingness to give even when you are able to.

So what do you think makes people unwilling to give even when they're able to, unwilling to spend even when they're able to, even to spend on themselves? What is it that makes them hang on to their money or whatever it is?

Padmapani: Fear of letting go; fear of not having anything.

A Voice: Lack of trust for other people.

A Voice: General insecurity.

Devapriya: If there is even the lack of the ability to spend it on yourself, then there's some deep ...

A Voice: Fear...

Atula: Lack of care, lack of love, lack of concern.

Padmapani: Mmm, quite interesting, isn't it?

Prasannasiddhi: It almost reflects an unwillingness to accept change and the law of impermanence, almost. They don't want to give their money away, they want to try and ...

S: Keep it for ever.

Devapriya: Fix(?) security.

S: I think security has a lot of do with it.

Devapriya: - a false sense of security?

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S: Well, a desire for security on terms [on which] security is not obtainable.

Devapriya: I think in some ways this is manifested in the Movement, and it's not just because there's been a lack of money. It's that to some degree there's this sort of attitude which stops much money being spent, so in the long term it costs more - that sort of attitude.

S: Yes, yes.

Devapriya: You think that because you're spending the very least that you possibly can now, it's cheaper.

S: Yes, you buy the cheapest possible kind of electric toaster so that it goes wrong after six months and you have to buy another one. Whereas if you spent a little more money on a slightly better kind of toaster it would have lasted you several years, perhaps. It's that sort of false economy. But sometimes you are forced to indulge in false economy because you don't have the ready money, as it were. But aside from that, if you do have the money and you indulge in false economy, that is a form of miserliness.

Padmapani: I must admit in the Suvarnabhasa community we're in - Devapriya, Mahamati and I - we borrowed \$1,000 to do the place up because we felt, in a way, to have [to pay] three pounds extra a week for furnished lodgings was a lot better than living out of a suitcase for a year and a half or two years, or for how long the property was, and I must admit it does really feel - well, what it's done for the community in sort of spatial terms and very positive clean, environment. Of course, Tejamati was with us.

Tejamati: Yes, I'm still paying for it! - much to my annoyance!

S: You mean you are paying for it literally or psychologically?

Tejamati: Oh, literally!

Devapriya: It's one of the agreements we made when we took on the debt.

S: Well, that was quite wise, no doubt.

Prasannasiddhi: Sort of trying to do things by halves. Not sort of really doing something properly and thoroughly but just trying to get by with, you know, sort of -

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S: Well, some people are mean with their energy.

Tejamati: Do misers generally want things but just don't buy them? I mean, would they go - if they see things - ?

S: I haven't personally known a miser. The only miser I have, sort of, any real knowledge about is a fictional one, and that is Scrooge. He seemed not to want anything except just his money. He certainly didn't spend on himself.

Tejamati: No, I just wondered if there were cases of people who would go out, say, shopping; they'd go out looking round the shops and seeing things but they'd just be too scared to...

S: Well, a miser wouldn't waste time like that. He wouldn't even look at things in shops! He would regard it as a very foolish activity, because if you went looking at things in the shops you might be tempted to buy something, which would be terrible!

Devapriya: You'd be wasting time when you could be making more money. (Laughter.)

S: Yes, indeed.

Ratnapani: I think up to a point there's still a sense of security. I've noticed that people will spend money on big things because that's something solid, say, a house or whatever, which is resalable and might even accumulate - well, you can hang on to that; it won't dwindle away - but would, for instance, walk from Bethnal Green to London Airport to save the tube fare, but would then go and buy a yacht - mentioning no names. You know, there's a great sense of security in a yacht, but if you lost that \$1.50 it's gone for ever and you've got nothing to show for it.

Devapriya: Except you just had to spend out \$15 on a new pair of boots.

A Voice: Did he actually do that?

Ratnapani: Who? (Loud laughter.)

A Voice: You know! We know! (Laughter.)

S: We all know people who have done quite strange sort of things, illogical, irrational things, in all sorts of ways. I'm sure practically everyone has done these sort of things at some point or another, at some time or another. (Agreement.)

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Ratnapani: It's a good measure of where you are at, so to speak: what you do with your money.

S: And your time.

Ratnapani: And your time, yes.

Padmavajra: I remember reading a line in a Tibetan text which said the Perfection of Giving was a knife to cut the knot of miserliness, constricting the heart, which seemed to sort of suggest that there was a streak of miserliness, to some degree - or at least meanness and selfishness - in everybody.

S: Well, that is the basic lobha, of which miserliness is just an extreme form. So to the extent that lobha is there in the heart, the possibility of miserliness is always present. Most people can be mean in little ways (agreement). You see the last biscuit there and you take it quickly before anybody else can take it. Well, that's the same kind of thing, really, isn't it?

Anyway, let's pass on. 'Who plays with dice and drinks intoxicants, goes to women who are dear unto others as their own lives.'

Ah, this is something which is new, isn't it, or rather a new development of an old idea? 'Goes to women who are dear unto others as their own lives.' That is to say, commits adultery with women who, after all, if one reflects upon the matter, are as dear to other people - that is to say to their own husbands - as their own lives. Nonetheless, despite this fact, you, out of your - what shall I say? - self-indulgence, blindness, you commit adultery with such women.

Padmapani: It definitely has a feeling that in factual fact women are the weaker sex in this situation, doesn't it? That women almost in a way become passive to the drunken person, and yet...

S: (interrupting) No, it's not suggested that he is actually [drunk]. This is anybody. 'He who ...' - I mean, it's not suggested that someone is guilty of all these vices simultaneously.

Atula: Oh no, it isn't.

S: You are running two things together. It's anyone who 'goes to women who are dear unto others as their own lives', whether he is a drunkard or not. In other words, you completely disregard the fact that the woman in question, whether passive or otherwise, is as dear to her husband as his own life; so what a terrible injury you are doing him. [183] What terrible suffering you are inflicting upon him. You disregard that. You are so individualistic, so selfish, so self-indulgent, you don't consider the consequences of your action for other people.

Ratnapala: If I may pick up that point that I think Padmapani was making, it does seem to put it across that the woman is sort of totally passive in the situation; there's an unmarried woman and there's a married woman, and you literally take your pick which one you go to. Do you know what I mean? That the woman doesn't actually have any say.

S: Well, the Indian view - whether it is right or not - is that women are quite inflammable. The Indian view is that - (aside) yes, write it down! (laughter) - ... inflammable. I mean the standard Indian view is that women - I mean contrary to the Victorian view - are seven times more highly sexed than men. This is the traditional Indian view. Most Indians today still believe this quite firmly. They therefore believe that women have, so to speak, to be kept

under lock and key. This is their view.

Padmapani: Seven times as sexed?

S: As highly sexed. That in the case of women, sexual desire is seven times as strong as it is in the case of men.

Voices: Ooh!

S: Now I'm not going to discuss now whether it is so or not, otherwise we'd be here all day, but I'm only trying to explain the Indian attitude. The Indian attitude is that in women sexual desire is seven times more strong than it is in men. They therefore believe that women should be married early and should be prevented from having much contact with men other than their close relations. And therefore they feel that if a woman is outside the house or she happens to be wandering by herself somewhere, and a strange man approaches her, she's quite liable to fall, so to speak. They really believe this, and their social system is based upon this assumption, or assumptions of this kind. So therefore they believe it is possible that if the roving male just happens to espy some married woman, maybe by herself, maybe picking mangoes or drawing water from the well, it is quite possible that if he approaches her she will succumb to his advances. I mean, the Indian regards this as quite possible, and clearly this is the sort of possibility that is envisaged here.

Atula: The implications are -

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S (interrupting): So therefore, whether she is actually - whether in India or elsewhere - passive in this way or not, a man in any case has this responsibility in this particular area, with regard to this question of adultery, of being aware of the damage that he is doing. It means sometimes you can catch a woman at a weak moment. I mean, leave aside this question of general passivity, but supposing she has had a quarrel with her husband, she's a bit annoyed with him and she maybe takes you into her confidence and you are very sympathetic. It's possible to take advantage of her in that sort of situation, sometimes. If you are a responsible human being, you shouldn't. Do you see what I mean? She might well regret it afterwards, but the damage will have been done.

But this is just an application, within a particular area, of the general principle that you must consider the consequences of your actions for other people. The essence of individualism is in a way not considering other people, not being aware of other people, being conscious only of your own needs, your desire, your wishes, your preferences.

You might have read Nagabodhi's contribution to the latest Newsletter on morality; he recounts this incident involving Dhardo Rimpoche. He asked Dhardo Rimpoche, it seems, whether he hoped - whether it was his idea (this is paraphrasing it) that children would leave his school with a good knowledge of Buddhism; his school in Kalimpong, that is. And Dhardo Rimpoche replied that he would be quite satisfied if children left his school realizing, or having learned, that actions did have consequences! So, you know, great importance is placed on this matter, this principle in Tibetan Buddhism - karma and the consequences of karma; the fact that actions do have consequences, you do not get away with it. And sometimes, as a result of your actions other people suffer, and you have to remember that

when embarking upon any given course of action. Don't simply consider the consequences for you; what about the consequences for other people? Don't simply consider the consequences today; what about the consequences tomorrow? And most of all you have to consider this in the field of sex, perhaps, because this is an area where you can be quite overwhelmed by passing feelings, to such an extent you completely forget what the possible consequences could be. One doesn't need to emphasize this.

So therefore the text speaks of someone going 'to women who are dear unto others as their own lives'. And if you commit adultery in this sort of way, under these sort of circumstances, you could ruin a whole family, perhaps; seriously disturb them; break up a whole family and be productive of misery for many people, just because of your unskilful action.

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And then 'He associates with the mean and not with elders'. Let's just see if I can see what that is. (Long pause while he looks it up.) Yes, 'elders' - it's the old rather than the elders - elders in the ordinary sense, elders in the sense of parents(?). One who 'associates with the mean', who associates with the low, not with those who are elders. In other words, not with those who are more experienced, who are wiser. That is the implication, because in most ancient cultures the old were wiser than the young. So 'old' tends to be associated with 'wise'; age with wisdom.

Devapriya: It seems to suggest that an older person and a genuinely more wise person isn't mean, wouldn't be mean.

S: Ah, no, mean in the sense of low, not mean in the sense of stingy. Hina is the word, as in Hinayana: 'low', inferior. You notice it isn't an opposition of young and old but of low and old? It is not [that] one should not associate with the young. One should not associate with those who are low, those who are mean, who are inferior - the suggestion is 'morally inferior'; but associate instead with elders, with those who are older than oneself and more experienced, wiser and so on.

'Who is drunk, poor, destitute, still thirsty whilst drinking'. What does this suggest, 'still thirsty whilst drinking'?

A Voice: Craving. Unsatisfiable.

S: This suggests that alcohol isn't pure and simple. ' - frequents the bar, sinks in debt as a stone in water, he swiftly brings disrepute to his family.' Not a very pretty picture. 'Who by habit sleeps by day' - by habit, you notice - and keeps late hours, is ever intoxicated, is licentious, is not fit to lead a household life.' What does that suggest, the phrase 'is not fit to lead a household life'?

A Voice: Is not fit to take responsibility for other people.

S: Yes, but in a more general way?

Ratnapani: Well, that it's no simple thing, to be fit. It is something worth while and something which isn't just ordinary and natural, but, well...

S: Yes. It's as though you are not following a household life just because you are not a monk. I mean there are certain qualities that are required, even certain qualifications to lead a household life. Do you see what I mean?

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Voices: Yes.

S: And among them, surely, yes, it's a sense of responsibility because you would be responsible for other people.

Prasannasiddhi: This gives a suggestion of the skilful household life and the unskilful household life.

S: Yes. But it's almost as though the text would say that the unskilful household life is not a real household life at all, not in any sort of genuinely civilized way.

'Who says it is too hot, too cold, too late, and leaves things undone, the opportunities for good go past such men.

'But he who does not regard cold or heat any more than a blade of grass and who does his duties manfully does not fall away from things.'

So in this way the Buddha seems to recapitulate in verse what he has already said in a more, in a sense, systematic way in prose. It could be, of course, that the editor of the Sutta used material produced by the Buddha at different times, so to speak, together with this. It's not possible for us to know. But the general picture which emerges is clear enough. It's the way in which the noble disciple, the ariya savaka, covers the six quarters. First of all he has to eradicate four vices in conduct, then commit no evil action in four ways, and then he has to not pursue the six channels of dissipating wealth, which seems to be identical with the six evil consequences.

Devapriya: One does get a picture, Bhante, at the end of it, you know, this text, that in order for the Dharma to be disseminated, the whole situation, in the whole conditions of society, the household life is a very regular affair and quite, in a way, straight sort of affair: it's quite sort of dutiful, and it's very organized. You do get that, don't you? You keep regular hours...

S: Hard work, sense of responsibility.

Devapriya: It's almost as if one begins to get the feeling that, in order for the Dharma to permeate into the household life it has to be structured, in order for it to work.

S: It's not just a question of, you know, father doing a bit of meditation every day and forgetting about everything else. The whole routine, almost, of family life, domestic life, needs to be very carefully considered, very carefully regulated.

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A Voice: The thing is we revert to chaos very quickly. It really is like a constant effort to keep things on one level, let alone move up to another one. You backslide for a short time and revert to total chaos.

S: Well, it's much the same in the community - maybe less dramatic inasmuch as where there are children around, perhaps, chaos can come a bit more quickly. But sometimes the behaviour even of adults can be quite infantile. I think chaos does come about quite quickly even in communities, sometimes.

A Voice: This brings into mind any situation where you have a mutual responsibility. If one person, or a couple of people, or if one part of that system starts to fall down, then the whole system could fall down.

S: In a spiritual community, you know, unlike in a family, the responsibility is mutual. Everybody has a share of the responsibility. But in the case of a family where there are young children, the same responsibility is not expected of the children. So in a way discipline has to be enforced or gently inculcated.

Ratnapala: I would go so far as to say that my children, although they are in their early teens now, are more responsible than many adults I've seen in the Movement, in terms of their own cleanliness, their own tidiness and their own taking responsibility in the house.

S: But that's because they've been trained.

Ratnapala: Yes.

S: They weren't like that to begin with, I suppose?

Ratnapala: Oh, no.

Padmavajra: It's amazing the number of people whom you encounter who don't actually know how to look after themselves in quite a basic way. I mean just personal cleanliness and looking after their rooms, and things like that.

S: Or perhaps it's a question of laziness. What I mean is, it's not that they don't know. They do know. But some other factor seems to get in the way and prevent them acting upon their knowledge.

Anyway, time for tea.

(TEA BREAK)

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Tape 8, Side B

S: The Buddha is now taking up the subject of friendship, or rather of a friend. First of all the bad friend, so to speak, the false friend - and the other the true friend.

"These four, young householder, should be understood as foes in the guise of friends: (1) he who appropriates a friend's possessions, (2) he who renders lip-service, (3) he who flatters, 4) he who brings ruin."

S: 'He who appropriates a friend's possessions' - what is meant by that? Sharing possessions

is normally part of friendship. How does that differ from just appropriating the possessions of someone whom you call a friend?

Ratnapala: The friend gives nothing.

S: Yes, it is one-sided. You just exploit. This seems pretty obvious, but is it in fact so obvious?

Atula: In what way does one do that?

S: Well, you could borrow money, for one thing, take money. But that is not saying you couldn't do that as a real friend, but the foe in the guise of a friend, in that pretty strong expression, is one who takes without giving, who in fact has, perhaps, no intention of giving.

Atula: Who exploits the friend rather than...

S: Who exploits. But don't you think that sort of attitude, that sort of selfishness, can creep into a relationship of friendliness or be present to some extent, some degree?

Ratnapani: Perhaps more psychologically than in monetary terms.

S: Yes. Well, clearly as between friends there can't be any sort of book-keeping, with 'How much has he given me? How much have I given him? Do they balance?' There can't be that. So what should really be the attitude?

Padmavajra: One of just giving.

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S: Just one of giving.

Padmavajra: You just give. You don't actually think in terms of what you get back. You don't expect anything.

S: Well, in a sense you don't. In a sense, perhaps, you do.

A Voice: What do you mean by that?

S: Well, you expect your friend to be generous, don't you? But not that you are looking for him to give you something. But, yes, in a general way you expect him to be generous.

Ratnapani: You are disappointed if he's not.

S: You are disappointed if he's not.

Ratnapani: It's lovely going out with someone, you get your wallet out every time and never get a chance to pay. It's a lovely feeling, apart from saving a lot of money. (Laughter.) It's a really good feeling when you just, sort of, you can't get the pound note across the table before he's beaten you to it.

Padmapani: It does set up a very positive sort of attitude, doesn't it? If you give and the other person wants to give; it actually sets the ball rolling completely the other way, just quickly, like...

S: Yes, and not just with regard to material things.

Padmapani: It's very easy psychologically how it can start up. You only need, like, two players in a group. One person - the other does it. It really is very infectious how it gets to the other people...

Devapriya: You've got an incredible amount of mistrust to overcome, I think, in larger groups.

S: In what sort of way? You're thinking of communities?

Devapriya: Yes - where somehow, as the size gets bigger, the mutual responsibility gets smaller, because then...

S: Well, this raises the question to what extent friendship is possible among a number of people. Aristotle raises the question of how many close friends you can have. He doesn't seem to think you can have more than four or five at one time. Can you really share your life with a hundred people? No, you can't; or even a dozen? Probably not, that [190] would be difficult. With four or five, yes, you probably could. With one you certainly could. With two you certainly could. So it means that the number of people among whom there can be a situation or relationship of complete mutuality and sharing is probably quite limited.

Padmapani: Even in the context of the Sangha, even in the context of the FWBO?

S: Even in the context of the Sangha, yes. I mean in the context of the Sangha you'd be able to share, if you got close enough to share, but you can't get close, really, in practice, say, to a hundred people at the same time. You can't live with a hundred people, literally. It may be staying under the same roof as a hundred people but you are only living with them as it were, quite formally. You are not interacting with them on a daily basis, but you are ready to.

Ratnapani: Right. When you come across any one of them in the Sangha, that generosity should be there. I looked through my wardrobe the other day, shirts and things, and half of them were given to me by different Order Members and Mitras at different times over the last few years: and my bookshelves are pretty similar. You know, all the different people have just handed, just given me, things at odd moments. Or I've borrowed it and they've said, 'Well, please keep it. It suits you.'

Padmapani: It is a really nice thing to get gifts, isn't it? It's a nice thing to give gifts. (Agreement.)

S: Anybody got a birthday this week? No? Oh dear.

So to appreciate a friend's possessions and not sharing your own is selfish and one-sided, lacking in mutuality, and someone who regularly does that is, in fact a foe in the guise of a friend.

I think we have discussed this whole question of sharing on a number of occasions on a similar note, so I think we need not go into it very much today.

Let's go on to number two, 'he who renders lip service'. We all know what lip service is, don't we? One who just professes, who calls himself your friend or you his friend, but doesn't in fact live up to it. In fact we use the word 'friend' quite loosely, don't we? - 'Oh, he's a friend of mine' - when we perhaps should use the more old-fashioned word 'an acquaintance'. In India they tend to do this quite a lot. 'Oh, he's a friend of mine' - maybe he met him only yesterday for the first time. 'Oh, I've got a friend in such-and-such a place, he'll help you' - maybe someone that his brother met once at college or something like that.

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So this sort of lip service is a form of untruthfulness. You could say there are two forms of untruthfulness: one when your words don't fit the situation, or your words don't go with your actions; and secondly when your actions don't go with your words, and you don't live up to your words.

Ratnapala: It could even be deceit, couldn't it? If you're paying lip service in order to extract some ...

S: Yes, yes.

Ratnapani: I think there is another case, though, of lip service, when people have never experienced friendship and they'd like to feel they were a friend and they talk about it but they haven't actually got it in them yet, or they haven't actually established any friendship with anyone yet, and...

S: Well, no, it's not so much a lip service, it's more talking about something that they have no experience of, in the same way that people talk about Nirvana; they are not paying lip service to the ideal of Nirvana.

Ratnapani: No, I mean, someone might think they were a good friend with somebody else and tell them what a good friend they were, but actually they don't know that they're not.

S: Well, no doubt they will find out sooner or later. You need the ability to discriminate, to be able to know when someone who professes to be a friend is a friend, is able to be a friend - whether he has those qualities, whether he has that strength of character, even. It's not easy to be a friend. Could he stand by you in an emergency? Would he? Would you like to be with him if you happened to get into a tight spot? Would you like to have him with you?

Ratnapani: I was once - well, I might as well blow my own trumpet - someone paid me a fantastic compliment: he said that of the people he knew (this was several years ago) whom he'd like to go rock-climbing with, to be at the other end of a rope with, he said I was one of the few people he would trust to be on the other end. Which I thought was a fantastic compliment.

S: Well, it's an existential situation, to a certain extent. I'm sure you can think of quite a lot of people whom you wouldn't like to be on the other end of a rope. (Agreement.)

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Padmapani: It's interesting because we often think in terms of friendship, you know, as something that would just occur between two people, but what seems to be the gist of this is that one has to qualify to be a friend, one has to be capable, one has to have the capacity of being a friend, it isn't something that just comes about.

S: Just because you have knocked around a bit together or you see one another frequently. I think people in the Movement, at least, are beginning to realize, or beginning to have some glimmering of apprehension of, the fact that friendships are made. They don't happen. They are made only when you work upon them.

So 'he who renders lip service' is a foe in the guise of a friend, and similarly 'he who flatters'. Flattery can be subtle and it can be gross - one who flatters, one who simply flatters, is not a friend. In fact he's a foe in the guise of a friend. What do you understand by flattery?

Dhammarati: It's a compliment that is not actually true.

S: Not simply not true but not sincerely intended. Someone may mistakenly think that you have such-and-such a quality; well, that is not flattery. They then ascribe that quality to you or praise you on account of that quality. But if insincerely they ascribe certain qualities to you, just for the sake of pleasing you, for their own selfish purposes, [that's flattery].

Dhammarati: Does that ...the opposite of fierce friendship?

S: Yes, indeed. Do you think flattery is very prominent?

Padmavajra: In the Movement, or - ?

S: Well, nowadays, in social life. Even within the Friends, if you like.

Atula: It extends [to] when you, perhaps, know the truth about something and you don't say, you keep something back; that's flattery in the sense that you're not showing someone the real situation between you and between them and others. You're giving someone a false sense of themselves.

S: But flattery is usually understood to mean to actually express your appreciation, a compliment which isn't sincerely meant. Flattery is by definition verbal. No doubt, there are other non-verbal equivalents, but flattery itself is verbal. I suppose it often occurs within the so-called romantic relationship, where an incredible amount of flattery goes on.

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Ratnapani: But isn't that pathetically sincere, in a way?

S: I think not always. I think, very often, in a little corner of your heart, at least, you know that you are just lying your head off! (Laughter.)

Ratnapani: It's so long ago that I've forgotten.

S: Well, it's pretty long ago in my case too!

Ratnapani: But you observed very carefully!

S: I observed very carefully... One encounters examples in literature.

Padmapani: Do you reckon it is quite a positive response in a person [that] if one is flattered one feels almost embarrassed?

S: No, I don't think embarrassment is very positive. If someone is flattering you and you know it is flattery, if anything I think you should be annoyed. Embarrassment suggests some sort of ambiguity or ambivalence in your response. You would like to think it was true, or you half think it is true, or you are pleased to hear it even though you know it is not true.
(Laughter.)

Devapriya: Or it could even be true but the reason somebody is putting it forward is - Would that still be flattery?

S: No, that wouldn't be flattery. Flattery is - if you want a definition - I suppose it is the ascription of positive qualities which the person to whom they are being ascribed does not actually possess, and it's also ascribing them to him or her insincerely, even though you don't really think that they possess those qualities. As in, for instance, times when people used to flatter kings and other such powerful people as being the embodiment of all the virtues, when they knew they weren't. They just had to please them, placate them.

Prasannasiddhi: Uriah Heep.

S: Yes.

Dhammarati: Is it done more to manipulate them [than to] placate them?

S: It is. Flattery is a means of manipulation, especially when you are dealing with very powerful people, maybe people who are much more powerful than you; and, of course, when you are dealing, perhaps, with women. You flatter to manipulate, to get your own ends.

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Devapriya: It's like the other side, people try and get you to do something either through coercion or through flattery.

S: Yes, though maybe there are other words here which are more appropriate. Not so much flattering as...

Devapriya: Back-slapping!

Padmavajra: Buttering up.

S: Buttering up, yes.

Ratnapani: What you are saying is perhaps true, but you're saying it [to get] what you want.

S: So it is no sign of a friend to flatter; in fact one who flatters, far from being a friend, is a

foe in the guise of a friend. If someone flatters you he prevents you knowing the truth about yourself. Perhaps he reinforces your illusions about yourself, even your delusions, reinforces your false self-image. Well, he is certainly no friend. This is why it is said - I used to quote this little saying years ago, I haven't quoted it for a long time - 'If you want to do someone real harm fall in love with them.' Because one of the things you will then do, probably, is to flatter them and that will certainly do them harm.

No doubt one can exempt from the charge of flattery things like poetic licence. If you say 'your eyes are as blue as the sky' - well, that's not meant to be a literal statement. One doesn't have eyes that are literally as blue as the sky. You're not necessarily guilty of flattery by only a slight poetic exaggeration which could perhaps be forgiven. (Laughter.)

Padmapani: It's a quite interesting area, isn't it? It is a form of flattery, though, isn't it, in a way? In a way it can be even more, er...

S: Well, you might actually perceive that person's eyes as being as blue as the sky. Poetry should be understood as poetry, not as a literally true, as it were scientific, statement. If you take it in that way, poetry perhaps can become flattery.

Padmapani: It's all right if a poet stays a poet.

Prasannasiddhi: It's often instructive. There seems to be quite a lot of positive emotion tied up with falling in love. People fall in love, there is a lot of quite strong, in a sense, positive emotion but it comes out quite strongly in such things as falling in love, but most people don't really experience such things outside that. It seems a bit sort of -

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S: A waste of good positive emotions.

Prasannasiddhi: It seems a pity that you couldn't establish that strength of emotion in some other way.

S: Well, some people do experience it in another way. Some people experience that sort of positive emotion in connection with nature, or even in connection with works of art or poetry.

Prasannasiddhi: It seems that, falling in love, you are deluded, your devotion is strong but the object is something, like a delusion associated with the object.

S: Well, it's a form of viparyasa.

Prasannasiddhi: Viparyasa?

S: There are four viparyasas: that is to say when you see permanence in that which is not permanent, and so on. So in the same way when you see, say, beauty in that which is not beautiful, so to speak. I mean there's nothing wrong with your feeling, nothing wrong with what you are looking for but you are, as it were, locating it in the wrong place. Or you are looking for it in the wrong place, in the wrong sort of situation.

Padmavajra: Is that viparyasa translated as perversion?

S: Yes, or topsy-turvynesses, upside-down views.

Ratnapala: Did you say there were four, Bhante?

S: Four.

Ratnapala: Would you mind just saying what they are?

S: Well, I dealt with these in *The Three Jewels*. Seeing permanence in that which is impermanent; seeing pleasure in that which is painful; seeing self in that which is devoid of self; and seeing beauty in that which is devoid of beauty. So there is nothing wrong, so to speak, in your search for beauty, your feeling for beauty (here the word is *subha*, which means purity as well as beauty, or you could say pure beauty), but one must locate it in the right place, so to speak.

Devapriya: They are topsy-turvy views of the four *lakṣaṇas*.

S: Mm? Ah, the first three of them correspond with the three [196] *lakṣaṇas*. I think the *viparyāsa*s are more profound in a way, because the three *lakṣaṇas* merely point out that conditioned existence has certain characteristics, or does not have certain other characteristics, but the four *viparyāsa*s point out that those characteristics which are not to be found in the conditioned are to be found in the Unconditioned and therefore are to be looked for there rather than in the conditioned.

So it's as though, yes, there is a great deal of positivity in people, but it often gets misdirected. And perhaps it gets misdirected partly because we don't have the positive social institutions which would help us to direct it positively.

One might even go so far as to say - I'm sure to be misquoted here, but I'll risk it - there's nothing wrong with falling in love, but (laughter) you must be careful what you fall in love with. Fall in love with Blake, by all means - in other words, the words of Blake. Fall in love with Goethe. Even fall in love with the Venus de Milo if you like. Fall in love with philosophy. Philosophy, the word itself, is love of wisdom. It is not just a tepid liking for wisdom. It's a sort of falling in love with wisdom, one could say. That's how Plato seems to have considered it.

So perhaps we ought to be a little careful not to adopt too negative [an attitude] and say, well, encourage people to fall in love - but encourage them to fall in love with the right sort of things, or even the right sort of people. Fall in love with spiritual friends. Fall in love with the Buddha and the Bodhisattvas. Fall in love with your *yidam*.

Ratnapani: I nearly said 'anything except women', but it's not quite that...

S: We're trying to keep it positive, Ratnapani - or trying to keep the mode of expression positive!

Ratnapani: I was reading a thing yesterday about the word 'eros' and the very many meanings that has. I mean we've got 'erotic' from it, which is only one of the very least of its uses. It's associated with poetry and with beauty and with truth and all the rest of it, but I think

connoting the same intensity as there would be with the erotic.

S: Yes, this is what one has in mind when one speaks of, say, falling in love with Blake or falling in love with philosophy. You need to bring to those things the same kind of emotional intensity and rapture, even. I think this is one of the great, in a way, mistakes of modern culture, if you can call it culture, that one associates emotional intensity almost exclusively with the romantic relationship between the sexes; which is expecting perhaps rather too much from that sort of situation. I mean don't throw away the baby with the bath-water, so to speak. Be very wary [197] about entering into relationships or falling in love with women, but don't necessarily eschew falling in love in a more general sort of way, falling in love with more worthy objects, so to speak. Not that that is very easy, especially in our culture nowadays - it's not encouraged.

Padmapani: Fall in love with life?

S: Some people say that they are in love with life.

Padmapani: That's very general.

S: Perhaps it suggests that they were experiencing a rapturous state from moment to moment, or were never frustrated.

Ratnapani: One of the negative aspects of being in love with a person is the exclusivity of it all. I was just checking over something vaguely about being really engaged with, or enthusiastic [about], or even in love with a particular topic or aspect of one's life or work or whatever: I've noticed again an exclusivity in that, like if I'm interested in a particular course of reading - but not meditating

S: But it seems that, yes, intensity seems to require exclusivity, at least for a time. Supposing you fall in love with Blake. You won't want to read Wordsworth, you won't want to read Shakespeare. You will only want to read Blake. So supposing you have a very intense, say, relationship of kalyana mitrata; you might well want to concentrate on that for a while. You might want to be exclusive for a while. I think that sort of possibility has to be recognized.

Ratnapani: Recently I had two, if you like loves - or I hope they are getting somewhere towards that state - which is work and reading a particular thing. So meditations, Pujas, other things, just didn't seem to register any more, they didn't seem important. Presumably that's...

S: That is something we have discussed generally, that people's interests seem to go in phases, and you can't keep up always a balanced distribution of interests, with each day an hour for meditation, an hour for study, an hour for communication, an hour for washing your clothes, etc. You can't quite do that. There are occasions when you want to spend all your time meditating for a few weeks, all your time reading, all your time communicating. So if you want to develop any degree of intensity, I think it needs a corresponding degree of exclusivity, whatever the interest or whatever the pursuit. If you are even, say, writing poetry, how can you get up the necessary degree of intensity if after half an hour you've got to break off and do something else? Or even if you are reading it?

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Padmapani: That's been a difficulty in our community, because we've had quite strong disagreements on fundamental issues between work and, say, meditation. Both points seem to be valid, but the community life seems to have suffered.

S: Well, one's total pattern, as I say, should include meditation, study, communication; but how big that pattern is - the question is you can have your pattern on a small scale, that is to say you have a little bit of everything every day, or you can have your pattern on a large scale, you have quite a lot of everything, say, every few months, or every year. Supposing you've got four main interests. You can either devote a little time to each of those interests each day or you can devote three months to one interest, then three months to another, then three months to another. But if there are two people whose patterns are of different sizes, to so speak - one fulfils his particular pattern each day and every day, another fulfils it in the course of a year, on a larger scale - it is difficult for them to live together in the same community, without a great deal of mutual forbearance and understanding.

Also there has to be the confidence that it is basically the same pattern, even though in the case of one person it is a small-scale pattern which he does every day and in the case of the other person it's a large-scale pattern repeated in its entirety only perhaps once a year. But in the end you're covering the same ground in much the same way.

Dhammarati: Do your interests dictate the size of your pattern, or can you actually work your pattern so that you have the optimum ... ?

S: Well, the intensity of the interest. If you want to go all out for Blake, say, for a few months, well, that rather puts the meditation in the shade for the time being. But later on you may feel like devoting yourself, with the same degree of intensity, to meditation for a while. Some people function best like that, it would seem.

Padmapani: What makes it even more difficult is the fact that some of the people you live with you would like to have stronger contact with as friends. But the patterns are different because you respect that individual quality.

S: Well, then you have to decide where your priorities lie. I mean, if you both feel that communication is the main priority, you have to adjust other things. You can't give top priority to more than one thing at a time, including communication. You have to accept that.

Ratnapani: I would personally be inclined to think that in the matter of, say, a course of study and meditation, you owe it to yourself and the [199] community you live in to keep the meditation at least ticking over; and that's what I try to do, although I've felt no real enthusiasm for doing so. But would you say that that would be generally true?

S: Well, if you were to live together in a community with other people in any meaningful way there must be at least some things that you do together, sometimes.

Ratnapani: That could be eating a meal, though.

S: Eating a meal. Eating is one of them, and meditation and Puja and study are others.

Ratnapani: I was just thinking in terms of whatever you are doing, you are probably going to

be doing it a bit better and a bit more clearly if you are keeping up a practice, even if it is only a tick-over meditation practice. Do you feel that that is true?

S: I wouldn't say that you would necessarily be, to use the same example, more into Blake if you kept up your daily meditation practice. Not necessarily. You might be, but on the other hand I think you might not.

Dhammarati: It brings up this whole issue of multiplicity of demands that are being laid on you ...

S: The demands you make on yourself. (Agreement.) I think sooner or later you have to choose. I think it's a weakness not to choose. I would even go so far as to say that it is a sign of a lack of maturity that you can't choose. You don't actually accept the fact that you can't do everything. You can't pursue everything intensively at more or less the same time, but you have to neglect certain other things - as regards this life at least - and concentrate on certain other things. You are not going to be the world's greatest tennis player and the world's greatest poet in one and the same lifetime. Not to speak of the world's greatest lover. Well, some people do harbour that ambition, I believe!

Padmapani: Do you have any sort of guidelines for patterns, Bhante? I mean you were talking about just a year. Could it not be longer patterns? I mean you mentioned a year, but presumably...

S: In theory, you could plan your life out for the next ten years. Some people profess to plan out future lives as well. (Laughter.) But you have to be sure you've got the time left, and you can't be all that sure; not absolutely. I would say, perhaps, a year is probably the most that one could in the Friends ... Or if you are entering into a college course, maybe a couple of years.

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Prasannasiddhi: Conze seems to have devoted his life, well, thirty years or something, to translating the Perfection of Wisdom Sutras. He must have realized pretty quickly into that that it would be...

S: Well, that is what he wanted to do.

Prasannasiddhi: - that it would take him thirty years and it would have to be that and...

S: Well, he would need to know Sanskrit and Tibetan and a bit of Chinese.

Devapriya: I think the longer your goals, or your patterns, are, the more mature and integrated you've got to be, otherwise you will set yourself five years and after two you will have changed your mind. I think - I don't know - to some degree that's a measure of maturity: how long somebody actually can follow it through.

Padmapani: But it also means you've got to know your own strength, because you come up against things that you hadn't thought of at the time. Which is maybe a sense of maturity but also you have got to have the strength to see them through. Otherwise you are cracking up.

Prasannasiddhi: What about the subject of meditation? I mean I have heard it said that you

should keep up a regular practice every day, but on the other hand some of the things you have just mentioned would tend to point towards, if you are devoting three or four hours to something else ...

S: Well, I think what Ratnapani says is correct - that if one is in a community one needs to keep up at least a minimum of practice. Did you say minimum?

Ratnapani: Yes, something like that. I was thinking also, I mentioned the point about your own mental states which ... if you're living in a community, for the sake of the community. If you are sitting up late every night and never getting up in the morning, that can have a depressing effect on the rest of the community because they don't understand. They might be tolerant, but if they are Mitras and you are an Order Member, they might think, what the hell? What goes on round here? What is all this? So you've got a responsibility to them as well.

S: If it is a community of Order Members who thoroughly understand one another, it might be a somewhat different situation. (Agreement.)

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Padmapani: But don't you think, say, in meditation `proper', you've got to actually want to do the meditation, otherwise you're going to have thoughts arising which are actually stopping you getting into it?

S: You've got to want, but there are degrees of wanting. I mean it is the well-known experience of quite a lot of people that they've not felt at all like meditating, but once they have actually sat down and started they have quite a good meditation.

Atula: Like if you are following a course through, there is that intensity that you can then take into the practice of meditation... I think they would [not] then necessarily militate against each other.

Devapriya: I think of Subhuti at Sukhavati planning out the days, the weeks, the months, projects, when he did actually sit.

Atula: I think there's a lot of other factors involved there - the pressure of other people ...

Padmavajra: Sometimes you can be in a community where you are doing a number of different things, quite exclusive of one another, but - I'm just thinking about my own case - but I feel that, in a way, all the activities are for the community, if you like; for getting people ordained. I was just thinking about that and I think in that situation you have to choose to put yourself into that situation with that in mind. And it might be that you would have to do several things, perhaps, not as well as you would like.

S: Clearly, if you wanted to get into intensive meditation you wouldn't stay in that situation. You'd go off to Vajraloka for a while. That might apply to certain other activities that you wanted to pursue in a more intensive way. For instance, if you go to college to study, you might not consider that justified you remaining in the community. [202] Anyway, we've got a long way from flattery, haven't we?

Devapriya: Could I just ask something on this theme? It's a sort of proposition that I'm

working with at the moment, and that is that certain people I know that are in exclusive sexual relationships with women I find after a certain point I can't get closer to them. It feels as if there's a part of them which isn't available, in a way. It just seems that there is an intensity of relationship there, there is naturally an exclusiveness, and...

S: Well, could one distinguish, possibly - and here I'm only thinking aloud - a skilful exclusiveness from an unskilful exclusiveness - a neurotic exclusiveness from a non-neurotic exclusiveness?

Tape 9, Side A

Padmavajra: ... in a way we've got to define a skilful exclusivity because there could be room for rationalization.

S: Yes, because it wouldn't perhaps be very helpful if, say, an Order Member were to spend say ten minutes with say ten different Mitras every day or every week. They might be better occupied spending the whole of that time with one of them, or at the most two. Do you see what I mean? But, getting away from the actual question that Devapriya asked - in other words, by discussing it in terms of kalyana mitrata - we are making things a bit easier for ourselves, but in the case of, say - you mentioned especially sexual relationships between men and women - I think usually exclusiveness does prevail. So to what extent is that neurotic, or to what extent is it non-neurotic? Is it necessarily neurotic?

: No.

S: Is it usually neurotic? Or can it easily become neurotic?

Ratnapani: If it's just the sexual aspect which is exclusive, then that's probably quite healthy. I mean, [then] people aren't in and out of bed with everybody, which is usually neurotic. It's when it's emotionally exclusive, isn't it, communicatively exclusive, that you come up against something neurotic, because the sum of the parts is less than one, sort of thing. One and one makes about half (laughter) when you're talking to them.

S: Yes, when you do get together with them, [and] you don't have the whole person there to talk to, then one might say that they were into a neurotic sexual relationship. It's not simply the fact that they have sex exclusively with one person that makes the relationship exclusive in the [203] neurotic sense. It's almost that they have no time for anybody else and don't want to have time for anybody else, or even are incapable of communicating with anybody else, to any extent.

Padmavajra: I suppose, as well, if that exclusivity reinforces somebody's unwillingness to develop, to change, it reinforces their ego.

S: In some ways the most exclusive of emotional relationships is that between mother and child, especially mother and baby, and no doubt the relationship between man and woman sometimes approximates to that; becomes one of infantile emotional dependence.

Devapriya: But how could you tackle that if you felt that was what was happening?

S: I think it's very difficult. I think an exclusive sexual-cum-romantic, whatever you like to call it, relationship between a man and a woman in that way is very difficult to, as it were, break into. I think it's almost impossible while it's going on. I think prevention here is better than cure. Do you see what I mean? It can be someone who was perhaps your best friend; if he falls in love and gets involved in that way you're not really his best friend any longer, nor is he yours. He hasn't got time for you.

Devapriya: I'm just thinking in terms of developing spiritual friendship, a feeling of a positive team working together, and you come up - well, I feel I come up - against 'I won't play any more,' as it were.

S: Yes. I think it is very difficult to have a decent communication with someone who is involved in a relationship in this way, difficult to work with them perhaps - not just with someone who is into a sexual exclusive relationship, but whose whole attitude is one of exclusiveness - because of this.

Atula: Yes, because you get cliques and groups who exclude other people.

S: Well, that's a different thing, a clique or a group. This is very much more virulent. You could even say that someone who is involved in an exclusive relationship of this unskilful neurotic sort is not capable of giving or receiving kalyana mitrata, and this has quite important practical consequences in the Friends. I mean can you take on someone as a Mitra if you're heavily involved in a relationship in this way? Because you won't give first place to your Mitra, you'll give first place to your girl friend or boy friend. So this is quite a serious practical matter.

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Ratnapani: Subsidiary to that, I've noticed this general thing of - it's almost an aesthetic matter. I remember seeing someone who'd been leading a celebration day, quite a strong group day celebration, Puja, ending at 10 o'clock; and then he went off with his arm round his girl friend. I couldn't believe it, frankly. I wondered where on earth he was at, where he'd been at during the day if this was the first thing he did after this big elaborate Puja, big gathering of people and so on. You'd expect a very different atmosphere, a very different feeling. That sort of thing couldn't have a good effect on anybody.

S: Yes, indeed. It would almost suggest you hadn't taken the whole thing seriously, done it almost with your tongue in your cheek.

Ratnapani: Very much so, very much.

: A very poor show.

S: I must say, in this particular area I find, with some feelings of alarm almost, I find myself bound for a head-on collision with many of the most cherished ideals of our modern civilization and culture - some of which seem to be shared to some extent even by people within the Friends; so I really wonder sometimes what is going to happen.

Dhammarati: Could you elaborate on that?

S: I don't know whether any further elaboration is really called for, but [it is] challenging, as it were, of the idealization of the male-female romantic relationship as being almost the centre of things, the centre of existence almost, or the most important thing in life. This is how a lot of people regard it. A lot of our best poetry celebrates it.

Dhammarati: Do you think it's possible to have a relationship without it becoming the centre of your life? I mean, is it possible to...

S: Oh yes, it certainly is possible. It is possible, yes. But then it's not a relationship in this sense. I mean, the `ideal' is that the relationship should be at the centre of your life. So it's that ideal, that pseudo-ideal, that I see myself coming into head-on collision with. I mean there will be relationships, there will be sexual relationships, sexual-cum-romantic relationships, for most people; but, from a spiritual point of view - spirituality as understood by Buddhism - they must be increasingly peripheral; not at the centre of your life, not in the very centre of your mandala, influencing everything that you do. It's rather as though, to continue the discussion in terms we were using before, don't put what you fall in love with at the centre of your mandala. Consider carefully [205] what you should put at the centre of your mandala and then fall in love with that. (Laughter.) Anyway, the Buddha's got quite a lot to say about the `one who is to be understood as a foe in the guise of a friend'. Can we read the next four characteristics of such a person?

(1) In four ways, young householder, should one who appropriates be understood as a foe in the guise of a friend:

- (i) he appropriates his friend's wealth,
- (ii) he gives little and asks much,
- (iii) he does his duty out of fear,
- (iv) he associates for his own advantage.

S: These are all an elaboration of `(1) he who appropriates a friend's possessions.' So first of all `he appropriates'. Then `he gives little and asks much.' If he gives anything he gives little and expects a lot in return. `He does his duty out of fear,' `he associates for his own advantage.' Anything needing comment or discussion here?

Dhammarati: That point about doing his duty out of fear.

S: What sort of fear do you think is meant here?

Padmavajra: Fear of rejection.

S: Fear of rejection, and feeling that the advantageous association may be cut off. I mean he's got to be a friend to some extent even just to retain your friendship, which is advantageous to him.

Ratnapala: There's often an association of duty with fear.

S: Yes. Yes. All right; then (2) is elaborated, that is to say the rendering of lip-service. Shall we go on to that? I think the previous section is quite clear.

(2) In four ways, young householder, should one who renders lip-service be understood as a foe in the guise of a friend:

- (i) he makes friendly profession as regards the past,
- (ii) he makes friendly profession as regards the future,
- (iii) he tries to gain your favour by empty words,
- (iv) when opportunity for service has arisen, he expresses his inability.

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S: So 'he makes friendly profession as regards the past' - he says, 'Oh, I've done this for you. I've done that for you. I was a good friend on that occasion. I was a good friend on such other occasion.' And then, 'he makes friendly profession as regards the future.' 'Oh, I'm going to do all sorts of things for you. I'm going to give you a lot of money. I'm really going to help you next week.' But it's always the past or the future, never the present. 'He tries to gain your favour by empty words.' Well, maybe here flattery comes in, though that's separately enumerated. And 'when opportunity for service has arisen he expresses his inability.' When there's an opportunity to help you right here and now in the present, he makes some excuse. He says he is unable to. He's too busy or he hasn't got time or he's tired or hasn't got any money, or whatever it may be. But this just about sums it up - the rendering of lip-service. Does one actually find people behaving in this sort of way? (Murmurs of agreement.) For instance?

Ratnapani: Well, not calculatingly but just sort of...

S: Yes, out of a general lack of genuine positive friendly feeling and real friendship. All right, what about 3) flattery?

(3) In four ways, young householder, should one who flatters be understood as a foe in the guise of a friend:

- (i) he approves of his friend's evil deeds,
- (ii) he disapproves of his friend's good deeds,
- (iii) he praises him in his presence,
- (iv) he speaks ill of him in his absence.'

S: That also just about sums it up. 'He approves of his friend's evil deeds.' You couldn't be more of an enemy than that. You couldn't be less of a friend than that. If someone whom you profess to regard as your friend does commit an evil deed you approve of it instead of disapproving of it. What could be less friendly than that? And not only that, you disapprove of his good deeds, even.

Dhammarati: How did this come about? I don't quite understand how a flatterer disapproves of a friend's good deeds.

S: Well, supposing he's meditating regularly and someone says, 'Oh, you don't need to meditate, you're such a positive person. You don't need to spend time in that way, that's only for relatively undeveloped people, you've gone far beyond that.' (Laughter.) So in that way he [207] disapproves of his friend's good deeds in a flattering sort of way. Many advertisements by pseudo-spiritual groups implicitly flatter you in this way. When they advertise, for instance, as even some Tibetan Buddhist groups do, higher Tantric initiations and things like that - well, that's flattering you that you're ready for all those sort of things, that you've

reached quite a high stage of spiritual development. So in approving of a friend's evil deeds you find an absence of 'fierce friendship', as one might say. And 'he praises him in his presence' and 'speaks ill of him in his absence.' That's quite a despicable thing to do, but it is part of flattery. Sometimes I think if you flatter someone in his presence you're almost bound to speak ill of him in his absence, to redress the balance, because perhaps you resent having, so to speak, to flatter him in that way. So you'll make up for it by speaking ill of him behind his back. Human nature can, I'm afraid, be quite unpleasant, can't it?

Devapriya: Politicians seem to be into that sort of game quite a lot. I've seen somebody answer the telephone and be very positive and full of it all on the telephone, and then put their hand over the [mouthpiece] as if...

S: Well, I think people do that in social life, too, don't they? It's not only the politicians.

Devapriya: Where would the place of formality come?

S: I think formality is not insincerity. Well, give an example of formality.

Devapriya: Well, you shake hands with someone when you meet them and - sort of formal manners - and you welcome them in, and all the time you might be resenting having to go through the motions.

S: Well, I think you shouldn't ... very much of that sort of thing. If they come to your house, presumably you've invited them, so why should you not welcome them if you've invited them? If you have enough positive feeling to invite them you should have enough positive feeling to welcome them in the appropriate formal manner.

Atula: Otherwise don't invite them.

S: Otherwise don't bother. I think sometimes the formalities are intended to grease the wheels of social intercourse in the absence of any great degree of feeling.

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Devapriya: Yes.

S: And that is entirely appropriate. You don't always want to be feeling strongly in every sort of social situation. It would be rather tiring.

Dhammarati: Could you see manners a wee bit like the Precepts, that it's almost like a sort of behaviour that eventually develops?

S: Traditionally, of course, in Buddhism, good manners are regarded as an extension of ethics. that's why Guenther, for instance, translates sila as 'ethics and manners'. That is quite justified.

Padmapani: It does seem to be because I have heard you say, Bhante, in the, say, Sikkim society there are very, very fine manners and ethics, but people would actually behind their backs be putting poison in their tea or something.

S: Well, it wasn't quite so bad as that. I get your point - it happened in Italy, say, during the Renaissance - ladies in beautiful brocade gowns, who were great admirers of contemporary art and all that, smiling, fingering their pearl necklaces, and then they would just drop a few drops of poison into your goblet - but it would be a beautiful golden goblet, of course, by the best artist. (Laughter.)

Tejamati: It's a bit like Chinese inscrutability, isn't it?

S: Yes. No, one should really remember the overall purpose of manners, which is basically ethical (general agreement), and no amount of manners can make up for an absence of basic ethics. That really is corruption.

Padmapani: Can you say that again, Bhante?

S: No amount of good manners can make up for a lack of basic ethical requirements.

Ratnapala: There's a popular Gujerati phrase - mukme Ram bhagume curi (?)

S: That's right, yes, yes.

Ratnapala: On the face a smile, in the back a knife.

S: It's Hindi, that is. Mukme Ram (?) - in the mouth, the name of Rama or the name of God; bhagume (?) - in the armpit a knife concealed.

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Padmavajra: Ambedkar said that about Gandhi. (Laughter.) That's how he described Gandhi.

S: Because he said Gandhi was going 'Ram, Ram, Ram' all the time, but according to Ambedkar he had the knife of orthodox Hinduism concealed in his armpit.

Prasannasiddhi: Could you say that the Victorians were sort of rather top-heavy on manners and low, or not quite so strong, with actual ethics?

S: It would depend on one's definition of ethics. They would have said that they were very strong on ethics. They were not that strong on ethics from a Buddhist point of view, not in all respects. They were certainly strong on manners of a certain kind. There was a great elaboration of manners during the Victorian period, with regard, for instance, to leaving visiting cards and things of that sort; [to whom] you should leave them, and how many copies, and that sort of thing.

Atula: A lot of stress on morality.

S: There was a lot of stress on morality; in some respects a quite positive and healthy stress, but in some respects not.

Padmavajra: Do you think that in the FWBO there could be a bit more of an emphasis on formality, on manners?

S: I have said something about this quite a number of times.

Ratnapani: Every ten years I've heard you emphasizing this point.

S: Yes. Perhaps I can be allowed to be a little frank, since it's all only Order Member, but sometimes I'm quite dismayed by the absence of manners within the FWBO. People seem extremely gross and individualistic sometimes in this respect, lacking in the sort of refinement which one would encounter outside of the Friends in so many social circles, without going very far up the social scale.

Padmapani: Have you mused on that?

S: Yes, indeed I have, and spoken on it, too! Well, years ago I spoke about formality and informality, and that was transcribed and edited and published in Shabda, umpteen years ago - six, seven, eight years ago.

Prasannasiddhi: It's in the Mitrata Omnibus.

S: Ah, right, yes, good.

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Padmavajra: Do you see any improvement?

S: A slight improvement - a slight one.

Tejamati: Which areas stand out most as being areas in which we could be - ?

S: For instance, eating. One could be, perhaps, in some cases, more refined in the way of eating or presentation of the food, the serving of the food, that sort of thing. I mean, at Padmaloka recently we in the community decided that when we eat together we should all try to start at the same time, otherwise it becomes very individualistic, each person just grabbing his grub and then tucking into it straight away without a glance to left or right at other people. It does seem almost a bit animal-like: you give a dog his dinner, or you give two dogs their food, they each go off and if they look at each other at all they growl. (Laughter.) Sometimes it seems a bit like that. Do you see what I mean? They're so intent on their food, the contents of their plate. It's as though the contents of their plate had become the world, for the time being. It doesn't seem very civilized. So the Padmaloka community decided to try to correct this: people waiting till everybody was served and then all starting together. It seems to be a little bit more civilized.

Prasannasiddhi: In communities it seems one of the only times that people get together, so if you make it something a bit more kind of formal ...

S: Perhaps formal is the wrong word. Perhaps we should say just a bit more awareness of one another. (Murmurs of agreement.)

Devapriya: I think having, say, that form agreed to, it does give you something to base, it helps - well, you've got something to use as a basis for the awareness.

S: Yes, that's true.

Devapriya: Because I've noticed that you, when we've been eating, you sit there and wait. Sometimes we've got it together and other times we haven't. I wasn't quite sure, if I'd been clear about that, if we'd all been clear about the form, it would - it will! (?)

Padmapani: I thought it was rather fun actually, seeing, well, just seeing Bhante sitting there, and thinking, 'Why hasn't he started?' Then seeing no one else has started, so you don't start. It's quite interesting to see people come in and eating, because it's definitely a lack of mindfulness on their part.

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S: Yes. Also I did drop a broad hint at the very beginning which perhaps some people picked up but others didn't.

Another area is the treatment of guests, especially greeting those guests, because sometimes people turn up and often, in the case of Padmaloka, I don't know sometimes who the person is. So there should be someone who knows and who comes forward and greets them, introduces them to other members of the community, and tells them what time the meal is going to be, shows them where to sit. Otherwise they're just left a bit ill at ease and awkward, which is really quite unpleasant and inconsiderate on the part of the host community.

Dhammarati: It's one of the areas that Aryatara's got sussed ...

S: I've not been down there for such a long time, I don't really know!

Padmavajra: Ah, well, you'd get the treatment!

S: I'd probably be recognized, anyway. (Laughter.) [It's the] relatively humble unknown person who turns up that nobody seems to know what he's come for, just doesn't take much notice of him. He might have come to see me and I might not be around, and I might not have met him before, might not know him. Usually Subhuti does the honours in such cases, but any community member should be able to come forward and just receive that person on behalf of the community. The same thing at the Centre.

Padmavajra: I think even in relation to things like Order Members going to Centres - I often feel very ill at ease going to a new Centre and I don't think people realize that. They think, 'You'll be all right, you can look after yourself,' but I always feel incredibly ill at ease unless I'm actually shown where to go and what to do. I feel a bit kind of ... It's quite important ...

Prasannasiddhi: It seems there should actually be someone, particularly in a large community, whose actual job it is to see that guests know what breakfast consists of...

S: Well, there was at Sukhavati once upon a time - a sort of, I believe even here at Padmaloka, a sort of guest master ...

Padmavajra: Do you have one here now?

Prasannasiddhi: Subhuti.

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S: Usually, as regards my visitors, Subhuti ... but any community member should be able to respond appropriately if he sees some new person wandering in.

Padmapani: There are people it comes very easy to. For instance, I notice Alaya has that quite strongly. He's very polite, very right in his dealings with people who come along. And Padmaraja's a classic.

S: You mustn't give newcomers the impression you rather resent them visiting your community, or Centre as the case may be - that you regard them as an intruder.

Padmapani: Of course that doesn't mean that one opens the door to anyone. It's just that if somebody is coming then they're welcomed. You have to remain in control...

S: Even if someone is unexpected, at least greet them with initial politeness, even though you are going to send them away. (Laughter.)

Padmapani: 'Come and have a cup of tea.'

S: I think we do need rather more - I don't quite like this word 'formality' - but more awareness of other people, in these sort of social situations, ... Even the way of speaking to people - sometimes it's very uncouth, the way people call out to one another, attract one another's attention. The Buddhist tradition is that you should never call anyone from behind his back, and things like that. It's regarded as quite impolite, especially ... people ...

Devapriya: Something I've noticed in study sometimes - and in meetings, too - is that sometimes people will sit in such a way that you can't see everybody, and they seem totally oblivious to the fact that you can't actually see who's...

S: Round the corner.

Devapriya: Yes. It's as if it doesn't matter, whereas I feel it's actually quite important that you can see everybody in the room. That's a sort of similar thing, that you're talking to somebody that you can't mutually see.

S: Anyway, perhaps we'd better stop there - we've gone a little over the time - and tomorrow we shall definitely finish with the bad friend and start on the good friend, which will be a pleasant change, no doubt. Perhaps we can go in to the good friend in rather more detail.

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Voices: Thanks very much, Bhante.

Day 5

Tape 9, Side B

S: How far did we get yesterday? We still have something about the bad friend to consider, then we come on to the good friend. (Discussion about where they were up to.) All right, there's one more section - would someone like to read that?

(4) In four ways, young householder, should one who brings ruin be understood as a foe in the guise of a friend:

- (i) he is a companion when you indulge in intoxicants that cause infatuation and heedlessness,
- (ii) he is a companion when you saunter in streets at unseemly hours,
- (iii) he is a companion when you frequent theatrical shows,
- (iv) he is a companion when you indulge in gambling which causes heedlessness.

S: So we have considered these things before - that is to say, intoxicants, sauntering in the streets at unseemly hours, frequenting theatrical shows, and gambling. But here it is characteristic of the bad friend that he is a companion in these sort of things. In other words, if you wanted to go and meditate he wouldn't be your companion. If you wanted to study a text, perhaps, he wouldn't be your companion. If you wanted to go and see a film, watch TV etc., then he would be your companion. So this is in effect saying that the 'foe in the guise of a friend' is someone who is quite willing to be your companion when you engage in unskilful activities but not when you're willing to engage in skilful activities.

So one might say this is a sort of criterion. You might say, what sort of activity is that person willing to share with me? Is he someone who is willing to go on retreat with me? Is he someone who is willing to go and visit an art gallery with me? Or is he someone who is merely ready to go with me when I go to a pub or when I go to see some third-rate film?

Padmapani: I suppose this could be taken specifically if one was really striving, but generally (I know one will have to be careful), generally you could get people who are actually striving also would occasionally do things which would on reflection seem unskilful but ... (?)

S: But here the suggestion would seem to be that someone is, so to speak, habitually ready to be your companion in activities such as those enumerated, but is never willing to share more skilful activities. Clearly there will be borderline cases. But to the extent that someone is willing [214] to share with you unskilful activities or pursuits, to that extent he is a foe rather than a friend, or on that occasion at least he is acting more like a foe than a friend.

Devapriya: It does connect up with the previous one in some sense, in so far as being accompanied by one's friend, in this sense, he's approving of your evil action.

S: Yes. This is why people like to get other people to do things with them. I remember in the old Archway days there were just a few people who used to spend time watching TV, and it seemed to me that there was a tendency on the part of some of them to try and get other people to join them, as if to say the more people there were watching TV the more 'right', the more accepted it became, so to speak, within the FWBO. But had that person just been left sitting there watching TV all on his own, then he might not have felt so comfortable about it. I'm not here necessarily saying that it is unskilful under all circumstances to watch TV. I must confess I've deliberately watched TV myself on at least two occasions in my life! (Laughter.) I forget what they were but one, I think, was a programme on the blasphemy trial; and something else ... So I'm not to be understood as saying that watching TV is out under all possible circumstances. On the other hand, the nature of the medium being such, one has to be extremely mindful how one uses it. I'm sure there are some quite good programmes on TV that are well worth watching. But mindless TV watching is an unskilful activity.

Devapriya: Maybe it's a question of watching TV is unskilful, watching certain programmes

that happen to be on TV would be, er...

S: But even those one has to scrutinize carefully. I can remember the case of bhikkhus in the East spending the whole day glued to the television set. There were two pretexts. One was that they were extending their general knowledge and the other was that they were improving their English - listening to English programmes.

So the criterion here is clear, that someone is a foe in the guise of a friend, rather than a real friend, who is more ready to join with you in unskilful activities than to join with you in skilful activities. I think we've discussed the nature of the activities themselves - we need not go over it here, especially as they are not very inspiring.

Anyway, let's push on. There's a verse here which simply summarizes the previous two sections. Would someone like to read that?

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Thus spoke the Exalted One. And when the Master had spoken, He spoke yet again:
The friend who appropriates,
the friend who renders lip-service,
the friend who flatters,
the friend who brings ruin to you...
these four as enemies the wise behold, avoid them from afar as paths of peril.

S: He keeps a good distance from them, and sees quite clearly that friendship with such people, in fact the people themselves, are dangerous ways - that's better than 'paths of peril'. (Reading?) 'Let the wise man avoid them from afar as they were paths of peril and of dread.' In other words, you don't want to tread the path of that particular kind of friendship or pseudo-friendship. It's a dangerous path, a path that will lead to suffering, a path that will lead to downfall.

All right, then, let's go on to the more positive, the brighter side of the picture.

These four, young householder, should be understood as warm-hearted friends:

- (1) he who is a helpmate,
- (2) he who is the same in happiness and sorrow,
- (3) he who gives good counsel,
- (4) he who sympathizes.

S: 'Warm-hearted' is actually *suhada*(?) - more like 'good-hearted' is more literal, or well-hearted; the prefix *su-* meaning good or well or happy; even 'true-hearted', one could say. 'Genuine' would be a more idiomatic translation, the genuine friend. 'These four, young householder, should be understood as genuine friends.'

Ratnapani: Has *su-* got even connotations of 'beautiful'? ...

S: No, not really - just good. 'Happy', as in *sugata* - 'the one gone to a good or happy state.' So what are these four kinds of good-hearted friends? '(1) he who is a helpmate, (2) he who is the same in happiness and sorrow, (3) he who gives good counsel, (4) he who sympathizes.' 'He who is a helpmate', one who is helpful, *upakaro*(?); the true friend is one who helps you.

What does that [signify]?

: He is prepared to give to you (?).

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S: In more general terms than that?

Devapriya: He puts it into action.

S: He puts it into action. Because one of the signs of the insincere friend was that he just gave you empty words, he referred to the past and made promises for the future. He didn't actually do anything for you. So this - I don't know whether there's any significance in the fact that this comes first, but it does come first: that the good-hearted friend, the true friend, the genuine friend, is the one who actually helps you - helps you materially, helps you spiritually, helps you in any way that you need help.

Well, there is a well-known saying or proverb, isn't there - 'A friend in need is a friend indeed'? So one might say that the real friend is the friend who acts like a friend; doesn't simply talk like a friend, or think like a friend, or look like a friend, act like a friend. He is a friend in action and in practice. He actually helps you.

Padmapani: That also must imply that a friend, a friend who helps one, isn't necessarily a person that you particularly like.

S: Well, it depends whether you can reverse the proposition. A friend is one who helps you. Does that mean that one who helps you is a friend?

Devapriya: Yes, if they truly help you.

S: To the extent that they help you they are a friend. At least they possess one important quality of the true friend - that they help you.

Padmapani: You couldn't really have an enemy inside the context of the Sangha, it would be a contradiction in terms, wouldn't it?

S: Would it?

Padmapani: I'm just throwing the question out.

S: We're concerned here, I think, with a wider context than that of the Sangha. At least one can say that inasmuch as it is one of the most important characteristics of the true friend that he actually does help you, if someone helps you at least you can consider the possibility of a friendship developing between you, because he has a friendly attitude towards you. Whether he actually was a friend in the full or ... sense would depend on the nature of the help - how great it was or how small. But anyone who helps you has at least a friendly attitude towards you; [217] they're a friend to that extent, however limited it may be. So one might well consider that there was the potentiality of friendship with anybody who actually helped you; at least there was a starting point, at least they had, to some degree, that particular quality, which was that they were helpful.

You may remember that Marcus Aurelius at the beginning of his Thoughts, as they are usually called, called to mind all the people in the course of his life who had in effect helped him, towards whom he had reason to feel grateful. There's quite a long list of them. So perhaps that suggests that we have been helped by quite a number of people, and we very often forget that fact - that quite a lot of people have actually wished us well, have had a friendly attitude towards us in one way or another. If we looked back over the past, if we tried to reckon them up, we might find we have a very great deal to be grateful for, as Marcus Aurelius had.

Padmavajra: We tend to do the opposite - tend to think in terms of what we haven't been given, what we haven't got.

Atula: Sometimes looking back you recognize that someone was helping you at times.

S: But sometimes you're too young and too immature to appreciate the fact. You are so taken up with yourself, so absorbed in yourself, that you hardly see other people, and perhaps overlook the fact that they are in fact helping you, or at least trying to help you.

Ratnapani: I think I'm right in remembering you were saying a few years back that when several people started saying 'thank you' to you for what you'd done for the Movement and for them, you felt that was a real landmark in the progress of the Movement.

S: Yes. It wasn't so very many years ago!

Ratnapani: No, it wasn't, was it?

S: Quite a few years passed, I think, without anybody really expressing anything ..., certainly not to any noticeable extent.

Padmavajra: Do you think that's quite a good indication of someone's maturity, that they're more concerned with actually helping, their overall concern is to help rather than to get something?

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S: On the whole yes, the assumption is that it is a mature concern, that they are not trying to help others as an escape from their personal problems.

One might say that life in the world is sometimes quite difficult. Sometimes it's quite difficult to manage by oneself. You need a helping hand. I'm not speaking necessarily about psychological problems and things like that, just ordinary everyday things. And the friend is just the person that helps you, or if you do have a friend, if he is a real friend, he does help you.

Prasannasiddhi: As long as that helping is a proper helping and not a getting in your way.

S: Oh yes, that is the assumption... it's like a small child trying to help mother or father, though sometimes mother or father just allow the small child to 'help', even though he or she is just getting in the way, because they have to learn.

Anyway, that's helpfulness, the first characteristic of the good friend. What is the next one? `(2) he who is the same in happiness and sorrow' (samana sukha dukkha). Whose happiness and sorrow?

Ratnapani: Do you want to go through the four subdivisions of (1) in the text?

S: We could do it that way. Yes, that might be more helpful. Yes, we could do it in that way. All right, let's do that, then.

(1) In four ways, young householder, should a helpmate be understood as a warm-hearted friend:

- (i) he guards the heedless,
- (ii) he protects the wealth of the heedless,
- (iii) he becomes a refuge when you are in danger,
- (iv) when there are commitments he provides you with double the supply needed.

: That's good, isn't it?

S: `He guards the heedless.' The implication is that when you are heedless he guards you. When you don't even take care of yourself he takes care of you. In what sort of ways might this reveal itself?

Padmapani: When somebody's sick.

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S: Well, heedless - unmindful.

Ratnapani: I was thinking in terms of someone who's very either overwrought or run-down or whatever, but not doing anything about it, just ploughing on blindly - you might talk to them or get them to go away on retreat or whatever.

S: The ancient Indian example would be if someone neglected the care of his own property, the friend would look after it for him. But, yes, there are these other applications. Supposing someone was careless about attending the meditation and puja. The friend would watch over him in that respect, maybe remind him. Or if there was some duty that he should have done and he is neglecting it, the friend will perform it for him rather than let it be left undone. Maybe it's his turn to wash up and he's gone for a walk instead, out of forgetfulness; the friend just steps in and does the washing up for him - if you see what I mean, to give a very common example.

Ratnapala: I saw another translation of this Sutta; it was a photostat, so I don't know where it came from, but under this bit it said that if a friend should come along and find you collapsed on the pavement drunk, he would sit down next to you and protect your person and your property.

S: Well, this too. Clearly, it's a context, so far, of quite worldly friendship for that person - not, as I say, within the context of spiritual community.

So one is speaking here of heedlessness. Everybody has periods of this moment of heedlessness, periods of unawareness. Do you see what I mean? You're not completely

mindful all the time, and therefore when you are unmindful there is the possibility of unskilful action. But supposing there are two of you together: supposing you have a friend; well, the friend also will have his periods of unmindfulness, just as you do. But it is unlikely that your periods of unmindfulness will always coincide. When you're unmindful he will be mindful, when he is unmindful you will be mindful. So you pull each other up on those occasions, or help each other or watch over each other on those occasions where you are the mindful one and he is the unmindful one. Do you see what I mean. (Murmurs of agreement.) Sometimes of course you may both be unmindful at the same time, but that may not happen very often. This is assuming that you are both, so to speak, on more or less the same level, but if there are two of you together then the chances are that one of you will be mindful when the other is not, and can be, as it were, mindful for two.

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Tejamati: I've noticed that in the context of being out with somebody, and they haven't been very mindful in crossing the street, just walking around, and my awareness has extended to include them and sort of hold them back from stepping off the kerb.

Ratnapani: I think that in conversation the tendency is to unmindfully get into negative stupid, or whatever, talk, and then it can be quite difficult, particularly if there are a lot of people together. Maybe one or two are quite mindful of what is going on and realize it's not particularly positive; the others are just into it. It's quite a thing not to be sort of Mary Whitehouse-ish, yet at the same time to try and re-establish something more positive.

S: That's why one needs as a friend, from a spiritual point of view, someone who at least shares your ideals and doesn't fall below your general level, someone with roughly the same amount of mindfulness that you have, so that he is mindful at least sometimes, on occasion mindful when you are unmindful, and then can be mindful for both of you just as you can be mindful for the pair of you on a similar occasion.

Atula: ... can only be friendship between equals.

S: No, I think that was a different point, what he was saying. What I'm saying is that for a spiritual friendship you must at least be equal. At least. I won't say equal because from the other person's point of view that would make friendship impossible, but at least you mustn't take as a friend, from a spiritual point of view, someone who falls below a certain level of mindfulness, otherwise he's more likely to pull you down than to lift you up.

Padmavajra: In a spiritual context would this sort of thing be the application of appatrappa(?) - fear of blame? Would it extend into that?

S: Well, it could include that, because the more mindful friends will point out to the less mindful, 'Look, if you do this, blame will be incurred.'

So 'he guards the heedless' - the true friend guards his friend when he is heedless - and 'protects the wealth of the heedless'. The first of these seems to refer to the person and the second to the property. Your friend might have left his book out in the garden and you see that it's going to rain. He's forgotten that he's left his book out there, so if you're a true friend you won't think 'What a silly unmindful person,' you just quietly go out and pick it up and bring it in.

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These are quite simple, basic things, but the observance of them makes friendship, in fact makes life in a spiritual community, so much more easy.

Dhammarati: Again, if you are on the receiving end of it, you won't always experience that as help. If someone is more mindful than you are it's sometimes quite shocking.

S: Perhaps your friend shouldn't be too much more mindful than you are! (Laughter.) But no doubt he will forget things from time to time so that you don't feel you're just living with someone who is perfect and that you are always in the wrong, you are always the one who commits the mistakes, who needs pulling up for unmindfulness. Maybe that's where the ... equality comes in.

So you guard the heedless, you protect the wealth of the heedless. And then 'he becomes a refuge when you are in danger.' The word refuge is actually the word 'refuge' in Pali, it's *saranam*. When you are in danger he becomes a refuge. What does that mean? How far should one take that? The word 'refuge' is a very strong word. If one thinks of it, say, in terms of the Three Refuges for a moment: how is it the Three Refuges are a refuge? For instance, when the Buddha says in the Dhammapada that many people threatened by fear go for refuge to shrines and trees etc., but they are not a real refuge; the real refuge, he goes on to say, is the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha. What is the basis of the distinction?

Padmavajra: They are indestructible.

S: Because they're indestructible. So what does that mean, in a way? They're absolutely dependable. They will not let you down. The Dharma - if you take the Dharma - the Dharma will never cease to be the Dharma. It won't change while you're practising it so that you get a different result from the one expected. It's not like human mundane law that may change from time to time. No, In a way it's unchanging, it's a ... [Pali word], you can always rely upon it, you can always depend upon it. It's something fixed, eternal, immutable, indestructible, therefore utterly dependable. Therefore you can take refuge in it. Therefore you can commit yourself to it. The same with the Buddha, the same with the Sangha. So when you speak of a friend being a refuge in time of danger, what are you suggesting?

Padmavajra: That they're indestructible, that they're -

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S: That they're absolutely dependable. Therefore one can raise a further question. Can even the best of friends be absolutely dependable? Absolute dependability is a very, very big thing.

Ratnapani: Not in terms of external circumstances.

S: But it's not expected that the friend, even a true friend, will do what is impossible. You might need a million [pounds]. Even if you needed it and he hasn't got it, how can he possibly give you it? He can go all out to raise everything he can for you, but he may not be able to raise a million pounds, however much you need it. So that doesn't cast any reflection on the genuineness of his friendship, but he must simply be prepared to make every effort to help you, then he ... But what about psychologically? Spiritually?

Ratnapala: It has a flavour of confession, this particular one. Perhaps when you are in danger,

you've fallen away quite a long way perhaps ...

S: Well, I think the danger that is referred to here is a worldly danger in this particular context, rather than spiritual danger. Yes, but in any case you have to tell him, tell your friend that you are in danger. You may be in danger from the police, you may be in danger from the income tax man, or an enemy, or from the king; or you may be in danger in a more subtle spiritual sense; but, yes, confession will be involved. You have to admit to your friend that you're in danger, tell him that you're in danger, otherwise how could he help you? But for a friend to be a refuge he must be dependable; but can one be, even the best of friends, dependable absolutely, in the as it were psychological and spiritual sense?

: No.

S: No. But why not?

Atula: Because you can only give what you have to give.

Padmavajra: Because he's not a Buddha.

S: Because he's not a Buddha, but can we put it a bit lower than that (laughter), otherwise that makes friendship a very rare sort of thing?

Ratnapani: He's not a psychologically integrated person.

S: Yes - or perhaps we can put it a little higher than that.

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Devapriya: Even when you do your best for your friend it's not going to be perfect.

S: What does one mean by perfect? Perhaps even what a Buddha does isn't perfect - but ... limits even for a Buddha. But put it a little higher than just integration and put it a little lower than Buddhahood, so what do you get?

Padmavajra: Stream Entry.

S: Stream Entry. It suggests that to be a really dependable friend, a friend in whom someone can take refuge in this way, he has to be really a member of the Arya Sangha. Then he can be technically a refuge. Do you see what I mean? So you might even go so far as to say that true friendship implies Insight, a degree of Insight. How can you give your friend the refuge that he may need unless you have something very deep and very solid within you - some kind of spiritual attainment? Otherwise you will just be at the mercy of your own emotional states, your own psychological limitations.

Atula: Even so, you've got to - you're still left with a situation where you are ... if that's what you've got to do.

S: Oh yes, but one can take it further than that. If you make an effort to be a real friend, an absolutely dependable friend, in fact you're trying to approach the point of Stream Entry. It can be a very, very powerful motivation not to let your friend down, to give him the refuge

that he needs, to give him the help that he needs, and that can therefore be, one might say, a sort of spiritual practice, even a means of achieving Stream Entry.

Atula: That's a question of pushing against all your basic tendencies...

S: Not so much that you're pushing against all your basic tendencies but that you really very much want to help your friend, to provide him with a refuge, to be a refuge for him. So in order to be a refuge for him you have as it were to make yourself a refuge for him.

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You are willing to do for him what you're not willing to do for yourself. So that, in other words, the demand for friendship really stretches you on occasion, and by being stretched in this way, in the course of being stretched in this way, you can really grow and develop as a human being, even spiritually. Perhaps you can even enter the Stream in that way, who knows? Because ... people have sacrificed their lives for their [224] friends, and that is something which - the state of mind of a person who is willing to sacrifice his life for a friend - is very difficult to imagine. There is something more than human about it.

Ratnapala: Is this possible without meditation, Bhante?

S: Well, people have sacrificed their lives for their friends who, as far as we know, didn't practise meditation.

Ratnapala: I meant the attainment of Stream Entry.

S: Well, there would be a concentration of all one's energies, all one's forces, all one's emotional positivity, which might - who can say? - amount to a meditative state. What is a meditative state? It's an uninterrupted flow of positive mental states.

Devapriya: Reading Homer, the degree of friendship between the warriors seems far above what we have today, particularly on that level of giving their lives for each other.

S: Most people nowadays would think probably in terms of saving their own skin. To be a coward or a traitor nowadays is almost regarded as an honourable thing; the heroic version(?) seems to have vanished away.

It's a long time since I read it, but I'm thinking, for instance - this is a fictional example, but no doubt they put in actual facts - I'm thinking of Charles Dickens's *A Tale of Two Cities*, where I think it is Sidney Carton impersonates someone who is to be guillotined tomorrow so that he can escape; he takes his place on the scaffold, he gives his life for his friend in that way.

Ratnapani: And not even in the heat of battle.

S: Not even in the heat of battle. I think that is a quite important consideration - that, on cool and calm reflection, he deliberately enters into the situation, deliberately takes his friend's place, allows or persuades his friend to escape, and is executed in his place. The state of mind of someone who can do that must be extraordinary - to give up life itself, to which people are

so attached. If you can give up life, you can give up anything. And to give it up for the sake of your friend and no other motive, apparently, than friendship. So here it seems that the pursuit of friendship can carry you very far indeed.

Padmapani: Didn't he say, 'It is a far, far better thing that I do than I have ever done'?

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S: Well, I don't want to paint too black a picture of love, but in the case of love it's the question of, far from sacrificing your life for the beloved, sometimes people have been prepared to kill themselves and kill her too, so that nobody else should get her, if you see what I mean, which is a quite opposite kind of thing.

Padmapani: It's interesting, though, isn't it? - reading about the Celts a few years ago, Bhante, the Celtic warriors in battle would fight furiously for the life of their friend also in battle. So they would be almost, like, fearless. They used really to drive fear into the Romans when they went into battle, because they had this tremendous comradeship.

S: Well, whether one can regard comradeship in battle as friendship in a spiritual sense, that's another matter, because one could say that that was a result of bad friendship - you are helping one another in unskilful activities. Nonetheless there's an element of friendship there that shouldn't be ignored. But in the example I gave - admittedly, a fictional example - from A Tale of Two Cities, there it isn't a question of the heat of battle or anything of that sort.

But I mean one needs the co-operation of circumstances. In that particular case one needed the co-operation of the whole French Revolution to make that kind of situation possible. We don't, it seems, have that sort of situation within the FWBO. You are unlikely to be called upon to lay down your life for your friend; at the most, perhaps, to give him a bit of time or lend him a few pounds. So perhaps the most sort of existential situation is working together, working together for the Dharma.

Padmapani: I felt there was a lot of co-operation and friendship in the last few days at Sukhavati, and recently also up in Glasgow, where you had a time when something was going to open and you jolly well had to...

S: Yes. Yes, and you had to go flat out.

Padmapani: Flat out, so you weren't fighting amongst yourselves, even amongst friends, you just had to get on and do the work. It acted in a galvanizing sort of way, stretched you out...

S: But again another, on the whole, maybe rather negative conflict, but it was noticed during the last war that people, in London at least, became more friendly and more helpful to one another. And a lot of people commented that it was a pity it needed a war to produce this sort of effect. And it ended when the war ended; that was the sad thing about [226] it, which was also commented upon. People actually spoke to one another without being introduced.

Ratnapani: Very odd.

S: They shared to a greater extent than they were accustomed to do.

Atula: We seemed to get that even when I was a child. Where I lived ... it was quite noticeable that because of the rationing and all that sort of thing at that time, there was a hell of a lot of sharing of common goods. As I grew up that sort of thing ... more people were better off - but that sort of dropped away, as though need does produce friendship, on a certain level anyway.

S: It not so much produces it, perhaps, but gives it an opportunity to show itself in its true colours.

Devapriya: [I've been] reading recently about the Inquisition on the Cathars and the risks that a lot of people would put themselves to, to protect and feed the Cathars, and sometimes very precarious situations they put themselves in.

Padmavajra: If you are prepared to be a refuge to somebody it does imply - I mean laying aside these existential situations - an incredible feeling for that person. And perhaps the reason why we don't become a refuge is that we don't feel it very well, we don't actually feel passionately.

S: In other words, there is no real friendship. Friendship isn't exactly encouraged in modern times. Perhaps we need not go into it at this point.

But anyway, the Buddha does mention it here, as far as the main characteristics of a good friend, the good friend who is a helpmate especially, [are concerned] - that `he becomes a refuge when you are in danger. The implications of that are quite far-reaching.

Ratnapala: Just as an observation, Bhante, it did occur to me that this particular area seems to crop up a lot in opera, Italian opera. You get many, many operas in which for love lives are laid down; it's quite a common theme.

S: You mean love as distinct from friendship?

Ratnapala: Well, both, but love very often, yes.

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Ratnapani: Talking about friendship stretching, in a slightly different way: if you care - I'm not talking about having a specific friend or two - but if you are caring for people and wanting to help them, particularly in the sense of kalyana mitrata, you've got to have a certain amount of wisdom in a way to be of any help to people, [there's] that impetus to develop in order to be of any use. Because otherwise you can make mistakes or not be able to help. I especially find that quite a sort of impetus to get things together, just from sometimes a feeling of impotence in that way.

S: Carried to a logical extreme, as it were, it means that if you want to be able to be a refuge to people, you've got to be a Stream Entrant. So if you want to be a real friend, you just have to aim at Stream Entry. So that's an additional incentive, as it were: think how good a friend you could be if you reached that point. If you had reached that point of dependability, your friend could rely upon your unfailing emotional positivity!

Devapriya: Do you think the mundane aspects of what's put forward here are a necessary basis for the more spiritual - ?

S: Well, you'll practise the elementary before you practise the more advanced. That is the usual procedure, isn't it? They'll be the basis in that sort of way. You'll hardly be likely to be able to sacrifice your life for your friend if you are not even willing to share your last pound with him. The one is the basis of the other in that sense. You go from the less difficult to the more difficult.

Devapriya: It's just that the idea that the spiritual community, [as distinct] from mundane friendship, one doesn't necessarily have the basis one on the other.

S: Well, one could say that friendship itself is a spiritual ideal, in the sense that it sometimes involves self-sacrifice, therefore a negation of self. A negation of self is surely in itself, so to speak, a spiritual thing?

I think there can be mundane friendship; there can be friendship outside the spiritual community, provided that mundane friendship is at least positively based, in an ethical sense; isn't a friendship in the sense of companionship in crime or an unskilful activity.

Prasannasiddhi: This aspect of friendship as a spiritual ideal - is it in the Greek tradition? Was it a sort of recognized ideal?

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S: The Greeks did seem to value friendship very highly, there's no doubt about that. Yes, I think one might say it was a spiritual ideal for the Greeks. But perhaps they didn't develop that as fully as they might have done, inasmuch as they didn't have quite the same conception of spiritual community. Very often the context of friendship was war.

Padmavajra: There seems to be quite a connection between friendship and ethics. I remember in the 'Meghiya' in the Udana where the Buddha gives a sort of path, which is kalyana mitrata and then ethics. There's quite a connection. If you were really being a friend to somebody you would act ethically.

S: I think that the more important question is the basis of the friendship itself. You can certainly join with another person in unskilful activities as well as skilful activities. And even in the case of someone with whom you join together in unskilful activities, there can be some sort of element of genuine friendship. The only question is to what extent that trans... and to what extent the fact that the activity is unskilful makes friendship itself impossible; do you see what I mean? So when I say that friendship itself is a sort of spiritual value, I mean that friendship itself is such - I mean friendship in the true sense - that it is incompatible with activities of a certain kind.

In other words I'm saying, I suppose, that friendship is essentially ethical; therefore, as Aristotle said, there can be no friendship between bad people - friendship can be only between good people. What passes as friendship among criminals is not the real thing. But even there I'd be very reluctant not to recognize at least some glimmering or some germ of possibility of real friendship, however misguided the activities.

Ratnapani: Not shopping a friend even under close police questioning or something like that - I'm sure that goes on.

S: Because people are very mixed, they may be ethical in some ways even though very unethical in others. But nonetheless one can say that friendship can flourish most within the context of, well, a genuinely positive group or, most of all, the spiritual community.

Ratnapala: A friend of mine has just managed to get a law centre at Plumstead for the Asian community, because many of them are very much victims because they don't speak English, and he spent some three years of his life really working very hard to get this thing built. It's now fully staffed, fully operational and everything, and really it's all down to the amount of energy he's put into it. And he's a friend of mine, but on some other levels I think he is one of the most unethical people I've ever met. He'd think nothing of stealing and things like this. And yet [229] on this level he really cares about the fact that these Asian people don't have facilities, don't have access to justice. Quite a mixture of a man.

S: Well, people are mixed, which means that they are not fully integrated. They're a mixture of positive and negative, so one has to be able to distinguish and not be unable to recognize the positive because of the negative elements by which it's surrounded, and vice versa.

There is a tendency to think that if someone doesn't practise a particular virtue, especially if it's your favourite virtue, they can't be practising any virtues at all! And that's why, for instance, in the Victorian period, if a man was what was regarded as sexually immoral, he couldn't be a good man in any respect, couldn't be trusted in any respect, so much importance was attached to that particular virtue. Also of course in the case of women, though that's perhaps a rather different matter.

So 'he becomes a refuge when you are in danger'; we've seen that the implications of that are pretty extensive. And then 'when there are commitments he provides you with double the supply needed.' The commentary here says 'if you go to him burdened with a commission involving outlay, he presses you to accept double what you will require to spend.' So what does this suggest?

Devapriya: Open-handed generosity.

S: Open-handed generosity. Maybe a bit more than that, even?

Ratnapani: Self-transcendent generosity.

S: It's not giving someone just what they need and no more. You're not sort of measuring it.

Prasannasiddhi: Give them ... cover it.

S: So you don't have to worry about it, so there's a good margin. If, for instance, you've worked out 'I need exactly, say, \$63 for my trip to Greece,' he says, 'OK, here's \$100.' He doesn't just count out \$63.50 or whatever it is.

Padmapani: In a way it implies trust. In actual fact he trusts you that even if you don't need the money he's given you you'll spend it in a wise way.

S: Yes, that's true.

Devapriya: And that you're worthy of it.

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Ratnapani: Surely if you're giving to a friend you're not particularly worried that he's worthy, you just give it to him.

Dhammarati: The other side of this commitment business is that the friend has to actually find out about the other person's needs, and imagining yourself from the point of view of the friend with the resources [who is] giving it away, you can see that that's positive; but I've been myself in the position of the friend who doesn't have the resources. I think in some cases it is quite difficult to ask for it, to make your need known.

S: Well, it depends on the degree of friendship. You say, 'Look, I need this. I know you haven't got the money, but what could you do? Or what could we do?' I don't think a friend would hold back thinking, 'What's the use of bothering him, I know he hasn't got the money, therefore I shouldn't tell him about my need.' I think in genuine friendship you tell your friend the need even though as far as you know he couldn't help you. Tell him anyway.

Ratnapani: I think in some ways asking and giving are two sides of the same coin.

S: Yes! It's not that you would ask, 'Look, I've got to do this,' so at once the friend says, 'OK, here's some money, more than you need.' Asking and giving - within the context of genuine friendship they lose their significance. So there's no need to ask, you just make known your position, not because you're thinking in terms of asking, or that your friend should give you, but just as a part of the general flow of communication. 'What do you think has happened today? I've got this commitment.' As though you're thinking aloud, you're just telling your friend. Then he says, 'Well, have you got the necessary money?' and you say, 'No, but I've got so much.' Then he says, 'Well, I've got a bit more, you can have that.' There's no question of the one asking and the other giving. It doesn't operate like that at all.

Dhammarati: Even if you know that you're mentioning it quite offhand, there's going to be a transfer of funds from your friend to you, it isn't going to be an inhibition.

S: Because to the extent there is friendship, there is sharing. There is, well, a common purse, perhaps, in a manner of speaking.

Ratnapani: It's very rare that you can [regard] someone's money as yours, or your money as somebody else's.

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S: I came across - I'll try to remember the details - there are some extraordinary instances of this sort of thing among the Sufis. Apparently, among them - I can't remember the details of the source - but apparently one Sufi maintained that, if you had to ask a friend for money, that wasn't real friendship. And there's another story that when a Sufi came home one day, his wife (for Sufis usually have wives; they don't get in the way in the Sufi tradition, I don't know how they manage that - well, perhaps they do, but -) (laughter) the Sufi's wife told him that in his absence one of his friends had come along, and knowing that he, the Sufi, kept all his money in a big chest, had just helped himself to whatever he needed and gone away. So the Sufi was delighted; he said, 'Ah! this is a case of real friendship at last; he doesn't even feel

the need to ask me.' He was overwhelmed with joy that the friend had just come and helped himself to what he needed.

And of course it wasn't just taking advantage. The Sufi knew that too. It was out of just excess of friendship. He knew that his friend the Sufi wouldn't mind - not only wouldn't mind, he'd expect him to; he regarded it as their common property. It's also, of course, interesting that the wife didn't object. She must have been quite well-trained!

Padmapani: What about in the case of not just close friendship, Bhante, but in terms of the way people are very, very positive to you, even people you don't know very well. For instance, when I went with Lokamitra to Gandhinagar, I got on very well with Kasha(?) - though I only saw him for five minutes - and he whisked me down to his store there, and insisted that I had a shirt and a new pair of trousers - and it must have cost him a fortune of his own personal money. I found the Indians very generous in that respect.

S: They must have been very pleased to see you.

Padmavajra: In the case of the Sufi story, that seems to suggest that they really have stepped outside of their own kind of separateness, that they really are ... with each other.

S: Of course, in a sense, one mustn't take all this too literally - in the sense that, if your friend asks you for something or other, if he seems to need something, that you should make a sort of regular practice of giving him exactly double!

: The spirit with which - if he asks for \$1, if you give him \$1, if he bids(?) for it, not counting it. (?)

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Ratnapani: There's also - I don't want to [militate] against any of this - people who are just careless, irresponsible, and then expect you to help out. I mean, that's not friendship, is it, going to a friend in that way?

S: No, indeed not. This seems to mean something like 'There should be no book-keeping between friends.'

: I remember coming to tell you how much I'd spent on shopping when you'd given me money once. You laughed at me.

S: I must have known how careful you were.

(TEA BREAK)

(2) In four ways, young householder, should one who is the same in happiness and sorrow be understood as a warm-hearted friend:

- (i) his secrets he reveals to you,
- (ii) he conceals your secrets,
- (iii) in misfortune he does not forsake you,
- (iv) his life even he sacrifices for your sake.

S: Hm! So `his secrets he reveals to you'. But what is meant by `secrets' here? What is a secret?

Padmavajra: Something you'd only tell a friend whom you trusted.

S: Something that you don't have to tell everybody. Why should you not tell everybody?

Dhammarati: The type of information that would have quite an effect on your life if people knew.

S: Perhaps in an extreme case, yes. So you tell your friend your secrets because you trust him, because he is a friend. But why do you think the true friend tells you his secrets?

Padmapani: Because there's just no reserve between you.

S: Because there's no reserve.

: It's part and parcel of getting to know one another. A process of opening up.

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S: Also, perhaps, because he needs to tell you. Sometimes it's difficult to keep things to oneself. I was reading recently the story about King Midas's barber. King Midas - I won't go into the details of the story - had ass's ears, and the only person who knew about it, apart from the King himself, was his barber, and he didn't dare to tell anybody for fear of being punished by the King. But the secret sort of burned in his breast, so in the end he went to a distant place by the river bank, he dug a hole, and he whispered the secret into the hole. He just had to tell somebody, so to speak. And of course the reeds learned the secret, etc. etc., that King Midas had ass's ears. But this illustrates the fact that it's very difficult to keep something to oneself, even something that concerns oneself very deeply. You need to tell somebody. So why is that? Why should it be so difficult to keep something to oneself absolutely? I mean, some people perhaps don't find it so difficult.

Atula: It touches on what you said the other day, that self-disclosure is necessary.

S: Do you think that is so? I mean, one doesn't need to accept the statement just because it comes from an American psychologist, but...

: I find it is.

S: Ah yes. Then if self-disclosure is a necessity, why is it a necessity?

Devapriya: That at least with somebody you're not holding back.

S: But why should you feel that you're holding back in not telling something?

Devapriya: They don't see you, that is you are not allowing yourself to be fully seen.

S: And what would be `fully seen'? What is this need to be fully seen? Is it putting the same thing into other words? Why should one need to be fully seen?

: It's something to do with when you do engage in self-disclosure, I think in a way you see yourself clearer, because it's as if it were more objectified. You tell somebody else - I can't quite work out what goes on, but in a way it seems more real.

: It seems, though, to have a common affinity with something higher, in a way. That in a way intrinsically communication is a fundamental part of human nature: not to have secrets is like an affinity with the fact that you and I in the intrinsic depths are the same in a way.

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S: Of course, with regard to communicating secrets or anything that you take very seriously, well, there's a lot of energy, so to speak, bottled up in that.

Atula: You want to be fully known.

S: So apart from wanting to be fully known, there's the whole energy aspect of things. That is to say, in talking to somebody else, telling someone else, something which you keep secret from most people, from everybody else perhaps, there's a certain energy released, and that energy goes into the communication.

Ratnapani: Yes, that energy gets turgid if it's not released or exorcised.

S: For instance, you may read a book and get very excited about that book, you may want to talk to somebody about it and so on, and what a wonderful book it is. If you can't do that, you feel some sort of restraint on your energy.

Ratnapani: It goes back to this last one, though, [where] someone supplies double the need. A friend doesn't say, 'Oh, go away, I'm busy,' if they can see you're bursting to express something.

Padmavajra: Do you think that release of energy you talked about is that sort of binding force? You know, if you do tell someone something ... that you've never told anybody, it binds you both together very strongly.

S: I think because you share something that both of you don't share with anybody else.

: And you both know the value of it.

S: Yes, yes. And the counterpart of that is that he conceals your secret. That is to say, having shared a secret, the friend who has been confided in does not make the secret that has been confided to him public. He does not tell anybody else.

Padmavajra: Do you think telling secrets - just being quite frank about yourself - perhaps has actually got to happen for friendship to occur? Because I think one could go around a lot and say, 'I don't feel I could say this because I can't trust'...

S: Because sometimes you can't. That, one might say, is not a question of should or should not, but the extent to which you can entrust secrets or purely can entrust secrets is a measure of the friendship. If there's [235] something you always keep back it means you don't ever fully trust the other person, therefore there is limitation to the friendship. You're not friends in an absolutely unqualified sense. And perhaps you shouldn't confide secrets too easily?

Ratnapani: Yes, but another thing is just a proof of attention, isn't it, when we sort of dig out the thing that must be deepest inside which they might most want to hear and wave it around for attention.

: It seems that, in the sense of reading a book, it's almost as if, if you don't have someone you can communicate what you have read to, there's no purpose in reading the book in the first place, unless you can communicate what you've read to another person.

S: When you read something, that becomes a part of you, and, as the psychologist said, self-disclosure is a human need.

Atula: On its highest level, it would be a confession, wouldn't it, the spiritual dimension? On a high level, it would be confession.

S: Well, not necessarily, not just confession. Confession is usually the communication of something or other that you have done which was unskilful. You don't have a positive counterpart of that, unless perhaps it is rejoicing in merit. But even that is not quite the same, because it would be rejoicing in your own merits; you should be able to do that.

Dhammarati: Can you see any element in this that needs self-disclosure in art? Obviously, I've always wondered why...

S: Well, expression is one aspect, yes, certainly. Yes, indeed.

Dhammarati: Why does anybody need ... ?

S: Well, if for instance one writes a poem, a story: what are you doing? You're externalizing something which was internal of yours, you're objectifying something which was subjective. You're as it were detaching it from yourself. You're seeing it embodied in an object, even a work of art, out there. From one point of view you are therefore free from it, you've transcended it. You could say you've thoroughly incorporated or integrated it. Paradoxically, by externalizing it, you've integrated it. Because in the course of embodying your feelings or your experience in the work of art, you make it clearer to yourself. You bring it up more into the conscious level. It emerges more into consciousness and therefore can be incorporated. It's as though the work of art is the vehicle by means of which you do that. You bring things, so to speak, from the relatively unconscious to the relatively conscious level, and then the [236] work of art, so far as you're concerned, has done its job, it has fulfilled its purpose. And that is why, very often, when you've written a poem or painted a picture, you relinquish it. You forget all about it, you just want to get on with something else. You don't want to be perpetually admiring what you've already done. Other people may do that, it may be very meaningful for them, but you want to get on with something else, because there's something else that you want to come to terms with and bring up into consciousness.

Prasannasiddhi: Apart from some poets who spend their whole life on - you know, they're continually going over their poems and finding better, more simple phrases and changing things slightly all the time.

S: Well, some seem able to produce works of art, perfect, at one stroke straight off. Others need to work at things over years before they can fully embody what they want to express.

: One artist might have six pictures on the go at the same time.

S: Yes, yes. That way presenting six different aspects of his personality.

Padmavajra: Do you think also that sometimes it's not as if you know fully what you are going to express? Sometimes in the act of expressing it you actually find out what it is.

S: Yes, you just feel a sort of creative urge. You want to write something. You want to write a play. It may not even be that you've a definite subject that you want to write about. You start sort of doodling, if it's something of a visual nature, drawing or painting.

Atula: This occurs in conversation when you're not quite sure what you're trying to [say].

S: Alternatively, there's something you want to say but you're not quite sure what it is. You work it out only in the actual course of the conversation, in communication.

Tape 10, Side B

Ratnapani: ... common interest ends up being quite a strong basis of friendship, because if I just want to talk about books on the Greeks, or my Greek holiday or whatever, and people have no interest whatsoever in those subjects, I can't get close to them; if that's what's bubbling through, then common interest can become quite a continuing basis.

S: A friend can sort of enter into your interest -

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Ratnapani: Yes.

S: - out of friendship, even though it isn't his own or he hasn't so far developed that interest.

Ratnapani: Yes.

S: He may think, because you are his friend and therefore close to him, what you have to say about some area with which he isn't familiar must be of interest.

Ratnapani: I obviously don't have any friends.

S: Oh dear.

: Oh, come on.

S: I would have thought anybody would be interested about Greece and what one was reading about the Greeks etc. Especially at Aryatara! Perhaps you don't have time ...

Ratnapani: Have to wait until Chintamani and I can get together to talk about Greeks.

: ... your Greek holiday, that would ... (Loud laughter.)

Ratnapani: No, I said the Greeks or Greece.

S: Well, you must just get together with Chintamani more frequently, that's all I can say.

Ratnapani: Yes.

S: Well, maybe you should insist on giving a talk. You could give a talk one evening on your Greek holiday.

Ratnapani: `My Greek Holiday,' yes. No one is the slightest bit ... (Comment and laughter.)

S: All they want you to do is to talk about how much money the co-op had made that week.

: Right. (More laughter and comment.)

S: The utilitarian banishing the artistic. Crude practical realities sweeping up on the finer things of life.

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: Absolutely. Yes.

: Philistines get everywhere, don't they?

S: I know exactly what you mean. I have exactly the same experience, when I'm sort of sitting quietly reading my volume of Dryden, and Subhuti comes in with a great armful of minutes for me to go through! The world just doesn't have time for these things. This is where one might least expect it. But is it even a question of secrets? Your holiday in Greece was no secret - so far as I know!

Ratnapani: I wish it was, but actually it wasn't.

S: ... the international ... must be in a different ... (laughter), even if it had been in Greece. But, yes, self-disclosure, self-revelation and self-communication, sharing a secret, does seem to be, well, yes, a psychological necessity.

: Sometimes when there's a friend who does have a certain interest, and they are sort of pursuing it from day to day, and just by your day-to-day contact, you sort of follow what they're pursuing, you follow it through. You don't actually have to be pursuing something, but it comes through with the friendship.

S: Yes; yes. But it does suggest that if - let's forget the hypothetical interest. If there is in fact no one who is willing to listen to what you share, or allow you to talk about an experience which is important to you, it does in fact mean that you have no friends. Because that would seem to be part of a friendship, that they are willing and ready, in fact happy to listen to an account of your experiences, just because it was important to you; even though it related to an area of life or experience that they were not personally interested in.

As regards the communication of secrets, there's also the point that communication helps one achieve a sort of sense of proportion. Because you might have just been turning something over in your own mind and dwelling upon it, and you might have blown it up out of all proportion. And in disclosing it to a friend, the friend might say, `Well, that's not very

important, what are you worrying about it so much for? That's nothing!' Do you see what I mean?

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: Is it that we want to have these things verified? - that it's a secret in a way because we're not sure if other people have felt it too; that's why we are a bit wary of telling just anybody?

S: Well, there are secrets and secrets. Things are just secret for various reasons; one, because of danger to life and limb, and others because, well, you're not sure whether you're going crazy or not.

A lot of people who come along to Centres in their early days, one of the things they want to do is to verify whether a certain experience that they've had is peculiar to them, or if other people might not have had it. And then it is a great relief, usually, for them to know that they're not the only one; others have gone through the same thing. But it might be some time before they bring themselves to the point, as it were, of confessing or sharing, because they think maybe they are the only ones, or maybe they are just going mad or they are at least very eccentric or unusual. So they don't find it easy to communicate that particular experience.

: It's amazing often how, what shall we say? - how uninteresting a lot of these confessions are. Sometimes people have got to know me and given apparently a torrid confession and they've just got to tell somebody, they've been keeping it for you. And, well, we've all been through that from time to time - often just really quite unimportant things.

: They're very important to the person.

: Well, of course they are.

: They're very loaded.

: What always surprises me is that they don't know other people have those sort of things too.

S: Yes. So in this way the sharing of secrets does restore a sense of proportion. You realize that either means that lots of other people have these experiences, you're not the only one; or that in fact the importance you had attached to the experience doesn't really belong to it. Sometimes, of course, these two things go together.

Padmapani: Bhante, would you say in some cases it's almost like necessary for somebody to take that load from that person's back, off their shoulders, and take it firmly on their shoulders?

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S: In a way, this isn't a load, because some things they tell you about are usually just small insignificant things, ...

Padmapani: Well, yes, yes.

S: - so it's not really a load that's been shifted from their shoulders to yours.

Padmapani: I didn't mean it for the other person who was actually taking the load, but it seemed that a load has been taken off that person's shoulders.

S: Well, yes, because if you see that it isn't really a load at all, it's not as heavy as you thought, well, yes, it has been, so to speak, taken off your shoulders.

Padmapani: A long time ago I had a bad experience - I don't want to go into it now - but I was very much caught up in it, for maybe about nine months, and I was going around with this in my head for a few years, and I met this person who was sort of ... I don't think she was fully aware of what she'd done. Somehow I felt a tremendous sense of relief. She took it on her shoulders, it was a woman actually. She actually took this sort of load on her shoulders, it was very strange, and then it sort of went away.

S: I'm not sure what you mean by someone else taking it on their shoulders, literally. I mean, can you really, unless it's an actual concrete responsibility? Can you transfer it in this way? I must admit that I don't ...

Padmapani: But it was on a psychological level.

S: It could have been that you were projecting your sort of saviour figure on to that. That is a possibility?

: Certainly there is the experience, if you do actually get something out, you do feel lighter.

S: You feel lighter, but that does not mean that they either literally or metaphorically take the burden upon themselves, unless you see that person as a sort of saviour figure, a sort of Jesus taking your sins and the sins of the world upon himself.

: It is how it feels subjectively. They say 'A trouble shared is a trouble halved.' It doesn't actually mean that the other person carries half. He forgets it five minutes later!

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Padmapani: This reminds me of a sort of parallel I saw - mind you, this is really quite extreme - in the film 'Ordinary People', where this young person had this real hang-up about, he felt guilty about the drowning of his brother. It wasn't his fault, but somehow he transferred the guilt on to his shoulders, and he was going around with this weight, and this psychologist, he went through some sort of traumas and eventually the psychologist sort of helping him, and it was transferred, and the person felt whole, sane...

S: What do you mean, 'it was transferred'? You're back to the woman, there's someone literally taking it.

Padmapani: Maybe it was that he was communicating ...

S: But you seem to have had with the woman the definite experience that she took it upon herself; it was literally transferred, on the emotional or psychological level, and this is what I'm questioning. It seems to be a different kind of experience from what we've been talking about, as though you did almost project something on to her, as people do in the case of any saviour figure. But perhaps that's another story.

Padmavajra: There is also the point that, although you might confess, say, that you did something unskilful, you might communicate it to that person, that person might not say, 'Ah well, you know, it's OK, don't worry about it.' They might actually say, 'Yes, it was unskilful.'

S: Yes, indeed.

Padmavajra: 'You know, it really was unskilful, you were wrong' - and, you know ...

S: He certainly won't take it over from you. Or even though it alleviates it, perhaps they've increased your realization of the unskilfulness of what you did. I mean, as the Buddha did with Bhaddali, in the Bhaddali Sutta which we were studying last weekend.

Atula: ... some practical possibilities, something you could do.

S: At a later stage. But, to begin with, they don't make light of what you've done, if you confess it and it was really unskilful. If necessary they make you realize how unskilful it really was; perhaps you hadn't seen how unskilful it really was. Perhaps you'd thought it was a case of a small mistake, and they might point out to you, well, it was not a small mistake, it's a very serious blunder.

(Confused cross-talk obscured by aeroplane noise.)

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Padmavajra: It is possible to do that, isn't it? Somebody might come out with something unskilful, and you think that you are being helpful by saying 'Don't worry,' when in point of fact it might have been better to put them in contact with their ..., their shame. That would be, spiritually, the best thing to do in that situation.

Ratnapani: ... digression, but Padmapani, whatever it was he was saying, reminded me of instances of someone being worried, wanting to talk about it, going through it with them, trying to throw some sort of objective light on their worries, which I personally didn't consider to be terribly serious; at the end of the conversation they feeling light, happy and grateful, and myself feeling utterly depressed and miserable. It's happened a couple or three times in my experience; I wonder what goes on.

S: I've noticed this on a number of occasions. I've come to the conclusion that there can be a see-saw movement between two people, especially if they get into a fairly regular, let's say, communication. When one is up, the other is down; when one is down, the other is up. It's as though the person who is down gets a certain satisfaction in bringing the other person down - this is a quite negative sort of thing - and gets satisfaction to such an extent that it brings them up and they're happy to have brought you down, because it's a sort of exercise of - you could say power, perhaps.

Ratnapani: And this, perhaps, entirely unconsciously.

S: Yes. It may be an expression of resentment. And I think they do this, yes, unconsciously. They feel glad, so to speak, to have brought you down. So therefore, at the end of the day, or at the end of the conversation, you - perhaps formerly you were up - are down, and they - formerly down - are up. I think this does go on quite regularly between some people. It can go

on between husband and wife. Maybe Ratnapala can enlighten us here. Well, it can go on between any two people who are around together a bit. You're feeling a bit depressed, a bit upset, a bit annoyed, and you see the other person is happy and carefree and laughing. So you start talking to them, telling them how upset you are, but actually your unconscious - or perhaps not so unconscious - object is to bring them down, which you succeed in doing eventually. So that destroys your good spirits eventually. The positions are reversed.

Padmapani: In this particular case, though, it's very interesting. I'd never met the woman before and haven't seen her since. In no way was there any sort of relationship involved. This was purely a one-off situation. It is quite strange.

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S: Well, perhaps you did think of her as a saviour figure appearing and snatching your troubles away from you and disappearing with them.

: How would you fight the see-saw, if it is on an unconscious level?

S: Well, first of all one of the two partners has to twig what's happening; usually the one who is generally the victim - that is, the one who is usually brought down by the other person talking about his or her troubles. Eventually, as Ratnapani seems to have done, you start wondering, 'What's going on?' There has been a sort of sharing and a halving of one of [their] troubles. It's not that they've transferred any of their trouble to you in any literal sense, but they've got satisfaction out of bringing you down. They've worn you down. They haven't really shared their troubles with you. They've not really communicated, because they haven't been aware of you, in a sense. They've not cared about you, they've just got at you. 'This is how I feel, in a terrible state' - they've gone on and on about it. Then they feel better, they've got it off their chest; and not only that, but they've had the satisfaction of bringing you down and sort of exercising power in that way, that they're up and you're down. The positions are reversed.

: Is this all in the elements of the neurosis; is it all to do with ... ?

S: I don't know. I don't think it's too much of ... of neurosis, but it seems pretty unskilful and unnecessary.

Ratnapala: I think this is absolutely marvellous. It's revealed something to me. I know quite often, if I'm down and worried about the bills and Punyavati seems very cheerful and happy, it irks me that I've got all these worries. And there are so many things that she could be worrying about, and she is obviously not doing so! I make a point of giving her a list of all the things that she could be worrying about. And I wouldn't say I actually go up because of it; I think we just both stay down, which is really unskilful and very childish; and yet I didn't realize I did it until you spelled it out like that.

S: I call it a see-saw process because when one is up the other is down, and vice versa.

: Well, a slight variation on...

S: The see-saw, you know, evens out at a relatively low level, I suppose. That can also happen. You are both down in the mire, both down in the gloom, and that gives a certain

amount of rather negative satisfaction.

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: Yes, the drowning man.

S: The drowning man syndrome, one could call it.

Ratnapala: How silly it all seems when you see through it.

Ratnapani: It seems to be mutual, too, when you are doing it to each other quite unwittingly.

S: Oh yes! It's not that one is always bringing down and the other is always up. You take it in turns.

: Sounds horrible.

: Well, it can happen with male to male.

S: Oh yes, it can happen in any such situation, not only between men and women.

Atula: Do you think it's always ... ? ... if the person ... is quite intense, I personally feel it would be best if they could reveal a bit of themselves, that ... I suppose if sometimes people are talented and very intense, and obviously I can't give advice, I sort of pull back a bit. I think perhaps I'm interfering with their ...

S: Well, I should be careful about giving advice.

Atula: Well, not so much - I'm willing to give advice, it's just that I feel that sometimes the intensity is a bit negative and ...

S: Well, sometimes if communication is too one-sided, it ceases to be communication. If they're just letting fly at you, just pouring out so much you can't get a word in edgeways, well, this can sometimes leave you feeling very drained and exhausted. That isn't communication.

Atula: No; no.

: Sometimes when the other person is sort of happy, you can almost say, 'Well, don't worry, it's not going to last long.'

S: Well, you can make sure it doesn't last long!

: You wrote a poem about it, didn't you? Something about an enchanted house somewhere. I can't remember the verses, but talking to a friend and it's almost as if all these leaves, petals, were being pulled out and just naught else could grow there.

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S: Yes, that's right, a sonnet, I remember now, yes.

: I got the impression of somebody going on and on and on and on about themselves and their

troubles, and in fact no room for anything else to take growth.

S: I hadn't looked at it in that way, but yes, I think that was true probably. I can remember the incident on which the poem was based very well, even though it was nearly thirty years ago. I remember the place where the conversation took place. When I wrote the sonnet, I didn't realize the full force of that 'naught else could grow.' That sort of slipped out. But, yes, it seemed quite significant.

: I think you showed him a rainbow, or ...

S: Well, I don't think it was literally, but I tried to point out the rainbow above the storm, so to speak, and sometimes people won't allow you to do that.

Anyway, this sort of self-disclosure is not simple unburdening of oneself. Simple unburdening of oneself, though it may have a slightly therapeutic effect upon you, is not really communication. You are not taking the other person sufficiently into consideration. You're not sort of aware of him, you just want to unburden yourself. You don't care, in a way, what sort of effect it has upon him. You don't care how much it gets him down, provided you can just have your say.

Of course sometimes it happens that someone is very upset over something and you just have to listen. Sometimes that is a necessity. Sometimes ... can take place within an overall context of friendship, but for the time being communication in the full sense is, as regards that sort of situation, rather in abeyance. It's too one-sided to be real communication.

Ratnapani: You decide to let yourself be used under those circumstances, for the good of the - in the long run.

S: Yes, and willingly, so in a sense you're not being used. If you just sort of bear it like a martyr, ... that isn't a very positive attitude.

: There's no way that self-disclosure is just depression, I mean just - ?

S: No, the psychologist in question spoke of self-disclosure, but it's really - perhaps he meant it is a part of communication. You don't sort of pour everything out regardless of how the other person is responding [246] to that, or how they're feeling about that, whether they find it interesting or not.

Atula: So it's an awareness of the other person involved.

S: Hm. In other words, there is no communication, in the real sense, without awareness of the other person. But sometimes you may feel a great need to pour things out and be aware of the fact that it isn't the most enjoyable experience for the other person, but you know that there are exceptions and therefore you feel free to do what you are doing; that is another kind of situation.

Dhammarati: The affirmation part of the communication exercises ...

Ratnapani: [Be careful to?] apologise after it - 'I'm sorry about all that, but I needed it, thank you.'

S: Yes, yes, but that may be understood. It does sometimes happen that way.

Prasannasiddhi: Well, with a good friendship, you won't even have to say sorry.

Dhammarati: `Love is never having to say sorry!' (Laughter.)

S: Perhaps not having anything to be sorry about.

Is there anything more to be said about this? - `His secrets he reveals to you, he conceals your secrets'?

: Well, again I can't help remembering another poem you wrote, something like `If you want to know a secret, tell one of your own.'

S: Ah, yes. Yes, you know, it's a two-sided process, it's mutual.

: Reciprocity.

S: Yes. In other words (in the same poem), `If you want to have a friend, be a friend.' This is something we were talking about, I think not in this study group; I was talking about it with someone else. Somebody says, `Oh! I don't have any friends, and no one wants to be friends with me. Nobody approaches me.' But on questioning them you find that they never go up to anybody else. They expect everybody else to come to them. They want to have friends, but don't want to be friends to anybody.

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So if you want to hear somebody else's secrets, the best thing to do is to tell one of your own, or if you want somebody to be a friend to you, the best thing to do is to be a friend to him. That's the quickest way of starting up the whole process. Assuming he hasn't already taken a violent dislike to you!

Ratnapani: Could be quite fertile ground, actually - violent dislike - as far as I can tell.

S: At least it shows a certain amount of emotional interest.

Ratnapani: Yes, ... infatuation, a sort of mutual propping up.

S: Yes. All right, let's go on, then, to: `In misfortune he does not forsake you; and his life even he sacrifices for your sake.' He's not a fair-weather friend, as we say.

Ratnapani: `Fair-weather' is liable to be more emotional in our context, isn't it? Because people aren't making and losing fortunes in the Movement, you can be happy and sad. (?)

S: Yes.

Dhammarati: More ... successful and (than?) unsuccessful. Some people are attracted to success, and friendship follows ...

S: Also people tend to ally themselves with power. I don't know whether I'm treading on dangerous ground here, but I will risk it. I think one sees this especially in the case of women.

Do you see what I mean?

: What, they tend to ally themselves with power?

S: Well, with men who are powerful or in certain positions. I notice in the Movement, in the case of women who are Friends or Mitras, they seem rather happier to have, say, a boy friend who is an Order Member; do you see what I mean? That sort of tendency. Because they see him as one of the more powerful figures within the group, because they see - of course, they see him that way wrongly - but to the extent that they do ... So I think if you're a male Order Member and you find that women who are not Order Members seem a bit attracted to you, be careful - I mean be careful anyway - but be careful for this reason alone. They may be attracted to you not for your own personal qualities, great though they may be! - but they may be attracted to you more as one of the more powerful members of the group. An Order Member, no less!

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: It can also work the other way, can't it? An Order Member - well, maybe not an Order Member, but a person of responsibility - can take the power from the group in order to develop his social life within it.

S: Well, yes, unfortunately, that is true.

: He utilizes the group and its power.

S: Yes, one should watch out in this respect. This would apply especially [to] a Chairman of a Centre or someone in that sort of position. Well, we did have a Friend who was a well-known karate teacher, and he certainly utilized his position in this respect.

(Indistinct discussion.)

Prasannasiddhi: Keats, I think, mentioned in his letters or something that when he was in the company of men he felt at ease, but when he was in a mixed situation, he didn't feel at ease. This sort of element of competitiveness crept in or jumped in.

S: Hmm.

: Sorry, I've lost the context we're talking about.

Atula: I think ... talking about ... There has been a case, I think, in the old days, that Mitras have had friends in the Order and when they've become ordained and the old friendship drops and I think there've been a few Order Members who have had a particular difficulty beyond ordination. I don't know if...

S: Difficulty in keeping up friendships with...

Atula (interrupting): Well, their kalyana mitras, whoever was before their ordination, then ceased to operate in that sort of capacity, and they felt that they had been dropped and in a sense unfortunately separated from the Order, and I think in some cases...

S: From the Order?

Atula: Yes, and I think in some cases it led to people actually - well, one person in particular - resigning. He felt particularly disgruntled.

S: [We're] not going to discuss that particular person; it's obviously too private a question. I do know in that particular case that the person who might be considered responsible for keeping up contact did make a [249] number of efforts to do so, but was rejected with such negativity that he felt he had to stop.

But certainly with regard to the sort of people who ... and the majority of those who have been ordained recently, it has been emphasized very, very much that kalyana mitrata, say, as between Order Member and Mitra continues after ordination; in fact, continues in an even better way. Everybody is well aware of that. (Murmurs of assent.)

Atula (inaudible): ... people have ...take friendship. But it does actually seem to be a passive attitude to friendship, unfortunately.

S: Hm. Well, if you are a newly-ordained Order Member and you feel that people, Mitras with whom you used to be very friendly, are no longer your friends, well, it's your responsibility, surely, to go out and contact them. They may be feeling, possibly (I'm only hypothesising), a little envious that you've been ordained and they haven't. That is a possibility you have to consider. So you certainly shouldn't just complain, 'Oh, they don't keep up friendship with you.' You should make that effort and keep it up and work at it. I think the follow-up within the Order now is much better than it's ever been. Nobody need feel after ordination that they're cut off...

Padmavajra: Even, just supposing it did happen that you felt that you were being cut off, if you really were an Order Member and you were committed, you would make efforts to correct that situation.

S: Yes, to establish contact. Not to grumble that no one was in contact with you, no one was approaching you.

Padmavajra: This thing of being a friend in misfortune; you know the way it's written: 'in your misfortune'. But I wonder if perhaps one could just take it in another way. Even if you were going through a difficult time, you wouldn't allow that to interfere with your friendship with somebody. Even if you were a bit down, you would still be friendly enough, objective enough, to consider them. You wouldn't indulge it.

S: Another situation in misfortune that does occur to me, that people can experience, is when they are ill. Sometimes it does happen that your friends are your friends when you're sort of bright and healthy, but when you're down, or maybe even literally ill, they don't enjoy your company so much.

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Dhammarati: You do have certain objective things ... people that will ... effective friendship. Some people do actually get quite negative. I find it difficult sometimes to keep positive.

S: Sometimes, yes, it is. Sometimes the best thing one can do is keep a little aloof in a friendly sort of way, recognizing one's own inability to cope with that situation, and re-establishing closer contact as soon as that becomes possible.

Ratnapani: Take him a bunch of grapes and tiptoe away immediately.

S: Or they may need more expert attention than you are able to give them, whether physically or mentally.

I remember I had one friend in Kalimpong who used to regularly send for me when his wife was in one of her tantrums. He just couldn't cope, he just used to leave me to sort her out. He'd send up a servant with a note or a message, 'Please come up quickly.' I'd know what it was all about; I'd go up, and he'd meet me. So then he'd disappear (laughter), and I'd hear it all from her. And after about two hours of this I would reduce her to a more reasonable frame of mind, then we would call him in, and then the three of us would have tea together and I'd go home. (Much laughter.)

: Absolutely shattered!

: Did you find that utterly exhausting?

S: It was sometimes very tiring, I must admit, but I was still quite young and they were both considerably older than I was and should have known better. Especially the lady. Oh yes, sometimes she used to literally fling herself on the floor in a rage and almost bite the carpet. Oh yes! She used to have paroxysms of rage, when she was frustrated and couldn't get her own way, which was often; and she was quite a strong-minded person. When she was in that mood he just couldn't cope, or perhaps didn't want to.

: And what did you do? Sort of reason it through?

S: I used to just let her talk and then I'd reason, argue with her, and she'd gradually reach a more reasonable frame of mind.

Dhammarati: Maybe we should get more involved with the Bethnal Green community.

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S: I can't dispose of that one as well! She came, one may add, from a very aristocratic family - from the Baltic nobility. It's likely, in fact, that we have touched upon this already, haven't we? One might say it's the extreme expression, or the outward expression, of friendship; one which very few people indeed are ever called upon to make. Anyway, let's go on to (3).

(3) In four ways, young householder, should one who gives good counsel be understood as a warm-hearted friend:

- (i) he restrains you from doing evil,
- (ii) he encourages you to do good,
- (iii) he informs you of what is unknown to you,
- (iv) he points out to you the path to heaven.

S: So 'he restrains you from doing evil' - ... (Pali). He hinders you from doing evil. That's the

first thing, isn't it?

Tape 11, Side A

. directly ethical aspects of friendship are introduced. In other words, the true friend is the one who encourages you to develop, who helps you to develop: 'who restrains you from doing evil and encourages you to do good.' Good here, by the way, is kalyana as in kalyana mitra. It's good, spiritual. One could translate it, even, 'encourages you in your pursuit of the spiritual.'

But this is clearly a part of friendship, to discourage someone from committing unskillful actions and encourage them to perform skillful actions, both by precept and example.

'He informs you of what is unknown to you.' What do you think this refers to? Does it refer to anything which is unknown to you, anything at all?

Atula: Things which you are unconscious of.

S: But anything that you are unconscious of?

Atula: Well, something that's going to be useful to you.

S: Something that is going to be useful, something that is going to be beneficial.

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: It could be just knowledge, couldn't it? You know, something that ...

S: Yes, but assuming that the knowledge is beneficial in some way. Not just knowledge for the sake of knowledge. You may not know all the numbers in the telephone directory, but why should you?

: Which brings us back to the point that that something need not necessarily be pleasant, that he makes you aware of.

S: Yes, he may point out some fault in you. But that, surely, I expect, comes under the first two headings. Thus he teaches you. I mean genuine friendship involves the sharing of knowledge; it being understood that that knowledge is useful knowledge... knowledge that conduces to individual development. And the culmination of that is, of course, that 'he points out to you the path to heaven' - it being assumed that you don't already know that - the path to a higher state of existence. I mean, heaven is mentioned here but one need not stop at heaven, of course.

: What's the Pali for heaven?

S: Sagga. S-A-G-G-A. It's the word that comes here. Saggassa(?) maggam, the path to heaven.

Atula: Given the Wheel of Life, is the path to heaven actually encouraged in the lay tradition?

S: Well, to the extent that there is a lay as distinct from a monastic tradition, heaven is usually considered to be the goal of the layman's life, as here. Well, that doesn't preclude going on

further, because the higher reaches of the Wheel of Life, so to speak, overlap with the lower reaches of the Spiral.

Padmavajra: Does the term sagga - often with Pali words, when they're translated, there's a richness of meaning which we miss - is the word sagga - ?

S: No, I think here sagga is just heaven or highest state of mundane enjoyment.

: Is it true that when merit is used up in the deva realms one falls into the lower forms of existence, i.e. the hell worlds?

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S: Well, once the merit that has brought you to that higher realm is exhausted, you can only fall.

: Yes, but to `a' lower realm, as in, say, the human realm, or to `the' lower realms, the hell realms?

S: No, it would be to `a' lower realm, depending on what other karma you have to your credit, so to speak.

: I see. I must have misunderstood it, then.

S: You don't necessarily fall to the lowest.

Dhammarati: So thinking back to this business about the ..., in a way it's sort of pointing out what ... heaven. It isn't always a transfer of information ... but a sort of general - It's almost like you have a relationship without ever mentioning hard information. It's almost that you're stimulating somebody ... (?)

S: Mm. I think very often the imparting of hard information, so to speak, is the vehicle of that process. As when people come along to a class, you actually tell them specific things. I mean you impart factual knowledge. You can even say the knowledge of how to meditate is factual knowledge. But something more than factual information is put across.

Dhammarati: I was just sort of thinking, a structure and a class. In a way with a class you've got a set-up so that it is very easy to discuss the Dharma and get information across.

S: To a number of people at the same time.

Dhammarati: But you come across people in so many different walks of life, and in a way the openings aren't usually as clear and structured as that.

S: I think you would find it very difficult to communicate without at the same time imparting information, of whatever kind. Because supposing you just start the conversation by saying, `It's a lovely day, isn't it?' Well, that's a factual statement. You're imparting information - which, no doubt, the person already possesses (laughter) - that it is in fact a lovely day. You don't ever really get away from imparting information. But that is just the vehicle.

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Atula: So the criterion in that sense [is that] you are trying to encourage, we are always trying to encourage, trying to give, to part with, knowledge that is going to be beneficial.

S: Yes. And not only that the knowledge is beneficial but that in imparting that beneficial knowledge itself you communicate yourself, which is beneficial. You have a stimulating or inspiring or encouraging effect upon the other person.

Prasannasiddhi: What do you mean by 'that is just the vehicle'?

S: Well, for instance, supposing you meet somebody and say, 'Oh, it's a lovely day, isn't it?' Well, it's not actually your purpose to inform the other person that it's a lovely day. You are just using that as an excuse, so to speak, as a vehicle, to express general friendliness. Do you see what I mean? So you can even extend that to something about the life of the Buddha or about the history of Buddhism. It's not so much those facts which are important, but the spirit you can communicate through them. They are the vehicle.

So very often we impart information not because the information as such is important, but because in the process of imparting that information we can in fact communicate something which is even more important. That is to say, when speaking about the weather we communicate friendliness. The information about the weather is not in the least important. Maybe it's not even information. It's pseudo-information, inasmuch as the other person already has it at his disposal.

Prasannasiddhi: But what you actually are talking about or what you actually say is somehow related to the spirit which you are communicating.

S: Mm. Well, sometimes it may be, sometimes not. I mean you can sort of communicate positivity by means of information, or with the help of information which is in itself of no value, like the so-called information about the weather. Or you may be, say, imparting information about how to meditate to a newcomer. Well, you can communicate that in two ways: you can communicate it just as information in a dead sort of way - it's still quite beneficial - but if, while imparting that information, you can use the imparting of that information as a vehicle to communicate your own positive emotion, then it becomes much more beneficial. There's an extra dimension added.

Prasannasiddhi: So there's sort of two aspects to it? There is actually what is communicated which may have an effect in one way, and the [255] actual words are the sort of, I don't know, the intellectual side, perhaps; and then there is the sort of spirit which is communicated.

S: Yes. What I was saying originally was that probably there is no verbal communication which does not contain an element of imparting of factual information.

Prasannasiddhi: So would you say that the essence of the communication is the spirit, but - ?

S: Well, what does one mean by 'essence of communication'? One could say 'What is the real function of communication'? One could say, in the context of this particular section, that the real purpose, or the real function, of communication is that, as a result of communication, the person with whom you are communicating should feel or should experience an enhancement of his being and consciousness. Ideally, it should be mutual. So in that case the essence of

communication is a mutual heightening of being and consciousness, mutual increase of understanding, mutual increase of clarity, or mutual increase of emotional positivity.

Prasannasiddhi: Mutual?

S: Well, that is communication in, if not the highest, the full sense; inasmuch as communication is not - at its best, at least - one-sided. One thinks of an interchange.

Prasannasiddhi: So even for, say, a Buddha, there would still be a mutual heightening of consciousness?

S: In the case of a Buddha that would be very doubtful.

Prasannasiddhi: (unclear).

S: Though, of course, according to the Mahayana there is a level on which Buddhas are in communication with Buddhas, or at least with Bodhisattvas. One couldn't speak of communication in the full sense between even a Buddha and a Bodhisattva. There would still be something, presumably, that a Buddha was not able to communicate, or rather which the Bodhisattva was not able to receive. But by the Buddha making an effort to communicate, the Bodhisattva is helped to become more and more of a Bodhisattva, and eventually a Buddha. So one makes an effort to communicate something which, in a way, you can't fully communicate to someone who is not, perhaps, on the same [256] level of communication. You have to make an effort. You can't just stop and say, 'Oh well, they won't understand that.' The text mentions here 'the path to heaven,' but I was thinking one shouldn't think of the path to heaven as lying in this direction - this fork, as it were, of the road - and the path to nirvana along that fork. It isn't like that. There's one road, but heaven is a particular halting-place, one might say, beyond which the road continues.

Padmapani: This is what became clear in the beginning, wasn't it? - that there wasn't a distinction, necessarily, between the household life, the life of a lay person, and that of a bhikkhu. One just sort of went further.

S: Though even in that case one has to be a little careful, because in what sense 'went further'? Supposing that the layman, staying at home, had attained Stream Entry, and the monk hadn't: well, which would have gone further then? So the difference between layman and monk oscillates between being a difference just of lifestyles, in other words something external, and something representing an actual difference of attainment, or at least freedom to attain, if one makes the effort.

Padmapani: So the difference is both?

S: It would seem to be both, historically speaking.

Dhammarati: Why did the Buddha present it in these terms?

S: Well, the terms already existed. There already were people staying at home with their wives and families and people wandering, before the Buddha's time. His audience consisted of people drawn from or belonging to both classes. But those who had already Gone Forth

and who were wandering were freer to listen to him and follow his teachings.

Dhammarati: Does that imply that sometimes we have to, almost deliberately, present the Dharma in terms of different goals, depending on the audience we are speaking to?

S: I don't think we should ever present the Dharma in terms of different ultimate goals. I think that there can only be one ultimate goal, which is Enlightenment - as the Mahayana teaches - for all. And one has to decide for oneself what is the best way of life for one at present, in view of that ultimate aim. Your way of life may change as a result of that. Your choice may even be limited, say, due to a previous ...

Dhammarati: Depending on the audience that we're speaking to, there wouldn't be an analogous situation where - ?

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S: Oh, there would be, in the sense of you wouldn't sort of describe the Path in its entirety. You might, say, speak to an audience of comparatively new Friends about peace of mind, emotional positivity, psychological security, job satisfaction - and fulfilment in relationships, as a very skilful means! (Laughter.) In other words, you might not speak about nirvana or Enlightenment, even though you personally saw emotional positivity and psychological health only as - what shall I say? - very provisional attainments indeed, which could certainly be gone beyond.

Well, 'he points out to you the path to heaven' means he points out to you the highest possible goal that you can, at that time, perceive or appreciate. But in any case he points you further on, however much further on that may be.

Sometimes it does seem unrealistic to speak at all seriously about, say, Enlightenment and go into all the Mahayana teachings about Supreme Enlightenment to people who are still struggling away at very basic psychological and even human problems. But to 'point out the path to heaven' means you are always encouraging, if you are a true friend, your friend to go further, to aim higher; in other words, to develop. You set a positive goal before his eyes. This is what heaven means. You encourage him to reach a little further than he has attained as yet.

Prasannasiddhi: It can be done, sort of, within the realms of a quite strong friendship. It can be done with, sort of, realism. A friend may be able to see what the other person ...

S: - what is the next step, what is the immediate goal for that person. Not point out a goal that would seem impossibly remote or too far distant.

Prasannasiddhi: It's quite commensurate, is it, with a Buddhist attitude, to aim for heaven as a sort of reward for a life's work?

S: Well, yes; traditionally, yes. But with the important proviso that in Buddhism heaven is not ultimate. If upon your arrival in or at heaven you still feel a need to go further, well, you're encouraged to do so. That possibility does exist. Not if you've landed yourself with heaven all other possibilities are closed to you.

Devapriya: Those possibilities you speak of - does that mean rebirth again as a human, or can any progress be made in the deva realms?

S: Well, according to some teachings progress can be made even in the deva realms. But the general principle should be clear: that you point [258] people as far as you're able to point them for the time being, but perhaps you give a hint that there would be even possibilities beyond that which at present they are unable to imagine. But the general principle is you point people on. You point to a further higher state which they could attain. And you suggest the possibility of indefinite progress.

: It probably wouldn't be very useful to point those people whom you meet in classes towards heaven, as such.

S: No, no. But therefore one would speak in terms of emotional positivity - or whatever they do talk in terms of nowadays; I'm a little out of touch with these things! Wholeness, integration, fulfilment.

: Aren't there a special set of heavens which the Non-returner - ?

S: Well, yes, in a sense. But to what extent they are heavens is subject matter for discussion. The Pure Abodes, they are called.

: More like Pure Lands?

S: Almost, yes. Yes. This was one of the things we discussed, I think, in Tuscany, I think it was last year.

Atula: (unclear). (Laughter.)

Ratnapani: Stages of the Path...

S: Yes.

Ratnapani: The tape boys (?) are going to be getting a lot of encouragement ...

S: (chuckles) But anyway, this is an important point here in a friendship, that as a result of your friendship, your friend should have grown or should be growing. He should be in a better state now than he was when he first met you, or when you first met him. In fact you should both be in a better state, otherwise one can't talk about friendship in the full sense.

Dhammarati: Could you look at that from another point of view as well? - how much your friend's growing is measured or how ... that person is a friend? I was thinking ... you're ... over four or five close friends.

S: Yes. I mean if it's a question of selecting you should select those people, or even that person, who are or who is most willing to grow and to develop. That would be the best friendship for you.

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Dhammarati: Does that not conflict with the earlier points of loyalty? For instance, I have still got at least one quite close friendship with someone I was at school with, and it's a quite productive friendship, but in a way probably not as productive as a friendship within the

Movement.

S: Well, one has to balance one skilful thing against another, ... try to decide which is the most skilful. I have said also that one should, what is it? not waste one's energy on the weak; nowadays it's the strong who need help.

You have to weigh, perhaps, length of friendship against quality of friendship. You've probably known your parents longer than anybody else, but are you going to spend more time with them than anybody else? But certainly a friendship which does not offer the possibility, or at least a hope, of a dharmic element being introduced into it sooner or later has very, very definite limits.

Dhammarati: It certainly isn't as clear-cut as that. It has been quite productive, but not nearly as ... obstacles in the way of spontaneity. (?)

S: Sometimes it's difficult to judge on this point.

Anyway, let's leave it there, perhaps, for today. We've dealt with much more positive topics in a sense, haven't we? (General agreement.) And we certainly have opened up a little new ground at least. There's a bit more about friendship tomorrow. We'll probably come on to what seems to be, as it were, part two of the Sutta.

(Side B blank.)

Day 6

Tape 12, Side A

S: We got to page 11, (4), didn't we? We're going to consider the last of the four things that make one a warm-hearted friend.

(4) In four ways, young householder, should one who sympathizes be understood as a warm-hearted friend:

- (i) he does not rejoice in your misfortune,
- (ii) he rejoices in your prosperity,
- (iii) he restrains others speaking ill of you,
- (iv) he praises those who speak well of you.

S: 'He does not rejoice in your misfortune.' Well, one would have thought that was pretty obvious, but is it so obvious?

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Ratnapani: It's a bit sort of subtle sometimes, isn't it? You feel your heart leap at somebody else's misfortune, quite despite yourself.

S: There is a saying to this effect, or a ... to this effect. I forget who it is by - it might have been one of the French moralists - that it is difficult to refrain from a slight feeling of satisfaction when one hears of the misfortunes of one's friends. [Note inserted by transcriber: Dans l'adversite de nos meilleurs amis, nous trouvons toujours quelque chose qui ne nous deplait pas. - La Rochefoucauld.] And there is truth in that. Why is it? Because clearly you don't really rejoice in the misfortunes of your friends, but sometimes there is, as it were

spontaneously, this sort of sense of satisfaction. It's quite momentary, just a little flash of glee almost. So why is that? What does it represent?

Atula: Perhaps that it makes you the superior person in the communication.

S: Yes, the glee is, perhaps, not so much for their misfortune as for the fact that you are free from it, that that misfortune hasn't befallen you. You are, as it were congratulating yourself.

Ratnapala: And all the time it's happening to your friend it's not happening to you.

S: Then, of course, you realize, or you recollect, that your friend is your friend, and therefore to the extent that it has happened to him it is in fact happening to you. Then your friendly sympathies, your warm-heartedness, comes into play; so that at most you just have this momentary gleam of satisfaction.

Devapriya: Could it be that in terms of that slight competitiveness that one sometimes has, and you, sort of, you're up for a moment and maybe then you realize that it's not a pleasant thing to have happened, but the first thing is that you're...

S: You're momentarily superior. You're momentarily the winner. Is it 'prosperity stinks'?

Padmavajra: Do you think that all the time you're as it were - because if you're doing that you're always measuring yourself against some person - do you think, all [261] the time that's going on, there's actually not much chance of friendship going on when that is present?

S: Well, there does seem to be quite a lot of competitiveness between people. I'm speaking of competitiveness in the ordinary sense, not as it were healthy, even skilful, rivalry. I think to the extent that there's competitiveness, it's very difficult for friendship to develop - competitiveness, again, as distinct from that healthy rivalry, urging people ...

Padmapani: Could you make a distinction there?

S: Well, I think in the case of competitiveness one is concerned to win at all costs. But in the sense of healthy rivalry you're each spurring the other on to do his best. You enjoy being stretched. Winning is not particularly important to you; being stretched is important to you. No doubt that is summed up by the well-known slogan 'May the best man win', which may not always be quite sincerely uttered but that does express, perhaps, the spirit of the thing. That should be your aspiration, if you do compete at all: 'may the best man win.' That is the spirit of healthy rivalry, but the spirit of competitiveness is 'May I win at all costs even if I have to cheat' sort of thing. Winning is important, or even just the appearance of winning.

Ratnapani: One is completely identified with that situation, the winning and the losing, whereas in rivalry you're playing the game but you're in it but not of it, so to speak.

S: Well, in the case of rivalry all you're concerned with is that you should do the best that you can. If you happen to win, that's fine. That's something extra. If you don't, it doesn't matter because, still, you've done the best that you possibly could. You stretched yourself to your limits. So, if you've done that, the fact that you didn't happen to win is trivial. But to the other kind of person, the more competitive person, the winning is the important thing, even if he

hasn't been stretched. He doesn't mind. He's won. Perhaps he covets the honour and glory of winning.

So therefore I say that healthy rivalry is not incompatible with the development of friendship, but competitiveness, in the sense that I have defined it, is, I think, incompatible.

Padmavajra: I think it's very easy - when people hear that healthy rivalry is a good thing, they misunderstand and take it as competitiveness. And they say, 'I'm being a healthy rival,' but actually they are being competitive in relation to you.

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S: Yes. For instance, I know that there seems to be developing a healthy rivalry between Glasgow and east London in the sense that they quite openly say, 'We'll have a bigger and better Centre than the LBC.' Well, that's fair enough. They are not going to do the LBC down. They are not going to send any agents down to blow up the LBC or anything like that. They are just going to try to do better. Well, if that spurs the LBC on to be even better, fair enough. Maybe Glasgow will make even further efforts still. That's more like healthy rivalry.

Padmapani: There's a big Centre opening up in the future that will do better than Glasgow.

S: Yes.

Padmapani: It's a bit like what I call the bootstrap syndrome. You pull up your bootlaces by pulling there and then that pulls that one up and then you tie your boot up. (Delayed laughter.)

S: Yes, but that will require a certain amount of reflection. (Laughter.)

Padmapani: I do mean a boot in...

Ratnapala: I just noticed no one is taking notes. (Laughter.)

Devapriya: Now you're in east London you'll have to help us catch up.

Padmapani: Well, I don't know if I am.

S: You're like the Colossus of Rhodes, you're straddling both. A foot firmly planted in Glasgow and the other firmly planted in east London.

Padmapani: Stretched wider and wider.

Ratnapala: It's good to have that distinction made clear, actually. It's something I've never been happy about. People have often said to me competitiveness is very good between men, and I've always felt it had a...

S: Well, if that competitiveness is spurring one another on to do better, that's fine. But if it means trying to ensure that you get ahead by holding others back, that is completely ...

Tejamati: The way you defined rivalry is not the way it would be defined outside the Movement.

S: Probably not. I think very often outside the Movement competitiveness and rivalry are used as practically synonymous. But I think we [263] ourselves could usefully use this sort of distinction, because there is a distinction between the two things.

Tejamati: Because, in the past, what we've talked about is healthy competition - healthy competitiveness.

S: Perhaps we can just say a healthy competitiveness, or just competitiveness or even unhealthy competitiveness or neurotic competitiveness. There may be a better word for it.

Padmavajra: In that rivalry, presumably you are trying to really stretch yourself in relation to the other person, but you have a concern about the other person as well, presumably. Whereas in competition you have no concern whatsoever.

S: Yes. Competitiveness in the ordinary sense is completely ruthless.

Ratnapani: Yes, you rejoice as he outdoes you, because you are impressed - whatever it might be. I experience it maybe just in working: who does the most the quickest. As he streaks ahead of you you let out a roar of laughter and try again.

S: One could say that. This idea of what I've called healthy rivalry harnesses man's natural competitiveness, which may not be particularly healthy, and sort of sublimates it. I think competitiveness is very deeply rooted among human beings; perhaps more among men than among women - I'm not completely sure of that, but possibly - and even so among animals. For instance, I was reading someone's travels in the desert the other day, and he had some comments on the behaviour of camels. He said that in the case of the camel caravan there's always a leader and no camel could ever be induced to go past him. It was so ingrained in them that, no, you could push and kick and beat the camel, he just would not go in front of the leader. But there's also an interesting thing that it was very difficult to get a camel to become leader. If the old leader died, you selected the one that you thought was the oldest and the most experienced camel and you got him to take it, but he usually wouldn't. He had to be pushed into the front and given a few blows, and he would be obviously very reluctant, and he would keep turning back, clearly refusing the job, trying to mingle with the other camels. But in the end he'd be pushed ahead by the camel drivers and with great reluctance he'd wander around for a bit and sniff the air, and then he'd get his direction and he'd patiently accept the job with a sort of sigh, and off he'd go, and off go the other camels after him. (Laughter.) And from the time that he took up his post, again no other camel in that caravan would ever venture to go past him. It's quite extraordinary. Especially the reluctance, which seemed quite human; he was just not [264] happy to take on the responsibility, as though he knew what a responsibility it was. So there is this in - well, this is a bit more sensible than some human competitiveness. So it shows that there is this [fact], or the recognition of this fact, in animal behaviour.

Padmavajra: It raises the whole area of, I think very often people quite like the idea of having a position of power, but they don't like the responsibility that goes with it. They like the position but not the responsibility.

S: I think it's one of the arts of the spiritual life to harness animal instincts and tendencies and put them to work in the interests of the spiritual life itself, rather than trying to negate them.

Because if you negate natural human competitiveness, just as you negate natural human aggressiveness, you end up not with something spiritual and angelic but something rather weak and namby-pamby instead.

So, 'One who sympathizes should be understood as a warm-hearted friend' because 'he does not rejoice in your misfortune.' On the contrary, 'he rejoices in your prosperity.' That's a quite important thing, in that if some good fortune befalls your friend you should heartily rejoice in that. There should be no element of envy or jealousy.

Devapriya: Well, presumably if it's your really good friend then you're sharing that to some extent.

: But do we, very often?

S: Perhaps one should make a special point of this - rejoicing in the prosperity of one's friends. Prosperity on any level. Rejoice if they're able to go away on a retreat.

Dhammarati: It's quite shocking in that second before you start to feel what you know you're supposed to feel, as opposed to what you do feel.

Tejamati: If someone gets invited on a seminar and you don't.

S: Yes. I had a quite interesting letter from one of the women Mitras not so long ago, describing her own unskilful feelings about another woman Mitra who was going to be ordained. And then, after indulging in these unskilful thoughts for a few hours, I think it was, she suddenly sort of pulled herself up short and said, 'What on earth am I doing? What on earth is this mental state I'm getting into? How awful it is. I ought to be rejoicing that that person is going to get ordained, and here I am feeling all left out and envious and spiteful.' So she felt thoroughly ashamed of herself, she said, and really pulled herself together, and [265] changed her mental and emotional state. But this is what can happen. (Agreement.) Even in the spiritual life. Even with regard to specifically spiritual things.

Atula: Yes, once you let those sort of states take over, you're lost.

S: Very often one thinks, 'Well, why not me? Why not me? Why should it be them? I'm just as good.'

: Or better!

S: Out of modesty we often refrain from thinking that, but [we think] 'I'm just as good.' Being very democratic, one doesn't necessarily want to claim to be better, but at least as good; or, even if equal, well, you're perhaps more equal than the other person! - in the well-known phrase. Even if just the same, well, more of it!

Padmapani: Bhante, when you mention in your talk about Female Will, it implies an element of competitiveness. Well, it seems to me...

S: I think it implies, I think Blake implies much more than that. I think he would say that the Female Will is, among other things, a will to domineer, a will to enslave man. I think he would say that. Though again, one must point out that when Blake speaks of the Female Will

it's against his own specific background and thought, within his own particular context; the Female Will is not quite the same thing as the will of individual females, if you see what I mean. It's the will of the alienated feminine part of the integral man, Albion himself. So it is not necessarily that the individual will of all individual females is necessarily the Female Will in that sense. Do you see what I mean? Though one could say that it's embodied more prominently in at least some women.

Padmapani: But in the context of friends, in the context of this, I'm a little bit confused over that area which I don't know, I haven't gone into, in Blake.

S: Have we got on to the Female Will?

Padmapani: Well, I was just about to say, in this context of spiritual friends, are we talking about friends of the same sex, or are we talking about just friends - in both senses? ... I mean in the context of the Movement.

S: When we're talking about friends? I would say, well, usually when I speak about friendship I'm speaking about friendship between members of the same sex, because I'm rather sceptical about the possibility of [266] friendship between people of opposite sexes. I think it sometimes can happen but I think it's comparatively rare, just because of the intrusion of the sexual factor, one might say - or mutual projection - that takes place ... Perhaps I ought to make this clearer, because it has come to my notice that two people, Order Members, I'm afraid, who are enjoying a relationship, after listening to what I had to say in 'A Case of Dysentery' thought that I was referring to 'friendships', inverted commas, like theirs, but actually I wasn't at all. I thought that would have been clear, but seemingly it wasn't.

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Padmavajra: Between two Order Members?

S: Yes. Not around the LBC!

Padmavajra: I wasn't...

S: Not even around Aryatara! There is no point in mentioning names, but this was the case, which I would have thought almost impossible, but nonetheless apparently my lecture was understood to validate their particular relationship.

Padmapani: So it doesn't really apply then to this? This element of competition, using Blake's term the Female Will, isn't really - ?

S: No, I think the Female Will is not quite something individual. That's why one mustn't think that, as far as I've understood Blake, he is not saying that the will of every individual woman is a Female Will, capital F, capital W, in that sense. So that if a woman, say, wants to do something, you can't say, 'That's just the Female Will.' That would not be necessarily the case, by any means.

Ratnapani: So it could be a woman who is being wilful, but does that mean it's not necessarily then appropriate to call it the Female Will? Do you see what I mean? It could be a bit of a label already.

S: Yes. I think perhaps one could say that - well, first of all, maybe, to go back to first principles, Blake has the idea or ideal of an integrated human being: that is to say, the Individual who, among other things, unites his reason and his emotions. The reason is not split off from the emotions nor are the emotions split off from reason. But when emotion is split off from reason and acts independently from it, it develops, so to speak, a will of its own, which he then calls the Female Will. Now, women are not necessarily representatives or embodiments of the Female Will. But you might say there is a tendency, inasmuch as women are - what shall I say? - I don't want to say more emotional than men because I don't think they are actually, but women are, as it were, more dominated by the biological side of existence than are men, and by the emotions associated with that. And when those emotions and those associated needs develop a sort of autonomy, without much reference to the rational side of things or even the woman's own potential rationality, and [there's] a lot of energy behind them, this does become a Female Will. So clearly a woman is more likely, to say the very least, to become an embodiment of the Female Will than is a man. A man becomes an embodiment of something no less bad: Blake doesn't give it this term, but one could say a sort of spectral will. It does seem that [268] a number of more active and ardent feminists are embodiments of the Female Will.

So the point I originally made was that the Female Will is not exactly competitive; when the Female Will embodies itself in individual women it doesn't seem to be simply competitive with men, or whatever men stand for in their eyes. It seems to want more to domineer and even enslave them.

Padmavajra: You said that in man it's more of a spectral will, so that Blake...

S: Well, as I said, Blake doesn't use this term. I was trying to think of something corresponding in the case of men, but certainly men would seem more likely to embody the divided intellect than women. Just as women, it seems, are more likely to embody the divided emotions.

Padmapani: How would that manifest, Bhante? - (you talked about the Female Will) the Male Spectre? How would that be embodied, in an example?

S: Well, you would get the sort of scientific person whose emotions were relatively undeveloped. Something like ...

Padmavajra: Would that be the equivalent to, say, alienated awareness?

S: No - well, it's an aspect of it but it's not quite the same thing.

Devapriya: So both of these is basically, whether it's within a man or within a woman, where the emotion and the intellect, or the emotion and the reason dissociate and there's a conflict.

S: Yes. Yes.

Ratnapani: I'm walking on ground I don't really understand very clearly, but would the sort of negative anima mode of Jung, you know, in a man, be associated with the Female Will in a male?

S: What does one mean exactly by a negative anima?

Ratnapani: Well, as I understand it, it's emotional energies which are unintegrated, undeveloped and, well, intrinsically quite infantile, in fact, in a male, ruling him for a period of time; just sort of taking over and being his motivation for a time.

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S: It doesn't sound quite like the Female Will; though again there seems to be some sort of connection. I've certainly met men like this, or men who much of the time were in that sort of mood. But the Female Will seems to be even more powerful than that, or ruthless than that, more wholehearted than that, one might say.

Ratnapani: It's more like a tantrum, I think, the negative anima mode.

S: Yes.

Padmavajra: Just something I'm not clear about. Could you actually have a man who has a Female Will? Can it be - ?

S: I don't think you can in the strict sense, but I think some men do seem to take on certain characteristics of the Female Will. But I think, in the case of a woman, the Female Will receives a strong reinforcement from her whole organic biological set-up. I don't think a man can embody the Female Will in that sort of way, even though, yes, I mean, a man can get into moods where he does reflect it to some extent; but not in the full-blooded way, so to speak, that a woman can. I have met in my time some very classic examples of Female Will as embodied in women. I might describe one or two in my memoirs. I think there are a few known to history and in literature.

: Clytemnestra in Aeschylus.

S: Yes, she's regarded as an example.

: Would Hedda Gabler?

S: She's regarded as an example. I must say in the case of Clytemnestra ... I'm not so sure because she did have a grievance, a ... grievance.

Devapriya: Could the Female Will arise when you have a very strong biological urge in a woman to have a child, and yet [her] rational side is saying that it's not conducive to the Path, and trying to deny that, setting up a conflict?

S: I really don't know. But in the case of a woman who really embodies a Female Will there doesn't seem to be any conflict at all. Her energy seems to be flowing into that. She seems to have no doubts or hesitations. Perhaps there is a very deep-seated conflict. It's difficult to say. One can always posit a deep-seated conflict (laughter), but evidence for it is another matter.

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But one knows, I think, that women can get into a sort of mood of irrationality when they are completely deaf to all reason, in a way that it's very difficult for a man to be. They are simply as it were driven, simply possessed. They just want their own way. This is, one might say, the Female Will, or at least the raw material of the Female Will.

I must say that I fear I have sometimes come up against it, especially in the past, within the FWBO, in the case of some women - even some women Order Members. You feel there's a sort of residual Female Will; that, despite all their spiritual efforts and sincerity, there's a sort of residual Female Will that deep down is almost working against the overall interests of the spiritual life, which is especially concerned with opportunities for men and women to get together, which is always unconsciously guarding against any possibility of their being separated. Do you see what I mean?

Ratnapala: I'm sorry, I don't understand what you meant by that.

S: For instance, when one suggests any sort of single-sex situation, one can see that in the case of quite a number of women they might agree to that, but at the same time they're not really happy, and whatever they say or they do - perhaps it's not very conscious - but it's sort of calculated to make that possibility inoperative; to create situations where, or rather to safeguard the continued existence of situations where, men and women can get together and not be separated; because the whole side of life which that getting together of men and women, especially sexually, represents is so important to them. So there is this undercurrent of resistance to anything that threatens that, which is sometimes not very conscious, or very often of which women themselves are not completely conscious. And this is very, as it were, intractable. It never gives up. It is quite, well, inexorable. It's as though it just can't be changed, it won't change, it is not going to give up that particular thing. Do you know what I'm getting at? Or is it something foreign to you, this ...tional experience?

Padmapani: I know what you are getting at, but I keep thinking it could be that that person is trying to - I hope this isn't considered pseudo-liberal thinking - it's almost like this woman wants a safe nest in order for her to work out her thing, because if it was single-sex and she found out that's what she didn't want, she would be in a quite sticky position and she would be...

S: (interrupting) Well, she wouldn't be, because there is the whole wide world, apart from the FWBO.

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Padmapani: Oh yes, I agree with that, but somehow I think it's almost like the long-term thing. It's going to be very difficult because there's parts of them that do want to grow but there are these other parts that want to grow up in the way that women would see as naturally, which means...

S: (interrupting) Well, this is fair enough; I quite recognize that; I accept that. But it's as though this sort of woman, this sort of Female Will, doesn't want that ever, anywhere, there should be such situations where women cannot get together with men if they want to do so. It's not that they simply want to safeguard the possibility of their own development - which is fair enough, however fast or slow that may be - but they do not want that there should be anywhere those situations in which they are potentially not included, and the values that they represent. Do you see what I mean? One sort of manifestation of this which we encountered earlier on is their resistance to the idea of men's communities. It's not that all the men in the world are going to be shut up in men's communities, but some women do not like the idea of men's communities at all, even if it doesn't involve their own menfolk. Do you see what I mean? It's a sort of affront to them, a threat to them. Therefore they are not happy with the

idea of men's communities, even though it does not affect them personally in any way. There is that resistance to the idea. They do not wholeheartedly welcome it.

Dhammarati: I think hardest to understand is this idea that ... is accessible to reason, ultimately you(?) cannot point out why they're trying to set it up.

S: I have personally tried, in the case of individual women, say, years ago, and this is what I found I came up against: a rock-bottom resistance, absolutely rock-bottom. So this gave me some food for thought. I certainly know that within the Movement now, with many women Order Members at least, if not the majority, they do quite happily accept the existence of men's communities and women's communities and are genuinely in favour of them. But that is because they've managed to push beyond that particular sticking point, as it is for the majority of women. But it isn't easy for them to do that. And there are quite a few women in the Movement, those who are either Mitras or Friends, and even a few women Order Members, who have not succeeded in pushing past that point, and who do not wholeheartedly accept men's communities or women's communities - even regard them as a bit of a joke.

Padmapani: So this pushing past that element, moving into new areas, do you see also tied up with the fact that women have resolved their biological urge?

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S: Well, they may not have resolved the urge itself, because - whether with regard to men or with regard to women - you can sort out something theoretically quite genuinely, but you may not have sorted it out in practice yet. But I am sure quite a few women have sorted out the biological question of, say, whether they want to have children or not, theoretically; they are quite sincere in that. But they may not always feel in accordance with their own decision. I wouldn't say that was Female Will.

Padmapani: I wondered whether that was one of the reasons why there are quite a lot of women who are ill in the Movement, if they had a lot more illnesses, because although they might have on a reason level sorted it out, on an emotional level they could be kicking.

S: This is so. It is not even emotional, it may be just physical. I do wonder this myself - whether the forcible denial of a biological need, say, the need to have a child, doesn't result in physical and emotional disturbance. Well, I'm sure it must.

Atula: It would be a very difficult question, because I think a lot of men are not a very well bunch really, are they?

S: Not very - ?

Atula: Well, they don't seem a very healthy bunch.

S: I think on the whole the men are healthier than the women, to generalize a bit.

Atula: There are a lot of men that...

: There are a lot more men, though, aren't there?

S: Yes. Yes.

Atula: There are a lot of men who go down very quickly.

S: Well, there's another thing we have to remember: that a lot of people are living in communities. I think we have to wake up to the fact that there is a sort of health hazard in living in communities. Because if one person catches something, most others catch it because you're living so close together. Whereas if you were living alone in your own bedsitter you probably wouldn't catch so many colds. I think we will have to develop a strategy for dealing with these sort of things: maybe have an isolation room in each community, which someone could be put into. I think we may have to think about these things quite seriously.

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But to come back to the question of the women, I do really think that some of them at least are in the sort of poor state of health they are because it's a repercussion of their denial of their real urges. This is why, in the course of the last couple of years, I've come to the conclusion that if a woman within the FWBO wants to have a child she should just be encouraged to have it. Because I think, even if she hasn't got a husband or a regular boyfriend, the situation is such, within the FWBO now, that she will get the necessary support from her friends within the Movement. And she can be quite sure that, after having to occupy herself with the baby for a couple of years full-time, she'll gradually be able to get back into classes and retreats and so on. This has happened with several women already.

So it does not mean that if they have a baby they are permanently excluded from spiritual life, or indefinitely excluded. It doesn't mean that at all. So I think probably, if they really want to have a baby, and at the same time they don't want to give up their spiritual aspirations, it is probably better if they are just encouraged to have the baby. If their aspirations are genuine they will not be lost, as it were, on the way. They will just have to accept that, for two years ...

Tape 12, Side B

.. in the meantime they're in individual contact - friends visit them, Order Members visit them. So I don't think that the having of a baby will hold a woman back from spiritual life and spiritual development, if she really wants to be involved in that. Not in the long run. So certainly if a woman said she really wanted to have a baby I wouldn't discourage her, a woman within the FWBO. I wouldn't say, 'Well now, that's incompatible with your spiritual aspirations, you should not have the baby.' I wouldn't say that; not just on those grounds. I would encourage her to go ahead and have it. I think she would be the better for it in the long run, not only materially but spiritually.

Ratnapala: The thing is it seems a part of that female urge can be a little bit more than just the male seed - in other words, just to be impregnated. She wants a nest, somewhere to bring a child up.

S: Well, yes. I think that's quite reasonable, because after all the woman, or the female of any species in that situation, is relatively helpless, so she wants a situation of security within which the child can be born and spend the first few years of its life. So I don't see that as unreasonable at all, if she...

Padmapani: That's where the problems start.

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S: I think the problem starts if she expects that security necessarily from the seed provider, and all the more so if he himself is involved in the spiritual life. But I don't think that it's necessary, within the context of the FWBO, to expect the seed provider, let us call him - the biological father - to fulfil the function that he used to in the past, because there is the positive group, which should as it were take over at least some of those functions. Apart from that, there is social security. Formerly you needed someone just to support you; now there is not the problem any longer - for, let's say, an unmarried mother. It isn't a problem. So I think we can develop a new pattern here.

Atula: Though it's getting difficult because that was the formal relationship: that the father actually was being provided by social security. I think the social security do get quite hard on single women to find the father, so there are a number of difficulties in that sense. But I think if there is a positive group, perhaps there's no need to get away from the old relationships. But it definitely does seem to need that strong security around the woman if she's going to have a child like that. She needs a lot of support.

S: Well there are three or four instances I know of within the FWBO in the last few years [where] they seem to have got on all right. In fact, one woman I spoke to a few days ago, whose son is now four, is already looking around for a men's community to put him into! I said I thought she should wait until he was seven or eight! (Laughter.) And then I asked her how soon she wanted to put him into a men's community. She said, 'Tomorrow, if possible!' She thought it would be the best possible thing for him. He is also getting to be rather a lively child...

Ratnapala: Well, that sounds more the motive behind it.

S: - and needs perhaps a firmer hand. So perhaps we have to develop arrangements like that.

Dhammarati: Do you think the idea of having a seven or eight-year-old boy in a men's community is a good thing or an unfortunate necessity?

S: Well, I think there are men's communities and men's communities. I mean you can't just introduce a seven-year-old boy into a men's community and expect it to remain the same, that he's just sort of added on. That wouldn't be fair, that wouldn't be right. So I think if a seven- or eight-year-old boy is introduced into a men's community there's got to be a general agreement and acceptance of that, in a quite wholehearted way, by all the men in that community, recognizing that they will all have a special responsibility and a part to play. Do you see what I mean? And not that they're just going to carry on with their usual life [275] and he's got to fit into that. So it will mean a modification of the men's community, if it is going to have a boy or seven or eight in it. So that might mean that you have different kinds of communities, some of which are geared in this way and others which don't want to be.

Dhammarati: Can you see in some situations that sort of community having sort of productive advantages, or is it just in a way a shared obligation, that would be better if...

S: I think it would be quite helpful to the growing boy to be in that sort of situation, from that age. I do remember that, say, in Ceylon, you get boys admitted to a monastery from the age of seven as novices. You get the same sort of situation there, and it seems to work very well

from an ordinary human point of view.

Ratnapala: I really wonder how many men in the Movement would be willing or, in fact, even able, to have a young child about the place. It's all very well to have a game of football with them for half an hour, but having them living with you for any length of time, especially if you don't have that biological bond - in other words, they're your child - as it were; something happens even in men when they have children, a bond is formed which makes you actually want to look after them, whereas you perhaps don't like other children, or didn't like them before you had some. I don't know; I wonder how it would work, actually.

S: Well, it does work. Well, I don't want to idealize the East, but it certainly works with the novice monks. The older monks do look after them very carefully. It's the same in Tibet. Also one even finds in the case of the joint families in India, the extended families, that the younger children generally are not so much the exclusive responsibility, not to say property, of their parents as in the nuclear family in the West. Do you see what I mean? But every adult in the family recognizes some responsibility. So I think that general sense of responsibility on the part of the older generation to the younger is more sort of widespread than perhaps would seem from our nuclear situation in this country, say.

Ratnapala: Well, because of the nuclear situation in this country don't you think it would be difficult to set up the sort of situation you're suggesting?

S: No, no more difficult than to set up the communities themselves. Because you have already overcome the nuclear tendency. But, of course, as I've said, it must be a matter of general agreement. I mean every member of the community must be happy to make that arrangement.

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Atula: Yes, it would have to be a community that intended to stay together.

S: And geared to it. Not, as I say, just expecting the boy to fit in. He'd require some time and attention and soon, and clearly there would have to be an acceptance of certain things which they might not have accepted, or wanted to accept, had they all been living on their own as adults together.

Atula: Presumably it would still be better if there was contact with the child before actually coming to the house, as well: quite a lot of interaction with the child.

S: Well, no doubt all that would have to be considered as we got individual instances arising. But I see that as a possible pattern of development.

Ratnapani: There could be certain advantages for the older people. You've got a responsibility to care then, it's not just an option. You've got a responsibility to care and be concerned with another human being's development, all round. You can't just turn off and not bother occasionally. That could be quite good, in a way.

Ratnapala: The other thing that concerns me is that it always helps, in a sense, if one person or two people have a responsibility for the child. They tend to fulfil that responsibility, whereas you know what happens when anything is everybody's responsibility.

S: Well, it might have to be like that in the community, that there is someone who is definitely responsible, as with Mitras; that there is someone whose Mitra that person is.

Tejamati: Only it would probably happen that the boy would gravitate towards one or two people especially, anyway.

S: Yes. Or maybe if his father, his actual father or biological father, is living in a men's community, presumably he would be the one who would take up the great, or at least the sort of residual, responsibility. This question has already arisen with regard to an Order Member who had a child of about that age, I think, because his former wife, who was living with somebody else - might even be married to him - was caring for the child. Now she's left that particular person, is going to live with another man, and I was informed that the child was not included in her plans. She's not - well, she knows of the FWBO, but she's not really connected with it; so the father, who is an Order Member and living in a community, is now seriously having to think whether he should take his son [277] to live with him in the community, which no doubt will be a good idea; probably the best solution from the point of view of the boy, if his mother didn't want him. But then the Order Member concerned would have to obtain the consent of the other men living in the community. They would have to accept a share, at least, of the responsibility.

Anyway, we've wandered a little far afield. 'He does not rejoice in your misfortune. He rejoices in your prosperity.' [But] before we do get back on to the track, I think we must understand that human nature is very malleable, and social institutions are very malleable. There are all sorts of peculiar social cultural patterns in different parts of the world. We don't necessarily have to stick with the one we've been landed with, just because we've been born and brought up in the midst of it. I was reading about an American community - quite a large one - which continued for several years - several decades, I think - in the last century; and they had the institution of multiple marriage: that everybody in the community was married to everybody else. It seemed to work quite satisfactorily, so long as the community lasted. And children were brought up communally. That seemed to work quite well. So institutions are all man-made, and they can be unmade and remade by men, by human beings.

So we shouldn't hesitate to think in terms of developing a social pattern of our own within the FWBO, in accordance with our own fundamental ideals: a pattern which makes those ideals more easily realizable. Some of us, no doubt, especially the older generation like myself, have got one foot planted in the old society and the other in the new. We sort of bridge the gap. But some of you, the younger ones, are lucky enough to have come into the nucleus of a new society pretty early on, without too much experience of the old, and that's definitely an advantage.

'He restrains others speaking ill of you and praises those who speak well of you.' It is not that he refrains from speaking ill of you himself, or praises you himself: 'He restrains others speaking ill of you and praises those who speak well of you.' So he's a sort of warm sympathetic friend indeed, a warm-hearted friend indeed.

Ratnapala: It's very easy not to say something, I think, if someone's slagging off, say, a friend or an acquaintance, someone you feel fond of. It's very easy just to stay silent - perhaps not join in, but remain silent.

S: But this says 'he restrains others'; and, especially if your friend is being unjustly treated, or unjustifiably, it's your responsibility to correct the person who is committing that injustice.

(Break in recording; a chunk of indeterminate length omitted.)

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S: I mean, I don't think that need be the case in England at least, because it's economically possible for the woman to survive, and the child to survive, without an individual male supporting them economically.

Devapriya: How incumbent do you feel it is on a seed-provider, I suppose in a sort of moral sense, to support, if he has - ?

S: Well, I take this view, that if one is thinking in terms of having children - if a woman definitely wants a child, then if she feels that it is necessary, if she feels she needs to have a man around her to look after her and as it were to be a regular husband, she just has to make sure that she finds someone like that. Not simply allow herself to get pregnant and then hope that he'll do what she wants him to do. I think there has to be a definite previous understanding between two people, that - yes, we both want children and yes, we're going to live together for that purpose. I don't think it's morally right for a woman to allow herself to get pregnant and then try and put moral, or allegedly moral, pressure on the father of the child to rally round and support her, or even marry her. So I think if a woman who has not entered into an agreement with a man amounting to a sort of marriage agreement finds herself pregnant, I don't think she can call upon him as of right for any kind of support.

Dhammarati: The most complicated situation is when there has been no intention to have a child but contraception breaks down.

S: But everybody knows that contraception does this. At least they know in England, I should have thought, or at least they should know within the FWBO. If you haven't got that degree of mindfulness, awareness, you've no business with Buddhism. You should [know that] actions do have consequences. This is the first lesson of Buddhism. If you can't apply that in a simple straightforward way to such a thing as a simple matter of having babies - everybody knows that if you have sexual intercourse with men you are likely to have a baby, for a woman that is. Everybody knows. So if you can't practise mindfulness to that extent, you are not cut out for Buddhism anyway. (Laughter.)

Ratnapani: I think Dhammarati means where they were making a mindful attempt to prevent...

S: (interrupting) But they should be aware of that too.

Ratnapani: That possibility, yes.

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S: They know. I mean any sort of sensible person should know what degree of reliability attaches to various kinds of contraceptives. The only safe contraceptive is abstention. I mean totally safe. Everybody knows that, I think?

Ratnapala: Well, so is vasectomy.

S: I include that among contraceptives. I'm not talking only about the temporary mechanical

contraceptives. Yes, there is vasectomy. And there is the corresponding operation for the woman.

So, in my own mind - having thought about these things quite a lot over the last few years and having talked about them with various people - I think if one is thinking in terms of having children, one needs to look upon it more as a sort of mission, almost; as a serious matter. It's not something you just stumble into. You should take it on quite seriously, and be prepared for quite a few years to put that first, before any other commitment. I don't think you can do it on any other terms. In the case of a woman, if your urge to have a child is strong, the best thing you can do is to find a man also who wants not just to sire a child but to devote himself to bringing up his own children. And if you allow yourself to get pregnant before you have made that arrangement, entered into that arrangement with a man, well, you're just silly. A woman should know better than that. But if she does find herself pregnant, she should have the child and manage as best she can.

Ratnapala: Could I say just one thing? We were talking about a woman having a child, especially if you happen to be responsible, as an awful lot of bad news; but just to redress the balance a little bit, bringing up children is intensely enjoyable. There's a great deal of satisfaction involved.

S: Yes, if you enjoy doing that sort of thing. I mean painting is intensely enjoyable - if you enjoy that sort of thing. It certainly is; bringing up children is one of those things that can be intensely enjoyable; but, presumably, if you want to do it. If you don't want to do it, it can be the opposite, just like any other activity which you are forced into which you don't want to engage in. So if you're one of those people who could find bringing up children intensely enjoyable, well, clearly you're one of the people who qualify for parenthood - otherwise not. If you just regard children as an unfortunate accident, clearly you're not cut out for parenthood, and should be careful to refrain from becoming a parent. There are quite enough people in the world by this time, so if you don't enjoy bringing up children, there's no need for you to take on that responsibility, or land yourself with it. Refrain; leave it to others who are better qualified, better equipped.

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Atula: If you want to do it.

S: Yes. I think one must regard it as a positive option, if one allows oneself to enter into it. Anyway, is that clear to some extent?

Voices: Mm. Yes.

S: And I do think that more responsibility here rests on the woman than on the man because, obviously, she is the one who becomes pregnant. So, in her own interest, she needs to be especially careful. She can't dissociate herself from that. In the case of the man, if he impregnates a woman, that's the end of it so far as he is concerned, if he wants it to end there. But in the case of a woman, she is pregnant, and the process continues.

Padmapani: It's very interesting. It's almost totally different from the way that the DHSS sees it.

S: How do they see it?

Padmapani: I think they see it from the point of view [that] it's the moral responsibility of the man - you can see why: it's all bound up with economics - whether they are married or not, if they find out, to provide full support - well, at least, a certain amount of support - for the child and the mother.

S: Well, the man admittedly does have a certain amount of responsibility, there's no doubt about that. But, on the other hand, he wasn't clearly thinking in terms of an honourable marriage, it would seem.

Padmapani: Thinking in terms of fifteen years, yes!

Atula: Certainly in the world, perhaps not so much today, but in the past, certainly a woman with a child was looked down upon.

Padmapani: Without a husband.

Atula: Without a husband. So...

S: I think it's probably just a legacy from those times. Anyway, gone are the days when a woman could claim that the child was fathered by a god!

Dhammarati: (inaudible comment.)

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S: Anyway, really we must get back to our text. This seems pretty obvious. 'He restrains others speaking ill of you. He praises those who speak well of you.' He more than just sings your praises himself; he even praises those who praise you. Again, it's like giving double measure, isn't it? But, in a case of restraining others speaking ill of you, if they speak ill of you - without reason especially - it's your positive duty to intervene and check those who are speaking ill.

Ratnapani: Whether it's your particular friend, anybody in the Order or the Movement, or almost anybody at all, in a way.

S: Yes. So how much more so in the case of a friend, one might say? This is why it's one's duty to correct any misrepresentation of Buddhism, or of the FWBO; not just remain quiet.

Devapriya: It's like the injunction, as I remember, of the Buddha going to the bhikkhus about other people speaking either in accordance with the Dharma or not: that they should praise those who spoke in accordance with Dharma and restrain those, and point out, those who weren't. It's a general responsibility, surely, if you hear an untruth, to speak out against it.

S: Right, yes. Of course, there's even a suggestion here, perhaps, that if others are speaking ill of your friend, even with justification, you should restrain them, because it's very rarely that there's any objective need to speak ill of anybody; even if the facts are as you state them to be. Maybe someone has a particular weakness, but why air that generally? If you feel the need to say something about it, well, go and see the person himself. Expostulate with him. What need is there to talk about it? Unless there's a definite positive occasion to do so, or positive context, as when one is, say, discussing someone's readiness for ordination, one can then

mention, say, a weakness which might get in the way of that person being ordained, quite objectively; it's not criticism or speaking ill.

(TEA BREAK)

... If you agree to be an office bearer you must agree to be that office bearer. Certainly you can delegate work, but you can't delegate that overall or residual responsibility which you have by virtue of holding that particular office. This is why I say, within the context of the FWBO generally, if everybody fails in their duty eventually it comes back to me. I'm the one ultimately responsible, because I'm the one who started the whole thing off. So it's like that at every level, and one has to accept that. Not that I'm doing all the work. I may be doing now not more than 1% of the work; the other 99% is being done by other [282] people. But I still recognize a sort of residual responsibility. If anything goes wrong, ultimately it's my responsibility. Perhaps not my fault - thought it might be my fault sometimes - but certainly my responsibility.

Padmapani: That's one of the difficult things, isn't it? - when one has responsibility, delegating it to people unless you're sure they can handle the responsibility. At the beginning it's difficult.

S: You can only be reasonably sure. You can't be absolutely, as it were, scientifically, mathematically sure. You can only be humanly certain. You can't be infallible. Not with regard to other human beings. They're fallible too. You're a fallible human being having to put your trust in another fallible human being. You can do it to a certain extent, but usually you can't be absolutely sure, ever, unless that particular person happens to be a Stream Entrant. Then you can be reasonably - well, you can be certain - there are certain things he won't do or will do. But even to know whether someone is a Stream Entrant isn't an easy matter, assuming perhaps that you are a Stream Entrant yourself, at least, to begin with.

Padmavajra: Was there a principle in ancient Greece that if there was an older man who was teaching, bringing up a younger man, if he wasn't actually developing it was the older man who was ...?

S: Yes. I'm glad that principle doesn't obtain any longer, otherwise I should be in great difficulties (laughter) - the things that some Order Members get up to!

Padmavajra: Maybe they ... responsibility ...

S: Yes, but anyway it does illustrate this factor of residual responsibility. Indeed. So one has to be very careful what advice one gives, what principles one lays down; because if people take those seriously and act upon them, you are responsible. You're responsible if something goes wrong.

Padmavajra: It's very much the case, isn't it, with an Order Member in relation to Mitras - you are responsible for the kind of atmosphere to produce ... how they are getting on.

S: Yes. This brings up one particular point. Perhaps this is the place to air it a little bit. Something I've been concerned with, because it does affect some Mitras, though it seems to affect the women more than the men. It seems that some people, both Order Members and

Mitras, have been going to a particular woman medium. Have you heard about this? [283] (Affirmative murmurs.) Some of the information, or some of the advice, that she gives seems to go quite counter to the FWBO.

Atula: I must come clean: I actually went to her... Certainly she never said to me the things that I've heard that you are worried about; but I certainly haven't said anything to Mitras about it.

S: It seems pretty clear that she is critical of the FWBO, and has said to a particular woman Mitra that a lot of people from the FWBO had gone to her - enough for her to form a general idea about the FWBO - and that it was having a harmful effect upon people.

Atula: Oh, I haven't heard that.

S: So clearly this is not a very good thing. In a way, it's a question of loyalty, you see? I mean, should you expose yourself, or should you seek advice from someone who it seems is critical and hostile towards the FWBO? But in the case of Order Members it has an undermining effect on Mitras if they come to know that the people to whom they are going for advice themselves go for advice outside the FWBO. The Mitra doesn't know where he or she is at. Are they being guided from within the FWBO or from outside the FWBO? So this is a quite serious matter.

Devapriya: I think maybe, I don't know, but I think maybe it started off from women going about their health...

S: Yes, I think it did.

Devapriya: - and the whole thing of what we talked about just now about women, biological and that affecting health, and that maybe sort of, the FWBO's premises have maybe been not clearly understood and therefore the response that the Order Members and Mitras have got has been...

S: (interrupting) But some people have definitely gone about, as it were, spiritual things; because I've heard that recently a male Mitra was in effect almost advised to do less meditation, for instance. I assume it wasn't for the sake of his health that he was so advised. Do you see what I mean? The borderline is very difficult to define.

Padmavajra: Well, if it's a medium it is obviously...

S: Yes, yes, it is something, as it were, spooky. It's as it were pseudo-spiritual or allegedly spiritual.

Padmavajra: With presumably quite a different criterion of her own.

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Atula: She is a very worldly woman. I would never go for spiritual advice.

S: But some women, some men also, seem to have done that; not just advice about health. Or perhaps she volunteers advice of a general nature. But she has clearly expressed criticism

about the FWBO to people who have gone to her from the FWBO. Also there is the point - this is to me not without significance - that it says she charges \$20 per session.

Atula: She didn't charge me that.

S: This is what some people have been paying. So if they pay as much as that, it's clearly of some importance to them. You don't pay \$20 a session just for a bit of chat.

Padmavajra: It seems to me to be a bit - we did talk a bit about this downstairs - but it seems to me that it's very serious if an Order Member has to go outside the Movement for spiritual advice. It seems to me to suggest there is something very much missing in their communication with other Order Members.

Padmapani: Well, one of the criteria for Mitras is that they are not shopping around.

S: Indeed, yes, and this seems to suggest...

Padmapani: Still less an Order Member.

S: Indeed! For instance, I recently got a letter from one of the women Order Members who I knew was concerned about this, and who told me that she had been concerned also and had raised the issue a few months ago and had apparently quite a discussion about it among the women Order Members - the majority of whom are very strongly against this sort of thing. But a minority, five or six women Order Members, were going along to this medium on a more or less weekly basis. One went along, I don't know how many times, perhaps more than once, because she wanted to talk about things to do with a separation from her husband (well, this is what Dhammadinna wrote to me); but then I thought could she not have talked about that to another woman Order Member? Do you have to go outside the Movement to talk about this? You could say it's a mundane thing, [but] you don't have to go outside the Movement to talk about mundane things. They are emotionally significant to you. That particular woman did talk about the same matter with me, later on.

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But what is the need for discussion? You might even say, if there are things of special interest to women that they don't like to talk about with men, well, there are other women Order Members to talk about them with. But it does seem to be this sort of murky area where you feel maybe a bit guilty about that particular interest. You feel as though you want confirmation from some, as it were, authoritative source, as it were spiritual, of something that you are doing which is not quite in accordance with what some people might call the FWBO line. Do you see what I mean? This is what I suspect.

Padmapani: It's almost as if - I think it's a bit of a micchaditthi - but it's a bit like in order to be objective you've got to go a bit outside of the Movement, in order to get the criteria.

S: Yes, [as if] the best person to ask about Buddhism [were] the Archbishop of Canterbury!

Padmapani: It does actually raise an issue that a lot of people connected with healing have elements of spiritual things connected and it would be quite interesting - I hope to see, say, Malini, and maybe Dharmapala, when they get their training finished.

S: We had this sort of difficulty originally with yoga, because it was sort of allied with Vedanta. But it seems now that the FWBO has thoroughly incorporated yoga. We've got our own yoga teachers, and we have...

Padmapani: Without the Vedanta.

S: Without any Vedanta. And it's come up again in connection with T'ai Chi, because Sthirananda has been quite concerned with the question of to what extent is T'ai Chi tied up with Taoist philosophy, and to what extent is Taoism in accordance with Buddhism? Do you see what I mean? And no doubt there are other things, and maybe you'll find that some forms of healing are associated with particular ideologies which could be more or less in harmony with Buddhism.

Ratnapani: Most spiritualists - well, I think most spiritualists - are quasi-Christian, aren't they? - Christian/Mystery rather than mysticism...

: ...mumbo-jumbo.

Padmapani: Sometimes you can get a person that can somehow - who is good, they can actually separate it. For instance, John Wheeton (?Weedon), the person who really patched up Lokamitra (to use inaccurate language) - I've seen him being down there with Lokamitra; I [286] found he was very matter-of-fact, and he kept the subject of religion or any quasi-mystical significance separate from his practice. His wife is a practising Catholic, and she's got a shrine and everything. And like you get the impression John Wheeton is very professional in the way he operates and he keeps it quite separate. So I think there are exceptions, but I think you've got to know who to go to.

Dhammarati: There are some ..., aren't there? Because I know of at least one case of a woman around the LBC who had bad health being recommended to eat meat by a homoeopath. And that just seemed to me ... your health ... lack of ethics ... (sounds of agreement).

S: Well, I think there is this..., this is why I think one has to be so careful. I mean you might go to a doctor who genuinely believed that meditation was bad for people. You couldn't accept that.

Atula: But surely in that sort of case you'd be able to engage in a discussion with certain persons?

S: Oh yes, one ought to be able to ... with the doctor straightforwardly.

Atula: You don't accept their view just because they happen to be in a professional post.

S: When you go to a medium it's rather different, because the medium professes to be in contact with spirits, you know, that can't be questioned. I think this is part of the whole attraction.

Ratnapala: There's a certain authority, isn't there?

S: Authority comes into it; because sometimes people want an authority to confirm -

Dhammadinna made the point that she felt actually that this particular medium just reflected back to people what they wanted to do, and gave them confirmation that, OK, they were free to go ahead and do it. Well, that's not a very positive situation. You won't get confirmation for your weaknesses and things you've been encouraged to give up or sort out within the FWBO. From that sort of source perhaps you're actually encouraged to indulge or to follow. So when you go to a medium you're going to another source of as it were religious authority - to use that term - outside the FWBO; so this could be considered disloyal. One might even, if one put it very seriously, consider it as a breach of Going for Refuge.

So this is why I'm quite concerned about this, especially with so many Order Members, and especially women Order Members, regularly, apparently, going to this woman. As I say, I'm concerned about it for [287] their own sake, and also I have heard that among some of the women Mitras there is a bit of uncertainty and they are a bit reluctant to go for advice to women Order Members who they know are going to the medium. Because where will their advice ultimately come from? I mean what a woman Order Member tells you, would it be coming from me? or from the Buddhist Scriptures? or it could be coming from the medium? So it does become a serious matter.

Devapriya: Maybe you ought to start charging \$20 for an audience. (Laughter.)

Ratnapani: More people might come.

S: I'll have to find some spirits first. (Laughter.) The Buddha is not enough, apparently. Spirit guides!

Ratnapani: We've all got one of those, I'm told.

S: Some mediums have got a whole number of them.

Ratnapani: It's strange that people should be so gullible. I don't know whether their medium puts on a better performance than the only one I knew, a woman I knew socially quite well. She was a lovely old thing and obviously very talented and sensitive and caring but obviously - you know, mashed potatoes and cabbage level! Very ordinary, very mundane. (Laughter.) She gave me some quite good advice of an ordinary sort, but...

S: I'm sure quite a lot of people go to mediums because they want to talk to someone about problems, but surely no Order Member should have difficulty. I even wondered, quite objectively, when I first heard about these things, are some people so cut off that they've no one to go to, no one to talk with? I certainly couldn't feel that that was the case. I know now, among the women Order Members, who has been going to this medium. None of them is out of contact. They've all got other women Order Members to talk to. In fact, they could talk to men Order Members. They could talk to me - well, a lot of them do; I've usually got a stream of women visitors, anyway. Some of them are in contact with me and have even written to me, and they never mentioned this matter. It doesn't come into anyone's reporting-in. Has it ever come into a reporting-in?

: First I've heard of it.

Ratnapani: Not to my knowledge.

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S: So that in itself is a bit unusual, isn't it? But I am looking into it. What was your personal impression of the woman, just as a personality?

Atula: Well, she's very impressive.

S: What do you mean by that? Or what impresses?

Atula: Well, I think she does exactly what Dhammadinna said. She does actually reflect back what you want to do about your life - or even makes you aware of unconscious sort of things that you know...

Tape 13, Side A

S: Or do you think - this is what Dhammadinna seems to imply - that she thought she was actually giving advice which was coming from the spirits, but what she was in fact doing was just confirming whatever you wanted to do?

Atula: I think sometimes she does go off on a strain of her own. Most of the time she was referring to this - I don't quite understand what it is. But she does go off on tacks. I must say I've come away, and I've thought about what she's said a great deal, and some of it I do actually feel is not founded. The original reason I went, one was curiosity, and also I'd been having particularly - I wanted to try and clear up a number of things; which I had actually tried to do within the Movement, but I don't think people are always...

S: But when you said you had tried to, do you think they were things that could have been cleared up within the Movement - ?

Atula: I think they could be cleared up...

S: - because it's very surprising if a woman that one, say, didn't even know, wasn't in sympathy with one spiritually, should have been able to help, and not fellow Order Members.

Atula: I think most things could be cleared up with a bit more sympathy at times, yes.

S: But did you feel that you didn't have that sympathy from other Order Members?

Atula: I feel sometimes people are a bit dismissive of something that you're trying to - Even if perhaps people feel it's negative and shouldn't - I don't think always there is enough room, people just listen and then come back at you because it's not as though ... I don't mind criticism if [289] it ..., but as long as - sometimes I think people sort of negate your actually trying to state your experience, even though perhaps your experience is not right; they don't give people always that time to objectify.

S: But don't you think you should persist and even insist that people do listen ... ?

Atula: Well, that's one of my faults in particular: like, if I feel that it's not being received then I won't pursue it. I think there is a lot of insensitivity, and I can see the reasons at times because people are so pressurized. And particularly I do actually feel that there is a lot of

insensitivity towards women, and it strikes me as one of the reasons why this sort of thing does happen.

S: I'd say I disagree with that, because the women are not insensitive to one another. And the women Order Members are not insensitive to one another. There's a good spirit among them. I see no reason why a woman Order Member need go outside to consult. I myself am always willing to see...

Atula: I think there is an atmosphere that does make women question what they are doing.

S: That's fair enough, but does any woman Order Member, for instance, need to go outside the Order to sort anything out?

Atula: They shouldn't have to.

S: I mean, the instance I mentioned, a woman Order Member wants to talk over the fact that she's parting from her husband and all that: surely that can be thrashed out with another woman Order Member?

Atula: Yes.

S: She only has an hour with the medium, presumably; she can't say all that much in an hour. I know that this particular woman spent a lot of time with other women Order Members and was living with them, had every opportunity, in fact did talk with them quite a lot. If you're just looking for approval of what you're doing, well, maybe you won't get that within the Order if people genuinely think it's unskilful. If you want approval, maybe you have to go outside the Order - but you shouldn't be looking for that.

Atula: Yes. I do think actually it goes a bit further than that. There's an actual sort of atmosphere that's set up in the Movement by general [290] trends of whatever's happening. And I do think - in a sense perhaps it's for the wrong reasons - but people do actually feel there is some lack of sympathy. Otherwise I couldn't see people actually going off like that.

Ratnapani: What we're suggesting is a lack of trust, which is why they go off.

Atula: Well, yes, but lack of trust - there's two sides ...

S: I might agree that men are not sufficiently sympathetic to the difficulties and problems of women; that may well be so. But there are enough women Order Members discussing, just women, to talk about these things amongst themselves. But that there's lack of sympathy within the Order as a whole, even though there might be individual unsympathetic Order Members, I don't really think this is so.

Padmavajra: You're saying, Atula, you feel that in relation to you there hasn't been sympathy in relation to particular problems, particular difficulties that you've had.

Atula: A bit dismissive, I think, yes.

Padmavajra: You feel there's an atmosphere of lack of sympathy. I get the impression that in

relation to Dhammarati that isn't so, in relation to other people. You can't really say it of the Order as a whole, can you?

Atula: I think I've got to acknowledge my own part in that, I'm not sort of saying it's the Order. You know, I think it's a two-sided affair, isn't it? The fact that you actually feel a lack of - you don't feel trusted, says to me that somehow I've got that impression even though it's not true. I think just to sort of see as an objective truth, it's not...

S: But if one sees that one has an impression that has not got an objective basis, well, one should act in accordance with the objective basis, not in accordance with the impression. You see what I mean? I might be under the impression, say, that you hate me; whereas you don't. But if I see objectively that you don't hate me even though I feel that you do, I should act in accordance with what I see objectively, not in accordance with what I feel. Otherwise I act as though you were an enemy, which is not fair to you. So if you act as though the Order is unsympathetic whereas as a whole it isn't, then you're doing an injustice to the Order.

Atula: Surely if that was the case and you never actually tried to do anything, then I agree wholeheartedly because responsibility rests wholly [291] on that person. But if they had actually tried to make some sort of ...

S: But I would say that if one really wants to talk to someone and get a sympathetic hearing within the Order, I'm sure one can find somebody. It may be that certain individuals are too busy, they haven't got time, even they haven't got sympathy, but I'm sure if one really wants to talk to another Order Member one can. Or as a last resort you can talk to me.

Padmapani: Supposing the problem cannot get resolved on that level, what can one do?

S: Which level do you mean?

Padmapani: The level of - well, this is a really interesting area; in other words it does actually bring in an element of neurosis, because it can't be talked out on a one-to-one level in communication. What does one do?

S: The one suffering, or the one who is being talked to about it?

Padmapani: The one suffering. What happens?

S: Well, if you are neurotic to that degree there's nothing you can do, you can only hope that your spiritual friends will take you in hand and take the initiative themselves. You are, as it were, in hell... You can only hope that your spiritual friends will take the initiative and take you in hand because you're in a sense in hell and you need the intervention of a Kshitigarbha, the Bodhisattva who descends into hell. You can't do anything to help yourself if you've reached that degree of neurosis.

Padmapani: Supposing one's friends aren't at the level of Kshitigarbha?

S: Well, I don't think your neurosis is probably of that degree that you need a Kshitigarbha.

Padmapani: I'm not personally talking ...

S: It's the Kshitigarbha principle there. Others must be able to see the state that you're in and sort of come to the rescue. One hopes there are no Order Members in that sort of situation.

Padmapani: So you think, for most people who've got slight neurotic problems, it's a matter that can be thrashed out within the context of the Movement?

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S: Well, I should jolly well hope so.

: In response to what Atula was saying in part, I've been surprised at the lack of sympathetic responses to various things that I've wanted to work out; but I've actually been even more surprised by the sympathetic responses. They have been a bit discomfiting at times, but I've realized that I've been more surprised by the sympathy than the lack of sympathy in certain quarters.

S: Perhaps the situation does call for more of trust and more of loyalty: trust that one will receive a sympathetic response, and don't let one or two unfortunate experiences put you off. Sometimes people have troubles of their own; it's difficult to listen to somebody else's troubles then. Perhaps they are very, very busy with responsibilities that have got to be fulfilled. So, you know, make full allowance for those sort of things.

And have sufficient loyalty that you'll determine 'I will only go for help within the Movement. That's the only source I can really get it.' If it's just a straightforward technical or medical matter, that's another question. But any kind of advice that affects you as a person, affects your spiritual development, well, you can only go for that sort of advice or help, opportunity to talk things over, within the Movement. Where else will you find someone with the spiritual background which you have, and against which, or in the light of which, you want to sort things out?

Could you for instance really sort anything out with a Catholic priest who believes that you are a lost sheep? He would see you as being able to sort things out only if you returned to the true fold. He might be a very pleasant and sympathetic person up to a point, but how far could you go with him?

The same with a medium. They will believe that you [should] submit yourself implicitly to the guidance of the spirits. I came up against this whole question myself once, and I've got a quite interesting batch of letters which an old friend of mine returned to me via Lokamitra recently, in which I discussed this question, because it arose in connection with someone whom we both knew and who claimed to be guided and inspired by God directly. He was a friend of both of us, both of this woman who was a friend of mine too and of myself. And we both had quite a lot of feeling for him, friendship. And he really wanted that we should - well, everybody should - accept what he called the guidance coming from God, divine guidance. And we could recognize many of the things that God was supposed to say as good things, things to be accepted, but other things we couldn't agree with.

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So in the end I sort of spelled it out to this woman who did also consider herself a Buddhist and with whom I'm still in contact (she's now about 85), and I said, from a Buddhist point of view we only Go for Refuge to the Buddha; we can't accept implicitly guidance coming from any other source. We can consider a suggestion, and then if we think it's reasonable and in accordance with Buddhism then we can act upon it. But we cannot just accept it because it comes from that alleged source. That is incompatible with our Going for Refuge and with our

being a Buddhist.

So you can go to a doctor; and for instance the doctor might advise you to eat meat; well, that's an advice, you can consider it and weigh it against your observance of the first Precept. It's for you to decide as a Buddhist in the light of your Buddhist principles that you should either eat meat or not eat meat. Not: 'Oh, the doctor, the great authority, says so, therefore I must.' Though that is very often the sort of aura that surrounds the doctor's pronouncements. In the same way, if you consult a medium or 'the spirits' - 'Oh, the spirits,' you know, 'they've said it,' as though they're some sort of higher superior power or authorities, and you feel you can't go against the spirits, as though all your primitive instincts perhaps are aroused.

Dhammarati: Do you think that that sort of perspective could be brought to bear on the medium? - that in a way you've got a certain quality of awareness involving your situation, you can accept the suggestions or not?

S: It's very difficult to argue with a medium. I tried arguing with God... (Laughter.) The only reply was the same that you get from Bible Christians: 'It's come from God,' 'This is what God says,' you can't argue with God, you know? You can only obey. This is the essence of Islam, and in fact of all theistic religions. You can argue with the Buddha (though you'd be ill-advised to do so) (laughter), but the Buddha will permit you to do that. You can argue with me, you can argue with one another; you can't argue with God, you can't argue with the Bible. You can't argue with what comes as it were allegedly from higher sources. It's not to be questioned.

Padmapani: This is the highest source, isn't it, according to Christians, it's like ... ? It's not to be questioned at all.

S: The only discussion is to ascertain the actual meaning, that is, sort of, not clear. But the actual instruction itself is not to be questioned.

So when you go to a medium you go to someone who is surrounded by that sort of aura, as it were; who believes that whatever comes through her or through him comes from a higher source and is to be accepted. [294] It's not someone's personal suggestion which you can consider or turn over in your mind. You go to someone who sort of feels that he or she is the medium - for that's the word - of some higher force, higher power, higher knowledge, insight, wisdom. I know people like - this is where their feeling of insecurity comes in: they've got ..., they like to feel some higher power is saying do this or do that. 'Shall I take this sort of treatment or shall I take that?' 'Ah, the spirits, dear, they say you take that treatment. That's going to do you good.' So you follow the advice because the higher powers have directed you to that particular form of treatment. It gives you confidence in following it. Which may not be a bad thing, as a sort of mechanism on an ordinary social level or an ordinary psychological level. It's quite incompatible with any spiritual life or spiritual development.

And human beings do have this love of falling back upon authority. We've touched upon the fact that the FWBO is a small and not very rich movement. This is one of the reasons. We don't allow ourselves ... but we try our utmost to get people to think for themselves and take responsibility for themselves. A lot of other movements and individuals say, 'Well, place all the responsibility ..., you know, I'll take charge of your life, just do what I tell you, I'm God, or I'm Enlightened, I'm inspired. All you have to do is obey.' And there are a lot of people ready to just do this, to hand over responsibility.

So even within the FWBO I think sometimes people feel like handing over responsibility; and that's why some of them, at least, go to mediums.

Tejananda(?): I seem to remember reading in The Mahatma Letters, where they talk about spirits and say exactly what they are, that they said that the spirits actually know no more than we do; they said they exist, but they know no more than we do. Not by virtue of them being spirits do they know any more than we do.

S: This would be the Buddhist view. Not that we deny that there are spirits, devas; we don't even deny they can influence the minds of people we call mediums. What we do deny is that you should place implicit faith or trust in them. That would mean you were Going for Refuge to them.

Anyway, that little area is cleared up, is it?

: Yes, to some extent.

Padmavajra: When you gave the lecture 'A Case of Dysentery', did you actually feel that - you talked a lot about emphasizing the importance [295] of caring for one another - did you feel that there was a tendency within the Order of lack of care, perhaps lack of sympathy?

S: Certainly I have felt there wasn't enough. Yes, I won't say that I felt there was a lack of sympathy in the sense that Atula seemed to be talking about; but I certainly felt we could do a lot more. Especially within communities. Especially actively and practically caring for one another.

Padmavajra: Because you did say at the end of that, I remember you saying quite strongly, that if there isn't that within the Order, then where will Order Members go to?

S: Yes, yes. Yes indeed.

Padmavajra: Where will they go?

S: Yes. I think at that time I hadn't heard about this matter of the medium.

Atula: When I heard it, I felt sorry about what I'd done ... [But] I would like to reinforce that I do actually feel there is a lack around at times. It's getting better but I do actually feel quite strongly at times.

S: But then one must make known one's needs. Sometimes people may not be aware of them. This is again something that I've been saying. I say it now to every Mitra that I come across - that if you feel you are not getting enough time for study, if you're not getting enough contact from Order Members, with Order Members - say so. Declare your needs. They may not be aware of it. So I think people generally should do that more. Don't rely on others to intuit your needs. Just tell them that you want more contact, you want to see more of them.

Atula: That's very difficult, though!

S: Ah, but that is something that one must do.

Atula: [They] get so embroiled in what they're doing that you - and also in the FWBO as a general thing, you're with people for a time and you're parted through their changing their ...

S: Well, you should make known your needs. Say, 'Look, I want to see more of you. Don't think of moving away, I'd really like you to stay here.' Let that be known sometimes. People don't let it be known. For instance - I forget the details or the names of the people - I know about a year ago, someone was thinking of moving from a certain Centre or community, [296] and I knew that the other people in the Centre or community didn't want him to do so. They really liked him and wanted him to stay. He was under the impression that nobody cared whether he came or went, so I said to the other people in the community - I think it was a community - 'Just express the fact that you really want him to stay, because he's not sure about it.' They thought he'd taken it for granted they wanted him to stay, but they hadn't expressed it. So they did express it, and he was pleasantly surprised that they did want him to stay. He thought they didn't care very much one way or the other.

So one must express one's feelings, express one's appreciation. Don't be surprised at someone moving on if you've never shown that you cared about him staying. So if you want someone to stay, to be around, to continue your friendship with, say so. Say, 'I'd like more opportunities of meeting, when can I see you again?' Or, within the community, just say, 'Look, I'm not seeing enough of all you people, let's make arrangements so that we can see more of one another.' You state your position. Then see how others feel.

Padmavajra: It's very active, it's...

Ratnapani: You really lay yourself on the line, too, you say - Because a lot of people have a fear of rejection. If you say, 'I'd really like to see more of you,' you're really laying yourself open, if you don't have trust, to someone going 'Huh!' (laughter), or whatever.

S: You don't want to sound like a sentimental drip.

: Or you're getting a completely flat response.

S: Well, it would be that no one likes you; you may have to face up to that fact, which may be your fault, it may be theirs. You don't know. You may have to look for another community, another Centre. But at least - you've come down to rock bottom, perhaps; perhaps there is no one that cares for you very deeply in that particular situation.

But I mean again there's another sort of maxim, the truth of which I see more and more almost every day, that to have a friend you must be a friend. It's no use just sitting down and saying, 'No one's friends with me, no one wants to be friends with me.' You have to go out and be friends with someone, to show that you want to be a friend, not just expect to have friends, people to come and be friends with you, while you just stay where you are. There's a lot of this around, I think, too. It may be due to or connected with people's shyness or fear of rejection, but not enough people make their needs known. Not enough people [297] let it be known frankly that they like somebody else. You don't tell people that you like them. You assume that you've tolerated them so they sort of take it for granted that you like them. You've put up with them all these years, so supposedly, well, they probably do like you. But that is not enough. It must be brought out much more into the open.

Padmavajra: Even if there was objectively a lack of sympathy within the Order, it's not enough to just give up because that might be so, you have to actually create...

S: Because you must care enough for the Order. You must see it as a weakness in the Order,

that there isn't this sympathy which you need. It's not only unfortunate for you, it's unfortunate for everybody. So if you have that loyalty to the Order, you do whatever you can about it.

Padmapani: Why do you think, Bhante, that - well, maybe you might dispute this - but why do you think that women have a more caring attitude towards women than men do [to men?] generally?

S: Well, I'm not going to generalize here.

Padmapani: It is rather general.

S: Within the FWBO - I'm not going to generalize about women outside the FWBO...

Padmapani: No, I meant in the context [of the FWBO].

S: - but within the FWBO: formerly the women didn't get together very much, this is a comparatively recent development. But they do get together quite a lot now, especially the women Order Members, but women Mitras too. There is a very positive feeling among them. Among the women Order Members it's partly because there's not too many of them, so they can get together, all them together, quite easily and comfortably, if you see what I mean. And they can know one another. There are many more men Order Members, and it's not possible for all the men Order Members to really know one another in that sort of way.

: So it might be quite good for Order Members to meet in smaller units, possibly.

S: Yes, well, this is being encouraged, I hope, by this new system. Perhaps people should attach more importance also to the weekly Order meeting, which is the smallest unit of all, and perhaps next to the regional meetings.

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But I think if one sees anything wrong within the Order or the Movement generally, or any imperfection, well, out of loyalty to the Order and to the Movement one should work on that.

Atula: That's what I think I tried to do. But it takes a lot of...

S: It takes time, it will take years and years more.

Devapriya: Maybe the first stage is to actually see if your premise is objectively true, and then, if it is, you find that it is true, then you can point that out.

S: Yes...

Devapriya: Yes, but I mean do other people experience it in that way?

S: Other people may experience themselves as very kind, loving and sympathetic, while your experience of them may be different, so you've got to come to an agreement about what is actually objectively the case. You may be expecting a bit more than is objectively, as it were, justified, and they may be satisfied with a bit less.

: I think it's also not very good to sort of say 'the Order', either. It's certain Order Members. I'm sure even Order Members around your situation do actually feel as though there's the sympathy, so to say 'the Order' ...

Atula: No, it's certain situations I find particularly...

S: I find this a little irritating somehow when people refer to 'the Order'; clearly they've completely forgotten that we've got Order Members in India. Because their generalization never includes them. It's as though that part of the Order doesn't exist; which is really, in a way, unfair. So I think one needs to be more specific and say 'those Order Members with whom I'm in contact,' or 'such-and-such a Chapter,' or 'the Order Members in such-and-such an area.'

Ratnapani: People just from different Centres in southern England, different Chapters in southern England, won't recognize one criticism given about a different Chapter. They won't have that particular fault; they'll have some faults of their own, but they won't have that one.

: On the point of sympathy, I don't actually feel that about the Chapter that I'm involved in, nor actually about other Order Members in different Chapters. I feel as though I can talk about things. I don't feel as though I've been clobbered. I might disagree, but I don't feel as though I've been clobbered.

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Atula: I don't mind being clobbered, it's when you feel people just aren't interested.

: It's probably a lot easier to tell a woman or - historically in our lives a woman - that we'd like to see them more, that we are appreciative of them, and so on. [You] probably find that - I do... more difficult with men, it takes more of an effort, because it is seen as sort of sentimental.

S: Well, that's another problem we have to resolve. You have to come to terms with your own feminine side, as they say. (Laughter.)

Anyway, let's carry on, because we've gone on longer than I intended; but never mind. Let's go through these concluding verses that summarize what the Buddha has just been saying.

Thus spoke the Exalted One. And when the Master had thus spoken, He spoke yet again:

The friend who is a helpmate,
the friend in happiness and woe,
the friend who gives good counsel,
the friend who sympathizes too...
these four as friends the wise behold
and cherish them devotedly
as does a mother her own child.
The wise and virtuous shine like blazing fire.
He who acquires his wealth in harmless ways,
like to a bee that honey gathers,
riches mount up for him
like an ant hill's rapid growth.

With wealth acquired this way,
a layman fit for household life
in portions four divides his wealth;
thus will he friendship win.
One portion for his wants he uses,
two portions on his business spends,
the fourth for times of need he keeps.

S: A few new points there, not just a simple recapitulation. 'The friend who is a helpmate, the friend in happiness and woe, the friend who gives good counsel, the friend who sympathizes too - these four as friends the wise behold and cherish them devotedly.' This is pretty much the same as we've gone through. 'As does a mother her own child' - this is quite interesting. You get this in the Metta Sutta also, don't you, this comparison? But perhaps it needs to be understood properly, because the mother/child relationship is a very strong one, but it's also a relationship of attachment, even in an unskilful sense. So the point of the [300] comparison is the intensity, not any unskilfulness that may be present in that particular relationship, or the exclusiveness. Metta is compared to the love of a mother and her child, but the love of a mother for her child is rather exclusive; it's her child, not other people's children, that she loves. But metta, I suppose, by its nature is universal - directed towards all. So it's the intensity of mother love that is the point of comparison here, not the possessiveness or attachment or exclusiveness, or anything of that sort.

Padmavajra: Didn't you also say in the Karaniya Metta Sutta seminar that it was in the same way that a mother actually nurtures her child, that metta should have that quality?

S: Yes, it's a maturing sort of quality, a developing quality. But not directed just towards one child, as it were, who'd be regarded as your own, but to anybody with whom you come into contact. Most of all, of course, to those with whom you're in regular close contact, your real friends; but potentially towards anybody, especially any other member of the Order. 'The wise and virtuous shine like blazing fire.' That's a quite powerful image.

Padmapani: It seems to be using images like you get in the Hindu rituals: the fire offering.

S: Right, yes.

'He who acquires his wealth in harmless ways like to a bee that honey gathers, riches mount up for him like anthill's rapid growth.' Another concrete image from Indian life: rapid growth of the anthill.

And clearly, early Buddhism sees nothing wrong in the accumulation of wealth, if it's done honestly and if it does not involve any infringement of the principles of right livelihood. 'So with wealth acquired this way, a layman fit for household life' - that is, someone who is qualified, not just any person - 'in portions four divides his wealth. Thus will he friendship win.' I don't think that last line is intended cynically. He will have the wherewithal to help people. That is after all one of the duties of friendship. Friendship will be consolidated in that way. 'One portion for his wants he uses' - and the note says this portion includes what is spent on good works, gifts to monks, charity as it were. 'Two portions on his business spends, the fourth for time of need he keeps.' [301] I remember a Tibetan student of mine in Kalimpong, someone coming from Kham, eastern Tibet, told me that their custom was they divided their money into, I think it was three parts, if I'm not mistaken; though it might have been four - let me try and work it out. Anyway, one part went for religion, one part went for amusement and

one part went for the expenses of life, including the business and reinvestment in the business. I think that's what it was. But anyway, whether it was divided into three or four, one part was for the Dharma, and one part was definitely for pleasure.

Padmapani: Would `business' include the household, like money to the wife?

S: I think it involves the maintenance of the household. The Tibetans, rather significantly, didn't, as far as I remember, save any special portion.

: And traditionally in India the woman would run the business, wouldn't she? I think it...

S: In India? No. In Tibet women very often had their independent businesses. No, not in India.

: It would be the woman's business to look after the house.

S: Yes.

Padmapani: Would that still remain the same, Bhante, when the Dapodi complex opens up? Will women start running their own businesses in the co-ops?

S: In a sense it's already started. Dapodi will be primarily, of course, the medical centre, and then of course there'll be the Vihara; but we have got in mind various co-operative ventures, and there's a group of women under Vajraketu's direction who are producing the bedspreads - no, quilts. I mean that is being done by the women; it's their personal venture, but under this sort of general guidance and supervision. He finds them quite good at it, and quite reliable workers.

(Discussion till end of this side on production and design of quilts and duvet covers. Finally -)

S: So we've finished part one, or what seems to be regarded as part one, of the Sutta, and we come on tomorrow to consider the different classes of people. This is quite an important subject; in fact, in some ways it's the more important half of the Sutta.

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Day 7

Tape 14, Side A

S: We come on to what is, in effect, part two of the Sutta this morning.

And how, young householder, does the noble disciple cover the six quarters? The following should be looked upon as the six quarters. The parents should be looked upon as the East, teachers as the South, wife and children as the West, friends and associates as the North, servants and employees as the Nadir, and ascetics and brahmins as the Zenith.

S: The association of these different kinds of person with the particular directions is not arbitrary. The footnote says: `The symbolism is deliberately chosen; as the day in the East so

life begins with the parents' care. Teachers' fees and the South are the same word, dakkina(?). Domestic cares follow when the youth becomes man, as the West holds the later daylight. North is beyond, utara, as by the help of friends etc. he gets beyond troubles.' Let's go on to the first of these six quarters:

In five ways, young householder, a child should minister to his parents as the East.

- (i) having supported me I shall support them,
- (ii) I shall do their duties,
- (iii) I shall keep the family tradition,
- (iv) I shall make myself worthy of my inheritance,
- (v) furthermore I shall offer alms in honour of my departed relatives.

S: So these represent the duties, as it were, of child to parents. By performing or fulfilling these duties one covers the Eastern quarter. So let's go through these one by one. 'Having supported me I shall support them.' The grammar is not very correct: 'They having supported me I shall support them.' So what is the principle involved here?

: Gratitude.

S: Gratitude. One could sum it up perhaps in two words, not just gratitude but gratitude and reciprocity.

: What's that mean?

S: Reciprocity: how would anyone define that?

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Padmavajra: Reciprocal - it's an exchange. Giving and taking.

S: Yes, it is giving and taking, one could say. Yes, it's the opposite of one-sidedness. It's like giving in return. So gratitude and reciprocity. They 'having supported me, I shall support them.' This would seem to be the natural, as it were reasonable attitude. Do you think this is one which people do normally, naturally, spontaneously feel?

: I think less and less now.

S: Less and less, it would seem. But why do you think that is?

Padmapani: Possibly the break-up of the family unit - the nuclear family.

Ratnapala: The break-up of the extended family, I would have thought.

S: Well, perhaps it's associated with people's feeling, rightly or wrongly, that they don't have much to be grateful for. Probably wrongly. They don't feel, perhaps, that life in itself is a gift for which one should be grateful. Not that they entertain specifically the idea of existence as an evil; they probably don't. But it's perhaps connected with what we were talking about earlier on in the week, people being brought up to great expectations and those expectations being disappointed; as, in fact, they must be disappointed in almost all cases. And they,

therefore, perhaps, blame their parents if they blame anybody; perhaps blame society as a whole, but in particular blame their parents for not giving them everything that they would like to possess. So far from being grateful to their parents for what they have done for them, they're resentful that they aren't doing enough for them, very often. Do you think this is, in fact, a fair statement of the case?

Ratnapani: Unconsciously, perhaps, yes.

Dhammarati: I've noticed there's been quite a change in lifestyle between my generation and my parents' generation. When I was growing up, my parents lived in the same house as my grandparents. My grandparents would look after the kids. My parents would work. This generation - well, I'm 400 miles away, I've altered my lifestyle, but my parents don't have much time for any objectives that don't ... It seems to me that that's quite a big factor.

S: But nonetheless you could still be grateful to them for what they did actually do for you. I mean, that is possible, no doubt. Perhaps it's more possible for you to be grateful as a Buddhist inasmuch as you can take a fairer and more objective view of what they did. Whereas perhaps if [304] you had entered upon worldly life and you hadn't been very successful, not as successful as you would have liked to be, you would have blamed your parents for being what they were and not being able to do more for you, and therefore have not felt quite grateful to them for doing what they did do. I think the chances are, as a Buddhist, one is more likely to feel more grateful to one's parents than otherwise, because one will look at things much more in purely human terms.

Dhammarati: I suppose the angle I was thinking of is the demands of my lifestyle are so far removed from the concerns of my parents that when they finally come to the age when they're going to need active support I'll find it quite difficult to [reconcile] these two sets of demands.

Ratnapala: It's interesting that you say Buddhists should perhaps feel more grateful than most, because I would have thought - I don't know if other people would agree with this - but generally in the Movement, perhaps not so much now as it used to be, it was something of a feather in your cap if you refused to have anything to do with your parents.

S: Well, some people did need to have nothing to do with their parents for a while - certain people I can think of - inasmuch as there was such a strong feeling of resentment that they just needed to separate themselves from their parents for a while, develop a more positive mental state generally, and then on the basis of that, after a couple of years perhaps, try to renew contact with their parents. There may have been difficulties on the other side, the parents themselves not being in a very - what shall I say? - positive frame of mind, not a very healthy frame of mind. So perhaps people did years ago regard it as a feather in their cap if they broke away, because up to that time they felt so enslaved and so under the domination of their parents - rightly or wrongly. Some of them had in fact what seemed to me quite remarkable parents but nonetheless the children didn't feel them as reasonable. So for them it was something of an achievement to separate from their parents for a while.

But, as far as I can recollect, in all cases where that happened they subsequently re-established connection on a much more positive basis. I think that happened in every case. So I think a Buddhist can be more grateful because in a way he expects less from his parents. He understands why his parents were not able to do as much for him as, perhaps, he wanted formerly. And also he understands, as a Buddhist, that the goals that society places before him

are not really satisfying goals. So he doesn't blame his parents for not enabling him to reach those goals anyway. He's just grateful for what they did do for him. He sees they did do their best within their limitations, very often. Or even if they didn't do their best it was because of certain perhaps psychological [305] limitations. So he doesn't blame them; he just feels grateful for what they did do. They must have done something, otherwise he wouldn't have survived! So at least he can be grateful for that!

Atula: But, reading into the actual symbolism, you've said it's more ... for the actual parental relationship, it's the most important for you to sort that out, in a sense, in terms of the rest of your life. If that's not sorted out then you take ...

S: Yes, I have said this, because I feel one is so closely associated with one's parents from one's earliest years, so much of one's emotional life is bound up with them, that if your emotional attitude towards your parents is not satisfactory, not very positive, the chances are that your whole emotional life, your whole emotional attitude, will be in some confusion. So you owe it to yourself, at least, to sort out your relations with your parents. And that may, of course, involve a period of separation in some cases.

I think personally it is very difficult for someone to develop psychologically and spiritually unless they do have a positive attitude towards their parents. It doesn't mean that they necessarily are going to be seeing a lot of their parents, or agreeing with them. It doesn't necessarily mean that their parents are going to be able to get on with them - they may not be; but it means that from the child's side, from your side, there is only positivity in your attitude towards your parents. You wish them well, quite genuinely. You've nothing against them. You don't consider that you have any score that has to be paid off. You've forgiven anything that you might have felt originally they'd done to you. You've understood why, perhaps, they couldn't help that. You've forgiven even if you haven't forgotten, and you wish them well just as you would any other human beings - well, even more, because they have done something for you, with all their faults, which nobody else did. They've brought you up. They've supported you. And now you are on a good path, and it's to some extent owing to them that you are now on it, even though that might not have been, or certainly wasn't, their intention.

Ratnapala: In Geshe Rabten's book on preliminary practices he talks about the practice of trying to look upon all beings as your mother, and he also says that it is possible that they have been, in the process of rebirth.

S: This practice - and again I have discussed this elsewhere - assumes that one has a positive mother image. If you don't have, that argument falls rather flat. The same with regard to father image: one needs to have a positive father image to apply that sort of reasoning.

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Ratnapani: It seems to be easier with grandmothers and grandfathers. It seems to be easier to have a positive image...

S: Yes, often one doesn't come so much into immediate conflict with them.

Ratnapani: Their only role is benevolence, isn't it, usually?

S: Yes. Perhaps they can see the faults that their own children are committing in relation to their grandchildren, and can stand a little aloof and even sympathize when necessary. I do

know several people, even within the Order, who've had very positive relationships with their grandparents, or one of their grandparents, which has to some extent made up for inadequate relationships with their parents. I remember years and years ago - this is outside the Order - a Friend who was coming along, an American hippie, who had very serious problems with his parents who were very middle-class and ambitious, materially oriented people. He got on, he always used to tell me, very well with his grandmother, better than with any other member of the family. Even when he was staying in England and living a really hippie sort of life, or trying to, it was always his grandmother who wrote to him, always sent him money and helped to support him, without the rest of the family knowing. That was his mother's mother. He knew that his grandmother disapproved of the attitudes of his mother, so he derived quite a lot of psychological support from the grandmother. He felt that she sympathized with him and understood him. One does sometimes find that happens.

You notice here that the text says, 'having supported me I shall support them.' Nowadays - in Britain, at least - the question of material support doesn't so much arise. The state more or less looks after that. But there is the question of psychological support, because old people are often left alone, especially in the nuclear family situation. And usually it's the woman who is left alone, because if there have been children they've left home, they've gone away, and the wife usually outlives the husband. So it is more often the woman who is left on her own, and even if she is materially comfortably off no doubt some psychological support is needed, some emotional contact. And it's that, perhaps, that one has to think more in terms of giving. After all, she gave emotional support when you were young; why should you not give emotional support now she is old? Perhaps not every old person needs it, but I'm sure many do, or at least will welcome contact, especially with their own children, at that time of life.

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Ratnapani: I think often the expression of gratitude is just going to see parents. It might not be particularly fascinating or even stimulating time spent, but they appreciate it.

S: They do, yes. Also remembering birthdays and anniversaries. At least send a birthday card or a New Year card or something of that sort. Parents, I think especially mothers, attach quite a lot of value to those sort of gestures. It means that they're remembered, not forgotten.

Dhammarati: You don't see a sort of conflict of interests, this idea of ... and elders and people with family involved in the Order, a lifestyle that makes - ?

S: This is very difficult to generalize. It depends what other relations one has, what they are able and willing to do. And also there may be a genuine conflict in one's own case. One has to weigh up one's priorities. Even one's own mother may not always weigh heaviest in the balance. Only the person in the actual concrete situation can weigh up all the different factors involved in coming to a decision. One can't generalize; except that, certainly, if it is at all possible, one should do whatever one can for one's parents in their old age, if the doing of it doesn't conflict with responsibilities which are even more important. But they would have to be, at least, definitely dharmic to outweigh the responsibility one has towards one's parents. It couldn't be just a holiday, or just some amusement that one wanted to follow.

Atula: Siddhiratna was faced with that the other year, wasn't he?

S: He did very well in that respect. He went out to Spain and virtually rescued his mother and brought her back and kept her in his flat for a while, he looked after her and tried to get her

settled. He did very well. He is, in that respect, a very good example because he didn't have at all a happy time as a child, no. He, again, was very appreciative of what his grandmother did for him. But nonetheless, though he in a sense didn't have the best of childhoods, he didn't in the end bear his mother any ill will for that. He did whatever he could for her when he time came. So that showed that he's resolved quite a lot in that particular area.

Someone did ask me some few months ago, I think, whether within the Movement we'd ever given consideration to provision for elderly Order Members who could no longer work. Were we not going to have homes or hostels or even viharas, communities, for very elderly and frail and infirm Order Members who had done their bit in their day? So far, the question hasn't really arisen. We don't have any such Order Members on our hands, not yet. But we no doubt will; because not everybody is [308] able to go on working till the day of their death. So the Movement generally will have to think seriously about that.

Ratnapani: We do have Chanda, don't we?

S: He is, I understand, still working a bit, isn't he?

Ratnapani: He is now, yes.

Atula: Do you see much of him ... ?

Ratnapani: Occasionally, in passing.

Devapriya: Well, there's also another case which hasn't been mentioned, someone getting old and ill ... We don't have any facility at the moment.

S: Well - just to think aloud a little bit, just for a few minutes, we will probably need some kind of community where people in that position could stay and where they would be looked after. There would have to be a warden and a cook, who would at least perhaps be Mitras or even Order Members, who would not only look after those old Order Members but give them spiritual support, especially as they approached death.

Ratnapala: Have a large community for old Order Members and young children. Help to keep us young.

S: I don't know whether old people always want to have young children around. Some do. But some of them, I do know from talking to them, get very tired of young children's noise. They like children, it's not that they don't like children; they like them but they do find the noise and disturbance of young children in the end a bit too much. And I know grandparents have sometimes said this - that they are really glad to see their grandchildren, they really love them, but after a couple of hours they've had enough. (Laughter.)

Padmapani: Sounds quite good going.

S: (laughs) Perhaps it is. Well, maybe grandparents are quite patient and long-suffering, and they know that the little dears will be taken away eventually. It's not like your own children - you are just landed with them indefinitely. In the case of grandchildren, they are taken away at the end of the visit. Close the front door and breathe a sigh of relief. Get back to your knitting or television or filling in your pools!

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Ratnapani: I don't like the idea of this rest-home for old Buddhists, I must say. I think I'll go on working.

Padmapani: Another possibility is going to a country like India, isn't it, which is...

S: (laughs) You will at least die quickly there! (loud laughter) - without wasting any time, and have a decent cremation. Possibly even in the open air if you were lucky.

Padmapani: Yes, if it got sort of systematized, it could be ... (voices talking at once) ... 'Come along now, we've got your plane to India. It's the last time you'll be leaving the mother country!'

S: Yes, that wouldn't be a bad thing at all, because they are all the more respected and all that in India than they are perhaps in this country. They'd perhaps have a better time. You could just totter around with your long white beard, presiding at meetings and not saying a word, just looking very wise or even Enlightened, and you'd be really doing your bit. (Laughter.)

Padmapani: You might be on the Four Sights.

S: Be one of the Four Sights! (Laughter.) I'm not quite sure which one. You'll probably be all of them in turn! (Much laughter.)

Padmapani: We might have our own Four Sights. Sort of label round your neck: 'This one came from the LBC!' (Laughter.)

S: Well, the Indian Buddhists would no doubt gain a lot of merit from cremating us. (Agreement.)

Anyway, they 'having supported me I shall support them,' and then, '(ii) I shall do their duties.' This isn't quite clear. Let me see what Rhys Davids makes of that: 'I will perform duties incumbent on them.' Yes, I see, any duties that the parents have left undone the child should do on their behalf. For instance, if your parents have left any debts behind, you regard those debts as your own. Or if there was something which was very dear to their hearts, you see that that is carried out.

In India, of course (and this may have been general previously), sense of family, that is to say extended family solidarity, is very strong - that people take on their deceased brother's wife and children, and if the deceased brother's wife has any dependants of her own [whom] her husband was supporting you take them on too. I had a letter to this effect from someone whom I met in India, a very good young man who [310] got involved with the FWBO, who is now a Mitra, from C... When I met him he was free, his own wife having died; but his elder brother has recently died so he now has fourteen people to support, suddenly, so he's no longer free. But he just takes on that responsibility - I won't say without a murmur, but certainly without questioning that he should take it on. He just accepts it as his duty. In the same way elder brothers and sisters take it as their responsibility to bring up the younger brothers and sisters if the parents happen to die, or if the parents become too old to work. There are several Order Members actually doing this in India. And one of them wrote to me - well, it was the one woman Order Member there, that she has eighteen people to support in her family, and she was hoping to hand over some of the responsibility to a younger brother

who was in a good position; he had agreed to take over part of the responsibility to free her more, but then he was killed in an accident; so she has a few more dependants now to look after. So, in India, this sense of as it were family solidarity that you are responsible for any unfinished duties of your parents is very strong. And of course this is reinforced by the fact that the state doesn't help out.

Ratnapani: That's allowed our families to dissipate, almost, hasn't it? It's just not possible to ...

S: Yes, one might say it almost has encouraged.

Ratnapani: Which could have a very positive effect as well.

S: Oh yes, indeed.

Ratnapani: It would seem that leaving home was absolutely necessary - well, almost necessary - if you were to lead a spiritual life, if the alternative was that you'd have maybe a dozen, twenty dependants.

S: Even if you didn't have actual dependants you were surrounded by a whole swarm of people. Life could become very stuffy, very closed in, very narrow, rigid, limited. I mean, yes, it may be emotionally positive, a bit secure, but a bit nest-like. Many young people, especially young men, felt a need to, well, just stretch themselves a bit, to spread their wings, to see a bit of the world; got tired of the family, positive though it was. It's not that they hated the family, they just wanted to go beyond it.

Atula: It was a bit like that in - well, I don't know whether it is now but when I was small, in the town I was brought up in, it was very close. You knew what everyone else was doing.

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S: I think that sense of solidarity is rather lacking now, not only within the family circle but even (I'm talking about England mainly, Britain) within society in general. You don't feel, as it were, responsible for one another. 'Oh, that's his responsibility. Nothing to do with me.' People nowadays even feel like that towards their own parents. 'Well, they've got their pension. What responsibility do I have?' That is, I'm afraid, often the attitude of children these days.

Devapriya: Maybe it seems more that the state is responsible for that fraction(?) - the social services.

S: It's true, of course, the social services do provide financial support, but there's more to life than that.

Devapriya: I meant more than that, in terms of, like, social workers giving the emotional support because nobody else will, it's been delegated.

S: Well, in a way, the very fact that you need social workers of that sort is a big reflection on our present-day society.

Ratnapala: I think it's that way round. Yes. I remember when I was a child in Deptford. It's quite a poor area. There was always three generations and an aunt, all living in the same house, but above that there was the community. I was born in a place called Creek Road in Deptford, and you actually felt you were part of the Creek Road community. You would meet someone else and say, 'Where are you from?' 'Creek Road,' and it meant something. Today to say you come from any street names in London would be absolutely meaningless, but it actually meant something. Everyone in that street knew you. You'd go to whoever had a television, everyone would go down there every time they wanted to watch the television. Everyone's door was open. And even in my lifetime, which is not a long one, I've just seen all that go. People don't care any more. People have become much more nuclear, not less so, I feel.

S: I think prosperity, to some extent - increased prosperity - has made them more nuclear.

Ratnapala: More selfish!

S: Seems extraordinary. Seems in some ways quite pitiful, even tragic, that the more your standard of living increases the more selfish you become. You should become more happy because of that, because you have less to worry about; because you are more happy, you should be [312] more outward-going and friendly and helpful to other people, but it doesn't seem to work like that, strange to say.

Ratnapala: Doesn't seem to, no.

Padmapani: It seems to show what is in actual fact a lack of spiritual dimension, in the actual overall country, in a way. There is a lack of, I'm not saying the Church, but a lack of guidance.

S: One doesn't wish that people should remain poor, but when they become better off they seem to lose at the same time at least some of their better qualities.

Ratnapala: You know that old phrase, poor but 'appy? It seems to be a bit like that in some ways.

S: Poor but honest.

Ratnapala: Poor but honest.

Ratnapani: Not in Deptford! (Laughter.)

Ratnapala: Poor but not honest. (Laughter.)

S: Poor but not honest.

Ratnapala: Poor but happy.

S: No, I won't say not honest, but a different conception of honesty, let us say.

Padmavajra: A more poetic conception. (Laughter.)

S: Less rigid.

Ratnapala: More flexible.

S: More flexible. More human. (Laughter.)

Padmavajra: Therefore a more real conception! (Laughter.)

S: Anyway, that is a bit by the by. Let's go on to number (iii), 'I shall keep the family tradition.' I shall maintain the family tradition: what sort of family tradition do you think is meant here? [313]

Padmavajra: Aren't some families in India devoted to a particular tradition, particular deities, particular gods?

S: Let's see what the notes say. Rhys Davids translates: 'I will keep up the lineage and tradition of my family.' And then the note says kulavamsa. Family lineage, really, implies both. Buddhaghosa explains it as 'not dissipating property. restoring, if need be, the family honour and integrity and maintaining gifts to religious people.' Let's just take Buddhaghosa's points one by one. 'Not dissipating property': keeping your inheritance together, passing it down intact to your son.

Ratnapani: Well, we give it to the FWBO, don't we, immediately? At least, everybody has.

S: Most people don't have any sons to give it to, anyway. Because there's another point to be made here about property. I'm not quite sure what the position in India was in the Buddha's day. I suspect it was much the same as it is nowadays with Hindu joint families - that is to say that property is not anybody's individual property. That is to say, when the father dies, let us say, assuming the father to have his own independent property, which may not always be the case, all the sons will inherit jointly. Do you see what I mean? They won't divide the property. It will be undivided, joint, let's say, joint family property. So they all have the duty of handing that on, so to speak, to the next generation of the family. It isn't anybody's personal property. And it is usually considered desirable not to divide it and fragment it, although of course that does very often happen, because even in India brothers fall out. But even now there are many families in India possessing their property as a joint family property; that is to say, for the sake of example, a number of brothers owning everything jointly. I believe now there are provisions for individual brothers to demand, so to speak, their separate share. In the old days that would be frowned upon, I think.

Tejamati: Do people actually make wills in India, or is it, because of this [custom], not necessary?

S: Not now, because it goes by custom. I think - and again it differs from one community, one caste, to another - but I think, if a written will was not left, automatically the property goes to all your sons. I think daughters have a sort of right of maintenance, unmarried daughters - a dowry and all that - but the daughters who have married are considered to have left the family. Married daughters do not belong to the family. They hence forth belong to their husbands' families.

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Padmapani: It's never handed on to women, for instance. It's always to do with the men?

S: In one part of India, that is to say among the Nairs of Malabar, inheritance is through the - well, it's matrilineal, through the mothers, I suppose one could say. That is to say you inherit not from your father, you inherit from your uncle, from your mother's brother. You inherit through your mother. But the property never actually belongs to the mother. It's simply that the line of inheritance is traced through the mother. But that is quite exceptional.

Atula: What relevance would that, number (iii), really have today?

S: I think this sort of provision, or this sort of duty, has significance only within the context of a society where social continuity itself is important. It doesn't seem to be so important. Take this question of property. Formerly people took great pride in living in the house that their father had lived in, and his father had lived in, and his father before him. There have been, say, Smiths in this house, there have been Smiths inhabiting Smith House or Smith Mansion for eight generations. One as it were took pride in that fact. I don't think one does that any longer. Again our mobility militates against that, our increased mobility.

Ratnapani: It's more something to be ashamed of. It means you haven't moved up.

Ratnapala: It's also a confidence in the future, confidence in a future.

S: Yes, the fact that the family has carried on for so long suggests it's going to carry on even longer. And also you are improving, ideally, the property all the time. But again that seems to be no longer the case. Even families with old properties, stately homes even, who would like to carry them on, who would like to maintain their family traditions, can no longer do so. They can't afford it.

Ratnapala: Also people talk about the inevitability of a nuclear holocaust and things like that, and is it worth storing up wealth?

S: Yes. So - just falling back, say, on one's own experience - has anybody present ever had the idea that there was some good custom or tradition established by their parents or ancestors which they would like to continue?

Padmavajra: Only in very small ways, actually, no sort of major things. My parents are very generous people and very friendly people to anybody. I'd quite like to continue that, but I don't think that's -

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S: It's more like a personal quality.

Atula: ... values.

S: So Buddhaghosa says, 'not dissipating property; restoring, if need be, the family honour and integrity.' I don't quite know how that would work out in practice. In the Hindu social system it would be maintaining one's position in the caste hierarchy, and if possible climbing a little higher.

Padmapani: How could you climb a bit higher in the caste system in India?

S: Well, there are ways and means.

Padmavajra: Only within that scheduled caste, though. You couldn't gain...

S: No, there is a sort of mobility in castes in India, though it is not generally recognized. But the fact is the caste as a whole can move up a little or move down, not any individual apart from his caste. That is really not possible. But usually a caste moves up by giving up certain customs which are regarded as degrading or belonging to lower-caste people, for instance the eating of meat, the drinking of alcohol. Castes which...

Tape 14, Side B

... originally were relatively low can ease themselves up in the caste system by changing their customs and habits and way of life generally in this way. There are historical examples. But it happens, it takes several generations.

Padmavajra: Do you think since the Untouchables converted to Buddhism there's been a shift in their status as a - just to use the term - as a caste?

S: I think yes, though very unevenly. But I think yes. In fact, at the time of the original mass conversion, some relatively well-meaning caste Hindus did make that point that through mass conversion they would actually not separate themselves from Hindu society but just raise themselves a few notches within the caste system. And those particular people who made that answer were quite happy that it should come about in that way. They saw it as a solution of a problem within Hindu society itself. But it gave, as it were, the Hindus an excuse to sort of treat them a bit better, without giving up their own caste principles. But [316] in effect they felt that the Buddhists, the Mahars especially, would just become a slightly higher caste than they were, and be treated not quite so badly, therefore not give quite so much trouble.

Padmapani: That implies, then - do you think there are quite a lot of, say, educated caste people - well, people in India - who can see the injustice of the caste [system], but their hands are tied, so to speak?

S: Yes, I think there are some. I don't want to exaggerate that, but you can get a lot of quite insincere lip sympathy. But even sincere people have their hands tied. You may be sincere, but you may not be prepared to be a hero or a martyr for your cause. Also the crunch comes when you want to get your children married. Because if you inter-dine with lower-caste people, etc. etc., or mix with them socially, in that sort of way, well, you will then have difficulty in marrying off your children. And you may draw the line there. You may not want to have to marry off your children to people of lower caste because you've lost caste to some extent. You can actually, of course, be excommunicated from your caste. Every caste has a sort of caste governing body and they can excommunicate those who do not observe the caste rules; especially rules, for instance, about inter-dining and intermarriage; and then you could be in a very difficult position, because then you could only marry into a lower caste. You could never marry into a higher caste, or even the same caste as you'd been before, or the equivalent.

Then, of course, 'maintaining gifts to religious people.' Clearly, if you're a Buddhist and if

your parents have been in the habit of, say, making offerings to a certain monastery every year on a certain day, well, you would like to keep that up. Well, maybe, to give a more English example, your parents might always have donated to a particular charity. They might have always supported the Red Cross or something like that, and you might like to do that in their memory, to continue that practice, keep up that custom.

Dhammarati: It seems to conjure up a much more stable society than the one ... ideological differences between the generations.

S: Yes. Because, well, supposing now your parents had been ardent supporters of the Church. Well, one could hardly conscientiously continue that. You'd probably stop it as quickly as possible, because one duty would as it were outweigh another. I mean, your parents might have been regularly donating, say, to the Catholic Missions to convert the heathen in India. Some of the priests that they were supporting might even be working in Maharashtra (laughs), so you could hardly go on maintaining your parents' contribution as well as supporting Aid for India at the same time. The two things would be contradictory.

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Padmavajra: ... contribution to Aid for India.

S: But, anyway, one can see the general principle. These things make for continuity of social life - in a way, security, solidarity of social life.

Devapriya: Maybe it comes under an earlier - well, within this somewhere - keeping one's parents', grandparents', graves in order, bringing flowers and so on.

S: Yes. Yes, that's true. Yes, keeping alive their memory. Buddhists, of course, in Buddhist countries nowadays, especially I think China and Ceylon, often bring out booklets on Buddhism in memory of their deceased parents, very often with their photograph as a frontispiece and so on. This is regarded as an act of merit. Well, this is more in memory of them, not exactly keeping up or maintaining a custom which the parents themselves have established. But it belongs to much the same sort of order of ideas.

Tejamati: What about in the case of deceased Order Members within the Movement, or maybe Mitras as well?

S: Of course, in the case of Vangisa we did publish a booklet, didn't we? I think this was a very good precedent.

Tejamati: But how long, say, should we go on doing ... ?

S: Well, I think it would be rather difficult to do it, say, every year, so this is why I've suggested, as you probably know, that we should have a sort of general remembrance of deceased Order Members and Mitras and other Friends, in connection with the Parinirvana Day celebrations, so that we remember not only the Buddha himself as regards that aspect or that time of his life, but also all those who are deceased who were in any way connected with the Movement, especially perhaps those who have deceased during the previous year. I have circulated some suggestions. I don't know whether they have come to people's notice. I circulated them to all Centres three weeks ago.

Padmapani: These would only be general guidelines, though, wouldn't they?

S: Yes.

Padmapani: For instance, if, say, an accident happened, an Order Member who was very prominent in a Chapter, died, they might want a special ceremony.

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S: Oh yes, indeed, and this is not to preclude a special ceremony, especially immediately after death. But just to provide an occasion when a Centre as such can commemorate all the Order Members, Mitras, Friends and relations of Order Members, Mitras and Friends, who have died in the previous six months, I've suggested that people could be asked to bring along photographs of people who have died whom they would like to have commemorated, and put the photographs on the shrine, and also the names of all those people being commemorated should be read out at some point during the ceremony.

Dhammarati: What would the purpose of that sort of ceremony be?

S: Well, first of all, why do we remember the Buddha? Why do we commemorate the Buddha? Or commemorate the decease of the Buddha? Well, that's mainly out of gratitude to the Buddha for the Dharma. And then recollection of the Parinirvana is also an exercise in recollection of death. Even the Buddha died, not to speak of ordinary human beings. And then we remember, let's say, Order Members who have died.

Or maybe we could not go on quite so quickly: then, perhaps, we could remember also - I haven't mentioned this point before - various great teachers who have passed on. We could remember them with gratitude for their teaching and also recollect that even they had to die. But then, coming on to, say, our own Movement, we can remember Order Members who have died. We can remember the inspiring example they left. It's not good that we should forget that. And also use it as an opportunity for wishing them well, wherever they are. Very likely they have been reborn. In that sense you maintain a sense of continuity and solidarity of the Movement as a whole, which is not broken even by death. Do you see what I mean? That in a way, yes, they are still part of the Movement. They haven't just disappeared from the scene. You keep up that sort of consciousness.

And then, of course, with regard to, say - well, we can remember Mitras in the same way, Friends in the same way; and then relations of those Order Members, Mitras and Friends. In their case it will help, no doubt, the bereaved people themselves to come to terms with the situation, with the loss; to bring it into connection with the Dharma. Do you see what I mean? And in this way develop a more positive attitude towards it. This was the idea.

So I suggested that probably, in the course of the evening Puja, the photographs could be put, displayed, on the shrine of anybody whom any Order Member, Mitra or Friend wanted to remember or to have commemorated; not necessarily people who have had direct contact [319] with the FWBO, but if, say, an Order Member has lost, say, an aunt, or a brother, during the previous year, they should be able to bring their photograph along also and have them commemorated in the same way. So at some part in the proceedings those photographs and pictures will have been placed in readiness beforehand, when the shrine was prepared, and at some point in the ceremony their names should be read out, [so] that we remember, with thoughts of metta, the Order Members who [are] deceased, Mitras, and then Friends, and then friends of all these people or relations of all these people. And one could even have a metta bhavana at that point, perhaps. And one has the usual readings and Sevenfold Puja.

And, of course, during the day one could also have - these are still only suggestions - readings from the Parinibbana Sutta, perhaps read it all through; and chanting of the Vajrasattva mantra at intervals. You get the general idea.

Ratnapani: Yes, I was wondering - I hadn't thought of this point of like psychic - a continuity through, beyond death.

S: For instance, people at the time of Vangisa's funeral said that they didn't feel that he was dead. They felt as though, in a sense, he was very much there, very much alive; that, in a sense, death of the physical body wasn't the end. Not that one can sort of dogmatize about life after death or anything of that sort, but it certainly is the Buddhist conviction that the death of the physical body is not the end, so that in some sense the person whom you knew as So-and-so is still around. At least one can put it in that very non-technical way. And therefore, it's not even just a question of remembering as though he exists only in the past; in a sense he continues to exist in the present, and there is still a present relationship, which you reaffirm, or remember, particularly at that time, at that commemoration ceremony.

Ratnapani: Certainly at the time of Vangisa's death there was a definite strong feeling of continuity through that actual act, so to speak. But anyway I just don't think in terms of now, perhaps someone who was, and isn't - as far as my own relations ...

S: Well, even absent friends who are still alive one doesn't think of very intensely, necessarily, does one? For instance, take the example, say, of Buddhadasa, who is in New Zealand. We all knew him very well. But I don't suppose many people think of him very intensely and feel his actual presence. Whereas if he were to arrive, well, yes, you would welcome him and be in contact again. But the same with Vangisa: if it turned out that he hadn't actually died, even though you thought he had, and he came back, well, after you had got over the initial surprise, you'd re-establish the old contact.

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Devapriya: Or in a few years a small boy came in looking the dead image of Vangisa who remembered ...

S: Well, he wouldn't necessarily look the dead image. You might just recognize certain characteristics. (Laughter.)

: [That would] give us something to talk about!

Tejamati: ... deep-throated laugh.

Padmavajra: Have you found that with people? - that you met people that had characteristics of somebody who has died - ?

S: I can't say that, probably because I haven't lived long enough in one place. I've been too mobile.

Ratnapala: What is the usual time given between rebirths, Bhante?

S: Oh, authorities differ. I think the general - well, yes, they differ; perhaps we can't go into

that now, but there is no general agreement.

Devapriya: The Tibetan Book of the Dead speaks about a certain number of days in certain bardos. Whether they actually correspond to the same length of earth days is questionable.

S: Yes, right. Perhaps it simply means you spend a certain length of time, as we would say, in the bardo and that can be divided into seven, and each of those seven can be divided into seven; you get forty-nine. So, since it's seven, we can speak of them as days and weeks. But as you say, whether they correspond to earthly days and weeks is quite another matter. Could be just an internal division at that time, whatever it is.

But anyway, are you a bit clearer about this Parinirvana extended celebration? I did write, or rather Vessantara wrote on my behalf, to all the Centres. I think the letter went to all the Chairmen. How many of you haven't come to know about this? Oh dear! You must speak to your relevant Chairmen. They might be sitting on the letter. Or you might not have been present at the Council meeting at which it was read out, perhaps. Because it isn't very far away now. It's only about three weeks away. If you are in doubt or would like to have a copy of the letter, Vessantara could probably give you a spare copy if you wanted. But I have just made these general suggestions.

Padmavajra: You say the Parinibbana Sutta: is there a Sanskrit Mahaparinirvana Sutra?

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S: There is. I've got a translation of it here. It's almost unreadable, this translation. I think the Pali, or rather the translation of the Pali, one is more suitable. That's in three thick volumes, anyway.

Atula: I've got one in the Little Wheel publication.

S: That's probably extracts, I'm not sure. But certainly it's complete in Rhys Davids.

Atula: It's a long sutra, isn't it?

S: Yes. Anyway, that's all by the by; but no doubt useful, none the less.

So: 'I shall keep the family tradition.' Well, this seems to be rather difficult to do nowadays. 'I shall make myself worthy of my inheritance.' The Rhys Davids's translation is: 'I will make myself worthy of my heritage,' which is rather different, isn't it? There is a difference between your inheritance and your heritage. Maybe the Pali doesn't really distinguish between the two. Let me see what the Pali says. (Looking it up.) Yes, it's just what comes to you, whether by inheritance or heritage. What do you think of this idea, making oneself worthy of one's inheritance or heritage? How could you do that? What significance does this statement have? What does one mean by worthy, anyway?

Padmapani: If you weren't worthy, the depreciation of the quality of family life as controlled ... would drop.(?) In other words, the property that was handed over to you would decrease in value - not necessarily material value but also in a social way.

S: Here the context is that of the family, one's parents. But one could look at it in a wider sense; for instance, in the sense of making oneself worthy of one's cultural heritage.

Dhammarati: I've got the idea of a certain set of resources made available to you, sort of realizing their potential.

S: Yes, indeed. So they could be material as in the case of inheritance or cultural, as in the case of heritage.

Dhammarati: But even sort of genetic.

S: Yes. Making the best use of all the resources, whether material or cultural or even spiritual, which had been, as it were, handed down to you or bequeathed to you. Or you might find suddenly that an aunt or other distant relation had died and left you \$1000, Well, you should not [322] only make yourself but be worthy of that inheritance (as it would be in that case). In other words, be able to make the best possible use of it, spend it in the best possible way. Make sure that you're personally equipped to make the best possible use of any external or extraneous advantages.

Padmapani: I don't quite understand, Bhante. I still don't understand what it means - to make sure that you're ...

S: Well, take, for instance, the crude example that I gave, that of your coming into some money which had been left to you: well, make sure that you are, or you have made yourself, the sort of person who can look at the matter objectively, spend the money wisely. Do you see what I mean? If you're going to just squander it, you're not worthy of the inheritance. So make sure that you are worthy of it, you are not the sort of person who is going to squander it and waste it and throw it away. Presumably it wasn't left to you for that purpose, anyway.

Padmapani: So it's a sort of moral, ethical question, rather, because you would inherit it anyway? Sort of moral attitude?

S: Yes, you are not under any legal obligation to fit yourself to inherit it, so clearly it is a moral one. It may be legally correct, but it seems morally wrong for someone to inherit a lot of money which he's going to proceed to squander. People will say, 'Well, it's his money, why shouldn't he squander it?' That may be legally the position but it's hardly morally the position.

Devapriya: You get cases where a rich lady has left thousands of pounds to the dog, and people fight that on legal grounds, saying it's...

S: It's not a very nice dog or the dog doesn't deserve it! (Laughter.) That the dog can't really use all that money! Or that the dog would only squander it at the races - dog races, of course! But another aspect of this whole question, supposing you've inherited a good physique and a healthy constitution, well, don't abuse them. Make yourself worthy of that by utilising your health and your strength in an honourable and noble and positive and constructive, creative manner.

Padmapani: That's quite interesting here, isn't it? It brings in a whole new dimension. I suppose you do, in actual fact, inherit positive attributes from your parents, and also diseases.

S: You also inherit life itself, so to speak.

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Ratnapani: The whole thing is just egocentric, isn't it? 'I'm me, I can do what I like ...'

S: 'I didn't ask to be born.' This is the modern individualistic attitude. 'What do I owe to my parents? I didn't ask to be born. They weren't thinking of me. When I was conceived, what were they thinking of? Just their own pleasure, if anything at all. They had no idea about me. What do I owe them?' (Laughter.) This is a typical individualistic, Urizenic sort of attitude. Actually you don't know what they were thinking of at that particular moment. After all those years, they probably don't know either! They probably couldn't tell you. They probably don't even know which particular moment it was, anyway. Give them the benefit of the doubt - that they were hoping and praying for a son just like you.

Devapriya: Well, that was the case with Anagarika Dharmapala's mother.

S: Yes, indeed.

: Can you say more about that?

Devapriya: She prayed and wished very hard for a Buddhist son.

S: Yes, who would help revive the Dharma.

Padmavajra: There is a whole stream of Tibetan contemplations, isn't there, where you have to reflect on the advantages that you've got, so that you can actually practise the Dharma. Are they for the purpose of making you make the most use of - ?

S: This is the main purpose. Also, I imagine, to instil a sense of gratitude. I think that people who are within the Movement now have a lot to be thankful for. First of all, most of them are coming to it quite young. Most of them have got their health and strength. Most of them have opportunities for study and meditation and spiritual fellowship. So, in a way, what more could one want? What more could one have to be grateful for? Perhaps, in some cases, a bit more time, a bit more leisure; perhaps a bit more financial freedom. But probably not much more than that.

Padmapani: Like the raw material is there.

S: Yes.

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Then, v) 'furthermore I shall offer alms in honour of my departed relatives.' And there's a footnote here by the translator: 'This is a sacred custom of the Aryans who never forgot the dead.' Not only the Aryans but the Chinese people, who are Mongolians. 'This tradition is still faithfully observed by the Buddhists of Ceylon who make ceremonial offerings of alms to the monks on the eighth day in the third month, and on each anniversary of the demise of the parents. The merit of these good actions is offered to the departed after such ceremony. Moreover, after every punnakamma (good action) a Buddhist never fails to think of his parents and offer merit. Such is the loyalty and the gratitude shown to parents as advised by the Buddha.'

So it's not only offering alms but any, as it were, good action, any good deed, anything done for the sake of the Dharma, in memory of or in honour of the departed relatives. Could be building a monastery, could be publishing a book.

Ratnapala: Apart from having beneficial effects psychologically, I find it hard to believe that you can transfer merit in that way. Something in me seems to find it difficult to accept that I could do that; that I could think of my grandparents or something, wherever they are, and transfer something I've done to them.

S: I don't think this is to be taken literally in that sense, like a transfer from one bank account to another. I don't think that one can take it in that sense. But I think if those deceased consciousnesses, for want of a better term, are anywhere around, so to speak, and if one can tune into the wavelength on which they are operating, and if one can as it were send a positive message by way of thoughts of metta, that cannot but do good and have a positive effect if it reaches them. I think one can at least say that, and one hopes that it does reach them. Because if one can't hope that, it suggests either that the death of the physical body was actually the end or that, if that wasn't the case, then different as it were consciousnesses that are not in contact through a physical body have no other means of contact; which is rather difficult to believe, actually.

Atula: That does for people who are living as well - they have contact with...

S: Yes, indeed. And we do know that contact does take place, telepathic contact, between people who are still alive in the body. There is a mind-to-mind, a consciousness-to-consciousness contact. So, if the consciousness of the deceased person 'continues' to exist in any recognizable form, communication should be possible; at least, to the extent of directing towards them positive thoughts, the effects of which they may feel even though they don't recognize that effect as produced by you and your communication, or don't, perhaps, feel in contact with you. But I don't think we can regard this transference of merit as literally a credit transfer. No, it's not a sort of celestial Giro card or anything like that. (Laughter.)

: Buddha bank!

Padmavajra: That would apply also with the Transference of Merits at the end of the Puja? It's the same, it's not a literal transference of merit, is it?

S: No, I personally find it difficult to regard it in that light.

Devapriya: I was just thinking on the memory of my grandmother who showed me loving-kindness and the good, in a way. I still remember her and that still has a beneficial effect on me. So whether it has this credit transfer effect of my positive actions...

S: But it's not that one's thoughts have no effect. For instance, you can talk to someone, face to face, while you are still as it were in the body, and your words can have a positive effect on them. Your positivity can as it were be transferred from you to them. But not by way of a literal transfer because what you give you don't lose.

Devapriya: Yes.

S: But you can have a positive effect upon them; so perhaps, also, if you're directing thoughts of metta towards those with whom you are not physically in contact or with whom you cannot be in contact because they are dead, it could be that something positive is, not literally transferred from you to them, but your positive thoughts affect them in a positive manner, so there is a gain to them. Do you see what I mean? At least a temporary gain. Well, no gain on the mundane level can be permanent, anyway.

Devapriya: There will certainly be a gain in the world, somewhere, through one's good actions.

S: Yes. Yes, indeed. The fact that a certain amount of metta is liberated, is let loose in the universe, as you say - that cannot but conduce to the general good; to somebody's good, anyway.

Padmapani: Could there be any correlation between that [idea] in the Yogacara school of the alaya vijnana, postulating that, without going into that - ?

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S: Well, the alaya is, at least from one point of view, a sort of theoretical scheme for explaining, or providing the possibility of explanation for, certain things that we do know, so to speak, happen; so it could be invoked in this sort of way here, too.

Padmapani: It does seem to make a very useful system for that transference of merit - that it does into, in a way, the actual idea of a store consciousness.

S: So, if people want to honour their departed relatives on Parinirvana Day, that is a good thing to do; perhaps bring along flowers for the shrine in memory of their departed parents, or take flowers to people in hospital, or something of that sort. Or just put a bit extra in the dana bowl that day in memory of your departed parents or grandparents, anybody.

Anyway, perhaps we can just pause there and have our cup of tea, then pass on to the corresponding duties of parents to children.

In five ways, young householder, the parents thus ministered to as the East by their children show their compassion:

- (i) they restrain them from evil,
- (ii) they encourage them to do good,
- (iii) they train them for a profession,
- (iv) they arrange a suitable marriage,
- (v) at the proper time they hand over their inheritance to them. In these five ways do children minister to their parents as the East and the parents show their compassion to their children. Thus is the East covered by them and made safe and secure.

S: Before we go on to these actual five points, in this way 'show their compassion'. The word for compassion in the Pali is anukampa, which means something like 'vibrating in accordance with'. It's more like sympathy or kindness than compassion in the karuna sense. Do you get the meaning? Kindness. Compassion may be a bit too elevated. Kindness; they show their kindness, their sympathy.

Padmavajra: Anukampa - A-N-U-K-A-M-P-A?

S: Yes. Anu is `after'; kampa is from kampatti, to shake or tremble. So it's just like one particular object vibrates and another object vibrates after it, in sympathy with it, as when you strike one musical instrument [327] and the other starts vibrating in the same sort of way. So it is more like sympathy than kindness, isn't it?

Padmavajra: It's a whole - again, reciprocity, and...

S: Yes.

Dhammarati: This sort of reciprocity business, has that not got quite a different flavour to it, this relationship insisted on between the Sangha and the laity? Because there's no giving in return for. It's just simple giving. You don't have any obligation in any way.

S: That is not reciprocity, that is more like a commercial exchange, that I was thinking in terms of: that there is not that relationship between the bhikshus and the laity - that is, where you have bhikshus and laity. Each gives what he can, in accordance with the needs of the other party. And the fact that they are providing for your needs sparks off something in you so that you want to provide for their needs. Not that you calculate and do a piece of book-keeping and think, `They have given me so much and therefore I must give them so much.' You are free from that sort of bargaining or book-keeping attitude. Nonetheless, the fact that they have given to you in a way causes you - not causes you to respond - you feel like responding.

Devapriya: I think the view that Dhammarati put forward has actually cramped some people in as far as they don't feel that there is a responsibility to - It's like, it can be seen as one-sided. I don't have to, because you have given me something, give something back. It actually cuts off...

S: Yes. It's [like] `I don't have to but I will.' `It's not that I feel under any obligation in the ordinary mundane sense that I've got to keep pace with your giving.' But it is only natural if someone gives to you will feel like giving to them; not because you want to keep your end up and you want to keep, as it were, even with them; not like that, but the fact that they give to you means that they have a feeling for you, a human feeling for you. The fact that you feel their human feeling for you means that you start having a human feeling for them and you want to give to them. Do you see what I mean? It's not that you are not giving, but your giving is in accordance with a higher law, as it were. Not that, say, Order Members should say, `I'm an Order Member and people are bound to look after me and support me. I have no obligation towards anybody; I can do as I like.' It's not that sort of attitude at all.

Devapriya: So I think that sometimes the baby gets thrown out with the bath-water; because I don't have to respond then if I do respond it's because I'm feeling that I have to, so I won't.

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S: Yes. I think when I made that original point that nothing is expected in return from the bhikshus, the assumption is - the framework of the discussion is - that bhikshus are as it were spiritually superior, the lay people are spiritually inferior. So they support the bhikshus. So it is not for the lay people, ideally, to as it were dictate to the bhikshus how they will behave or how they should respond. They give, they support the bhikshus, in the full confidence that they know best. So they don't expect anything from the bhikshus. If the bhikshus preach, say,

the Dharma, as it were in return, the lay people are happy. But if they don't, the lay people are still happy, thinking 'The bhikshu knows best. Maybe he's just meditating.' Do you see what I mean? And the bhikshu, for his part, doesn't feel under any obligation in the sense that they are expecting. They leave it to him, so therefore he is free to respond. Do you see what I mean? He may feel, 'These lay people, they are so good. They are looking after me. They are caring for me. What can I do for them?', not that 'Oh, they're expecting some return so I suppose I'd better satisfy them.' Not that.

But it could be that, as you say, people are throwing away the baby with the bath-water and interpreting whatever I did say in an individualistic way, in the sense that, well, they can expect to be supported but need not care at all about the people who support them. That would be quite individualistic. In other words, one's response must not be in accordance with a demand which you experience as external, but it must be by way of a fulfilment of your inner need or wish to respond.

Devapriya: Yes.

Tape 15, Side A

S: You respond not because you are expected to respond, you respond because you want to respond. You feel like responding. You are happy to respond.

Devapriya: The demand is internal rather than external.

S: Yes, it's internal rather than external. But even that cannot be expected of you, because if it is expected of you, in a rather hard and fast sense, it ceases to be a spontaneous response. It's just as in the case of friendship: you do something for a friend, you don't expect anything in return. But there is a return. There will be a return. But you must trust your friend, as it were, for that return. You mustn't even think in terms of a return. I mean, standing outside the situation and looking at it objectively, a third party could say, well, yes, one person gives and it's only to be expected that the other person gives, but the parties themselves, [329] the two friends themselves, shouldn't have any sense of expectancy, in that way. It's quite a fine point in a way.

Devapriya: [You must] be quite aware, mindful.

Padmapani: It also implies a certain immersion with the other person, doesn't it? An immersion of, like, two circles overlapping and sort of immersed, in a way.

Ratnapani: It's strange how in a way you can't expect gratitude, because that negates the value of giving in some way. But then, if you don't receive gratitude, well, that's just something a bit odd about the other person. So it's quite a subtle emotional feeling.

S: Yes. Anyway, 'show their compassion' - show their kindness, their sympathy. So how do they do that, parents in relation to children? First of all, 'they restrain them from evil' and 'encourage them to do good.' So this is quite important. This means that the first duty, so to speak, of parents towards children is ethical. Your first duty towards your children is to bring them up ethically - restrain them from evil and encourage them to do good. Ideally, in your society, natural morality and conventional morality will more or less coincide. If they do you'll be very lucky. But if they don't, primarily of course it must be your responsibility and

your aim as a parent to bring up your children in accordance with natural morality; but no doubt you will also, if the conventional morality of society diverges too much from the natural morality which you are teaching your children, you'll have to explain that discrepancy to your children so that they don't get too bemused when they go outside the family circle, or go outside the house, or go to school.

Padmapani: That could be very difficult, I should imagine, that constant bombardment, especially at some place like school.

Atula: So it's really positive...

S: In other words, it's quite interesting that the primary duty, the first duty, in a way, of the parents towards the children is to give them an ethical training.

: As a sort of Manu?

S: As a sort of Manu, you could say, yes. Because they won't be able to understand everything from an early age. You may have to, in a sense, impose it, though you'll do it as kindly and as gently as you can. But usually children who grow up in a happy atmosphere are only too happy [330] to do as their parents - I won't say 'tell them', but as their - they want to please the parents; so if the parents say 'Please do this' or 'Please do that,' usually children in that sort of situation are only too happy to, I won't say 'obey' because they don't feel it as obedience in that more rigid sense.

Ratnapala: They want to conform, they want the guidelines, they look for teaching.

S: They want to comply, yes.

Ratnapala: It's interesting, because it brings up the idea of conditioning, doesn't it? Once a dirty word. This is the positive conditioning.

S: Yes, indeed.

Ratnapala: As opposed to the other idea: people said, 'I don't like to tell my children off because I don't want to condition them. I want them to grow up unconditioned.'

S: Yes: 'So I'm going to leave them entirely without guidelines'!

Ratnapala: Well, yes, but the idea that by not conditioning them they grow up unconditioned, 'Unconditioned' in the sense of sunyata, Transcendental awareness - and of course that doesn't happen because if you don't condition them they set about conditioning themselves.

S: They get conditioned by their peer group, by teachers at school. They will be conditioned, so if you don't condition them positively somebody else is going to condition them, and probably negatively. So you'd better get in first. Yours is the first opportunity, anyway.

Ratnapala: Skilful samskaras.

S: Yes. Yes.

Padmapani: Do you think - well, I suppose it's implied - pseudo-liberal ideas amongst parents when they're bringing up children leads to very unruly behaviour with children actually in the house? For instance, if they sort of let the child just do what he wants to do in the context of the house, the home, when they're young, what effect do you think that has on the child?

S: Well, it just makes them individualistic. There are certain friends I have who have children that I just won't go and see, because the children are so unruly you can't possibly have even a short conversation with the [331] parents - just not even for a minute - because the children have just not been trained not to interrupt or to be a little bit quiet. They've been indulged, probably in accordance with pseudo-liberal ideas. It's a waste of time just going to those houses to see those people.

Padmavajra: Children like that usually end up very selfish, very spoilt, self-centred.

S: Yes. Whereas, in the case of some Indian families I can think of, it's quite a delight to visit someone's home and the children usually are so well behaved and, well, so sweet. It's not that they're subdued; you can see the way they look they're not in the least subdued or suppressed, but they are definitely nicely trained, you can say. They haven't been crushed, and their spirit hasn't been broken - nothing like that. They are just a little bit - well, they are just well brought up, as we say. Their liveliness and sense of fun, that's all there, not in the least disturbed, but they have some awareness of other people.

Dhammarati: Ratnapala's kids are very alive and very considerate.

Devapriya: Some friends that I visit, especially single parents, their children are a little bit freer and I feel that for my own sanity, if I visit, then I've got to actually draw lines, in a way, for my own sake and also from a certain duty, that you can't expect totally a parent or even parents to...

S: (interrupting) And also I think parents shouldn't expect other people, visitors and guests, to put up with their children in the way that they appear willing to put up with them. It's just not reasonable to expect that. If you care to put up with bad behaviour on the part of your children, well, that's your choice, fair enough. But you can't invite people to your home and expect them to put up with it. That's almost an insult. It's rude behaviour, it's inconsiderate behaviour, to invite anyone into that sort of situation where you are not prepared to control your own children or ensure that they behave with some decency, some politeness. If they behave like savages, well, who is going to visit you? It's like going into a wild animals' cage at the zoo. (Laughter.) If you don't see yourself in the role of part-time lion tamer, you just don't go along.

Padmapani: It would seem this text very generally is quite good, it would be quite good - I know this has been discussed a lot of times before - but the idea of having a primary education, a Buddhist - well, a school for kids.

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S: Yes, that seems to have dropped recently, doesn't it? No one seems to be even talking about it any more. I don't know what is happening. I haven't had time to look into the matter.

Tejamati: Maybe there's not enough kids to warrant the effort being put into that.

S: Not enough kids in one particular area, perhaps.

Devapriya: Maybe if we can get suitable housing in the East End and draw them together.

S: Yes, that's true. And you'd have all the mums and children probably under your fatherly control. (Laughter.)

Devapriya: NO!

Padmapani: I think he'd have a right old battle on his hands.

Ratnapala: It would be a marvellous idea if somebody else did it!

S: Anyway, let's carry on. I think that point is sufficiently made. I don't think we need to go into details of ethical training. I think everybody understands what they are: not to injure other living beings; how to treat the pets in the household; even look after plants and flowers; and to be truthful. Well, I don't think actually a child needs to be taught to be truthful. I think the child is naturally truthful, in the sense that untruthfulness demands a certain amount of ingenuity and resourcefulness and trouble, in a way. So I think you'd have to teach a child to be untruthful rather than teach it to be truthful, yes? And the question of kamesu micchachara doesn't come till much later; that can be introduced in a tactful, natural way. So it's mainly this question of - and also, yes, unselfishness, sharing of possessions. This is the main ethical training. You don't harm other people, you don't hurt anybody else; you're not greedy, you don't snatch their possessions, and you're willing to share. And you say what you think and you feel; and you're tidy, you're responsible. You gradually bring the child into awareness that there are other people in the world and especially in the family; that they also have their feelings and their needs which you have to consider, just as they have to consider yours. This simple ethical training can stand the child in good stead throughout his or her life and provide a good foundation for anything, anything skilful that he or she ever cares to do.

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And then iii) 'they train them for a profession.' I don't take the word 'profession' too literally here. It just trains them in a way of earning their living. You train them in such a way that they're able to survive in the world outside after they have grown up. This clearly, of course, presupposes a certain type of society. In other words, you train your children to survive independently of you.

Atula: So that today, it's education, a good education?

S: Well, I don't know, because it raises the question of what is a good education? For instance, the wise parent sort of looks around the world or society in which he lives; he sees the various openings, the various opportunities. He sees which are skilful, which are unskilful. He considers the aptitudes of his own child, the child's natural tendency, and encourages him to follow this or that particular path with a view to earning his or her living in this or that particular way. I'm leaving out of account the specifically Buddhist situation. You might honestly think the best thing you can do is to bring up your child to eventually join and work in a co-op, an FWBO co-op. On the other hand, considering the child's particular aptitudes or interests, you might think there's something else that was the best thing he or she could do. But in any case I think the principle here is you prepare your child for survival in

the outside world. You recognize that sooner or later the child is going to have to leave the home; or even if not leave the home, leave you, in the sense that he won't always have you and mother behind him or behind her; will have to make his own way and must have a means of doing that, even if he follows the family trade, the family profession. So you've got to bring up the child in such a way that he can cope with the outside world, survive in the outside world, make his way in the outside world. Do you see what I mean? And, of course, how you do that, what factors you take into consideration, will vary very much in accordance with the society in which you live and in which he has to be brought up and into which he has to be launched eventually. Do you see what I mean? (Agreement.)

Dhammarati: Do you think parents can have a profound enough effect on a kid to actually, in a way, predispose it towards higher evolution, if you like?

S: I think not necessarily. No, because children can differ so much from parents. Innate, or what seems to be innate, disposition and attitudes. No, you can be quite skilful and perhaps try to guide the child gently, but I think sometimes the child may have, even from a quite early age, a will or a mind, so to speak, of his own or her own; have very definite ideas which you wouldn't have thought of at all. So one has to take that fact into consideration.

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Ratnapala: I can't help feeling, Bhante, that it is possible in a quite unskilful way to indoctrinate your children. I've known quite a few people who are rabid Christians, and wasn't surprised to find their parents were of the same ilk - really bring up the child with this fear of God, fear of hell. Perhaps in that way you can.

Dhammarati: I had wondered about something a bit more intelligent - almost, if you like the spiritual life; it seems to me like I'm making some quite intelligent decisions, and I wondered if you actually sort of teach your child almost to think so clearly that it's a natural extension of its...

S: Yes, I think that you should certainly, if you can, teach your children to think clearly - or rather not encourage them to think in a sloppy way. I think if they do think clearly they may well see things in the way that you see things, if you already see things clearly. But also, of course, one has to take into account the effect of the outside world, especially the child who is going to an ordinary school. There's tremendous pressure to conform coming, even if unconsciously, from one's peer group - to look like them, dress like them, behave like them - and it can be so strong at certain ages that it may counteract all the parental influence and parental teaching and positive conditioning. It's a sad fact, but I think that is a feature of modern society. You may have brought your child up to be a vegetarian; the child may be quite happy with vegetarian food. But then at school perhaps he lets out that he's a vegetarian, not knowing that other children aren't, and then he's made fun of and perhaps mocked for being a vegetarian, or not eating meat at school; then he starts feeling uneasy about being a vegetarian because it makes him so different from everybody else. Then he comes home one day and says, 'Mummy, can I have some meat because, not that I like it but if I don't take it people are going to laugh at me?' So you see this sort of situation can arise when there's a conflict between the ideals current in the home and the ideals current in society. A quite difficult situation can arise. Maybe then you have to sit down and talk things out with the child, especially as he or she gets a bit older, and say: 'If you really feel you must, OK, eat meat. We're not going to stop you. But just realize you're just giving in to the pressures of the

group - sometimes unfortunately one has to - and be free from that when you can. Or even maybe limit the meat eating; maybe have a bit of fish or something like that as a sort of compromise.' But one certainly must not exacerbate any conflict the child feels between school and home, because it's in a way too much to expect the child to bear or to endure that sort of sharp conflict. If it becomes very extreme and you feel your [335] own ideals very strongly, you may even have to withdraw the child from school and teach the child yourself, if you are able to do that.

Anyway, `they train them for a profession.' I look at that as [meaning] they train them for survival in the outside world. They provide them with a means of survival, i.e. training in a livelihood, skill in a particular kind of work.

And then, v) `they arrange a suitable marriage.' Well, this is the Indian context. I think it's very sensible, actually. I think on the whole I'm in favour of arranged marriages. If I have to accept that there's going to be such a thing as marriage, I think it should be to a great extent arranged. I don't think such an important matter can be left to the arbitrary, whimsical decision of two people who happen to fall in love. I think that's almost the worst possible basis for marriage. (Some laughter.)

Padmavajra: Indian marriages are always pretty satisfactory.

S: Yes. They fall in love after being married, when all the other factors have been properly aligned.

Padmavajra: Parents are very sussed as well, aren't they?

S: They are!

Padmavajra: There's never any sort of - They really go into it!

S: They do.

Padmapani: I don't know.

Padmavajra: Oh, they do, they really do.

S: There are exceptions, obviously, but most parents in India really care for their children and they really want to do the best for them, and the children believe this, they have this faith in their parents, that they are doing their best. Especially the girls believe that her parents are really going to find her the best husband that they possibly can, within their means as it were. And she thinks it quite unfortunate [that] `These poor Western girls, they have to go out and shamelessly expose themselves in the market place, as it were, and lure and attract a husband. What shameless behaviour.' That's what they think. And not even being in a position to know his character or his financial position, or whether he has got any disease. All this is sussed out for her by her parents. In some more responsible families they even insist on what amounts to a sort of [336] medical certificate. Or at least they take steps to ensure that the bride or the bridegroom is in good health, is not suffering from any disease. So it does work much more satisfactorily. Whether it would work in this present corrupt state of Western society, I don't know.

Devapriya: In terms of royal marriages, I think a very similar thing goes on. They see that

each partner can have children; they look into the whole matter very carefully.

Dhammarati: You get another sort of mechanism there that makes quite a conservative society, because presumably you're going to take down the old men's ideology; ... social pressure to conform to an ideology ...

S: Yes, it does make for a conformist or conservative society. It also makes for a stable society. Well, perhaps they err in respect of stability in India, but in the West we err in the direction perhaps of instability. I've even wondered, within the FWBO, if people have to get married, well, maybe the Councils of the FWBO should decide upon that. (Laughter.) Yes! and have a little sub-committee to decide that matter. And if it's known, for instance, that the woman involved or the man involved are both pretty hot-tempered and impatient people, well, they shouldn't be encouraged to get married (laughter), because that spells trouble. The fact that they are 'in love' is pretty irrelevant (Laughter.) Well, whether they're married or not they're going to fall out of love sooner or later; and then, if there aren't more solid qualities to fall back upon, where does that lead them? I mean he might have tolerated her bad cooking so long as he was in love, but once he's fallen out of love with her, well, he's landed with her bad cooking, and probably doesn't feel like putting up with it now since he isn't in love with her any more.

Padmavajra: Being in love would be a factor that would militate against getting married.

S: Yes, indeed, distort the vision. It's not some sort of escapade that one should embark upon just by oneself. In India they regard it as affecting the whole family, as a family matter. In a sense they might also go as far as to say the marriage is nothing to do with the young people concerned, it's a family matter; it's up to the family to arrange it. And usually the young people concerned are quite happy with that arrangement. Of course, under pressure of modern Western so-called civilization, some young men, and even some young women, have become a bit restive - in some cases understandably so, but in other respects I think it's pretty well known in India that what they refer to as 'love marriages' are very often not very successful and certainly no [337] happier than the arranged marriages. I think one could safely say that they were less happy than the arranged marriages.

Padmapani: Out in India, the woman, for instance - I mean she can't really, her duties aren't finished until all her children are married off; is that correct? In a way that's her...

S: Well, the husband's, the father's, duties aren't finished either.

Padmapani: But does that mean they still continue with their high standards for their children or - ? Surely there must be an element creeping in of 'I must get them married. I must get all my children married off because I've got all this other work I want to do.'

S: No, I think not. No. I think most parents are very conscientious in India, and genuinely want the welfare of their children. And also this whole idea of arranged marriage is very deeply embedded in their social structure and perhaps in their psychology. If they see a young unmarried man wandering over from the West, some of the more motherly women will at once think in terms of arranging a suitable match for him. They feel sorry for him. He's got no family, no one to do it for him. 'Oh, we have to rally round. We have to help.' They start looking around. There are some matrons [who] automatically, wherever they go, within the

family circle and so on, they keep their eye open for suitable men for such-and-such girls and suitable girls for such-and-such men. It's at the back of their minds all the time, I think.

Padmavajra: Dharmalochana - one of the warmest things she ever said to me, and she really felt it deeply, she said to Virabhadra when he was there: 'Go and tell his parents that he's OK over here. I'll get him a really good wife.' (Laughter.)

S: Yes, yes.

Padmavajra: It was heartfelt, and she thought she ...

S: I'm sure she would have made thorough and conscientious enquiries and you would have been provided, if you had to be provided, with a good wife, well trained by Dharmalochana and accountable to her if she misbehaved. (Laughter.)

Padmapani: Surely that would be incompatible, though, wouldn't it? I mean it's a great idea, but surely that would be, on a very practical level, totally incompatible, a Western man with an Indian woman?

Padmavajra: Well, that's neither here nor there.

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S: I think not. Especially in India.

Padmapani: Oh, if they were living out in India.

S: If they were living in India there'd be no problem, perhaps not so much of a problem over here, if there were a number of such Indian wives who could keep up contact with one another, sharing the same ideals and outlook. But if she had no sympathetic Englishwoman who was a wife to talk to, that might be rather difficult; she might find it rather undermining. And also, of course, she would need children. One would have to accept that; that's part of the deal, as it were.

I must say that we have to look at arranged marriages in, I think, a much more positive way. It was the custom in the West until relatively recently that marriages were arranged.

Tejamati: But among the higher classes.

S: No, not necessarily; middle-class people too. Also you never married without the permission of your parents, and that was a very real thing in those days, because it concerned the whole family. After all, this new person, this new woman, if you are a man, was going to be brought into the household. So clearly how the parents felt about her was also important. Not just how you felt about her, the fact that you were in love with her. She might be a quite disagreeable young woman who wasn't prepared to make an effort to get on with your parents. If you were a farmer she'd have to be prepared to be a farmer's wife and lend a hand with the farm. So if you got a good stout healthy wench, that would be better; not one of these frail city damsels who'd sit in front of the mirror painting her face all day. That would not do for a farmer's wife. Well, supposing a young farmer went up into town and fell in love with one of these creatures. She'd play havoc with the farm if he married her. The farmer wouldn't

have a helpmeet. He'd only have a burden on his hands. He'd only have a piece of fancy goods that was all right for the drawing-room but not for the kitchen and not for the fields; not for the dairy; not for the bakehouse!

Padmavajra: I must say one of the things I did notice about going into Indian households was there didn't seem to be any - it just came to my mind now - any exclusivity between the man and the woman. Very often if you go into a house in the West, it feels very much as though you're going on to territory which isn't yours and it's very enclosed.

S: Yes. Yes.

Padmavajra: But I never, ever, felt that in India.

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S: Yes. It's very welcoming, that's true. It's your home - they often say this. 'Treat this house as your own.' It's quite common in the East. I was reading a travel book only recently; someone travelling, I think it was in Turkey in the last century, and he was staying at the house of the local governor, and the local governor's son spoke French; and the traveller, in speaking, would often say something like, 'Oh, your house is quite big, isn't it?' And the little boy would say, 'No, no, it is not our house. It is your house.' He would always correct him in this way, as though he really meant it, that he should really feel 'It's your house. You are staying here. It's not our house.' And the traveller really noticed this. And that is the Indian attitude also, to a great extent. You don't feel you're trespassing on somebody else's preserve, somebody else's ground, somebody else's territory.

Padmapani: I remember when I came back from Travi(?) on the train and I stopped off to get some money which Dharmalochana and Dharmarakshita had put in the safe; and I was sitting on the couch - and I was there for three or four hours - and he went out, she came in, he went out, the children came in, and it was just like life was just going on. They brought me tea and I was just like part of the family. It was incredible, as if I'd known them all their lives; was quite extraordinary.

S: I don't want to idealize the Indian arrangements. Sometimes things do go wrong and sometimes the wife especially suffers, one can't deny that. And some wives commit suicide - usually, I think, because of the mother-in-law's unsympathetic treatment. But such cases are a minority. The vast majority of arranged marriages are quite happy. I would say, in the West, if people do think in terms of marriage they should think of it in quite businesslike terms, practical terms. Don't think in terms of falling in love and then you arrange to marry the woman you fall in love with. You should think first, quite objectively: 'Do I want to get married?' - if you are a man, that is. 'All right, yes, I want to have a family. What sort of wife would I like to live with? What sort of woman, with what sort of qualities?' Because you are going to be working in, as it were, a sort of partnership. In a way you're starting a small-scale business, an enterprise. So if you were going to start a business in the ordinary commercial sense, and were looking for a partner, you'd look for someone who knew something about that kind of business and with whom you could work, etc. etc. I think you should take the same attitude towards getting married. In other words, something much more practical and down to earth and robust, because you'd be embarking on a joint enterprise - that is to say, of raising a family.

Ratnapala: It's like what you were saying about mandalas, Bhante. You choose what you are going to put in the centre of your mandala and then fall in love with it.

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S: Yes. Yes, right. So decide what sort of family you want to have and what sort of wife and then find her. Not fall in love with any sort of female that you happen to come into contact with and then assume that she'll be a suitable wife and mother. That would seem to be a disastrous presumption, or potentially disastrous anyway.

I think maybe one should, if one thinks of marriage at all, think of it much more in terms of a career that you have to approach quite sensibly and rationally, and make quite definite arrangements. I think if you like the woman and she likes you, I think that's quite sufficient, and if you are sexually compatible I think that will do the trick. And you both want children, and you agree on those sort of issues, and you're reasonable human beings capable of a certain amount of give and take and mutual support and sympathy. The fact that you've fallen wildly in love with her and she's fallen wildly in love with you may be a wonderful recipe for a honeymoon, but it's not a very good recipe for a marriage.

Padmavajra: Recipe for disaster.

Devapriya: Maybe in that way you should have a marriage for a month or something.

S: Most people usually do!

You see what I'm getting at? I'm not averse to marriage; I'm not opposed to marriage. But I don't feel happy about marriage on the present romantic sort of basis. It seems to me a much too slender basis on which to erect such an important social institution as marriage and family life.

Devapriya: It seems to be again being just a lot more objective than caught up in one's own subjectivity.

S: Yes. I mean, take into account whether the particular woman you're thinking of making your wife is acceptable, say, to your parents. That is surely a factor. Take her along, see how they react to her, she reacts to them.

Devapriya: Meet her mother to see what she will grow up to be like! (Murmurs of agreement.)

S: Possibly, yes. She may be sylphlike now but her mother may not be at all sylphlike! Well, you may not be, come to think of it, in twenty years' time! [341] So I don't think, even for people within the Friends, that marriage can be excluded as one of the options. I do think that no one should think in terms of marriage unless they are considering raising a family. I think there is no other reason for getting married, really. So you look about you for a worthy partner to assist you or co-operate with you in that enterprise. Maybe there's no one available to arrange your marriage for you; well, you have to arrange it, as it were, yourself and consult your friends, especially your spiritual friends. Don't approach the whole thing in an individualistic way. You can even let it be known that 'I'd like to get married,' if that is the way you are looking at things. You don't have to go to India and seek Dharmalochana's services. Let it be known, and friends may keep an eye open for suitable females and see to it that you're introduced.

Padmapani: Put an advert in the Newsletter. (Laughter.)

Tejamati: Or in Shabda. (Laughter.)

Ratnapani: Ah, just a minute! (Laughter.)

S: I suppose they'd charge quite heavily for them!

Ratnapani: It would be like the back pages of Time Out, if we're not careful! (Laughter.)

S: No, I think word of mouth is best, word of mouth.

Padmapani: Everybody goes down to Eddy's shop!

Padmavajra: I think I'd leave it to Dharmalochana.

S: Yes, indeed. And I think if one was seriously thinking in terms of getting married one should seriously consider an Indian wife.

Devapriya: An Indian wife?

S: Oh yes.

Ratnapani: Dharmalochana can keep control!

S: Even apart from that, the fact that they've been brought up in a different way; think in terms of being a wife, not that it's something they've got problems about or feel conflict about. That's all quite dreadful. Whatever you take up, your heart should be in it, so if you get [342] married your heart should be in that; being a husband or being a wife, being a parent, you should really want to do it. It shouldn't be something with which you find yourself landed.

Ratnapala: Indian women make very good wives.

S: Yes. In the case of Punyavati - I'm sure you must be referring to her to some extent - she's not even fully Indian. She hasn't had even the benefit of the full Indian training, because she was brought up in Kenya, you could say; so - even so, even so.

Ratnapala: She was brought up strictly within the Gujerati tradition.

S: Also, apart from all that, I'm quite in favour of inter-caste and international marriages. I think they do help to break down these dreadful barriers of caste and nationality; I'm not in the least in favour of them. From that point of view I'd be quite happy to see some of our English Friends marrying Indian women, all within the Movement, of course. I am assuming that they do definitely want to get married and you're not going to talk them out of it; all right, that will be a good idea, I think it would definitely cement things on a certain level. I don't know how it would work the other way round, that is to say Englishwomen with Indian men. No, because I think the Indians, the poor Indian men, would get more than they bargained for. I'd pity them. I would pity them, really. I don't think I'd encourage that at all.

No. There might be a certain amount of prestige attached to getting an English wife; they'd probably consider they were quite beautiful just because she was fair-complexioned, but she wouldn't be much use in the home, probably, in many cases, and not fit in very well. If he was going to be living over here it might be another matter, but even so I couldn't really wholeheartedly recommend Englishwomen as wives - no, not any longer.

Ratnapani: You see certain Indian men in this country being browbeaten by their emancipated Indian wives; they've got Westernized. They have a very ... time.

S: Yes. Anyway, perhaps I've said enough on that subject, perhaps a bit too much. I hope no one is going to misquote me or quote me out of context.

Ratnapani: `Marriage is in'!

S: No, it isn't `in' (laughter), but it isn't absolutely out - properly defined, properly defined.

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Ratnapani: Right.

Padmapani: It could never be `in' in that sense, because it would be a full-time occupation, for life, wouldn't it?

: In what sense is it full-time?

Padmapani: Well, if somebody died it would be a disgrace to intermarry.

S: I've lost the thread of connection.

Ratnapala: You often do with Padmapani.

: I'm not alone.

Devapriya: If one was a Buddhist and one happened to ... an Indian woman or any woman, you would have commitments.

Padmapani: That's true but from my experience it would seem to be far worse.

Padmavajra: There's two separate points here. The point Padmapani's making - that, if you happened to marry an Indian woman and you left her, then socially it would be very, very difficult for her.

S: Yes, she would be considered to have been in the wrong and therefore disgraced. She must have done something bad for her husband to leave her. So, yes, she would be definitely disgraced and would find it very difficult, if not impossible, to remarry.

: What's the other point?

Padmavajra: The other point was that, from our point of view, it would be very bad if you did enter into something and then you just broke it; but it wouldn't be socially so difficult if you

left an English wife. It wouldn't be socially so difficult as an Indian wife, though from our point of view it wouldn't be desirable.

Ratnapani: It could be desirable, couldn't it? - because if two people are no longer getting on they can say, 'The kids are grown up, bye-bye,' and that's it. No problem socially whatever...

Padmavajra: Depends on the context.

Ratnapani: - or psychologically.

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S: Well, the Indian wife sometimes has to face that situation if the husband leaves home to become a sadhu or a monk. Then it isn't regarded as her fault, but she is considered to be unfortunate. Generally speaking, the Indian view is that a woman without a man is hardly a woman at all, sort of thing.

Tejamati: Could she then get married again, if her husband left her to become a sadhu?

S: No, usually in India nowadays the remarriage of a widow, much more so someone in that sort of situation, is regarded as out. But not among the ex-Untouchables; because one reason they were looked down upon was they just don't conform to these higher-caste sort of rules. An ex-Untouchable Buddhist woman could certainly remarry if her husband died or if he left her, and no one would think very much of it at all. No, that problem doesn't exist for them.

Padmapani: I didn't realize that, actually. I thought it was still quite a stigma.

S: It is generally, but not among these people. Well, just as it is a stigma to handle excrement, but not among these people, because they're the sweepers traditionally, very often. So, actually, social life among the ex-Untouchable Buddhists is much closer to social life in England in some respects than it is to social life among the higher-caste Hindus in India. For instance, they don't seclude their women in the way that some high-caste Hindus do. Originally that was for economic reasons; women had to work.

And then: v) 'at the proper time they hand over their inheritance to them.' I think the context here is that of the extended family; or at least, if not extended family, the family which owns its property jointly, so that what happens is when the parents get a bit old and the children are grown up - the sons are living at home, of course, with their wives and their children - the father and mother gradually withdraw from the management of the household affairs and the management of the family property. The eldest son and his wife usually take over and the parents, very often, devote themselves more and more to religion. It's not so much that the father now hands over his personal property to his son, which now becomes the son's personal property. It's more that the management of the property in which they all have - not exactly a share, but an interest - is handed over from the older to the younger generation. This is more the sort of thing that happens.

You may know that in the case of the Dapodi land, this is a joint property. I believe well over a hundred people altogether have an [345] interest in it, all of whose signatures have had to be obtained. Even, apparently, infants, and even unborn children have a right in it; that is, unborn in the sense of conceived but not yet born. So that is one reason for some of the delays over the Dapodi property - it was a joint family property, and some of the people having an

interest in it lived at a distance or weren't available or had gone away, and still all their signatures were needed. Eventually they all signed a document appointing one and the same person, one single person, as holding power of attorney, so he could act on behalf of them all. But you have to get them all together in the first place. There had almost to be a public meeting of these people with an interest in the property. And they had to make sure that the list was complete, otherwise, if someone had been left out, he could challenge the whole thing. It would all be invalid. Or if one of his babies had been forgotten and things hadn't been done in the name of that baby, too. Anyway, we'll pass that over. So `In these five ways do children minister to their parents as the East and the parents show their compassion to their children. Thus is the East covered by them and made safe and secure.'

Side B

S: Perhaps we can pass on to the next, the five ways in which a pupil should minister to a teacher as the South. We can at least finish that this morning.

In five ways, young householder, a pupil should minister to a teacher as the South:

- (i) by rising from the seat in salutation,
- (ii) by attending on him,
- (iii) by eagerness to learn,
- (iv) by personal service,
- (v) by respectful attention while receiving instructions.

S: There is quite a lot that could be said on each of these. First is the paying of outward respect `by rising from the seat in salutation.' This was considered quite important an ancient times in India, and is even today, one might say - the paying of respect in the manner which is customary within one's own society. I think one must make that qualification. I don't know what the custom is in schools at present. When I was a child at school, as far as I remember, everybody stood up when the teacher entered the classroom. I don't know whether this is still observed.

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Tejananda: When I was a schoolteacher they used to greet me by throwing chalk at me as I opened the door.

S: Oh dear.

Dhammarati: Is this `teacher' in the sense of schoolteacher rather than guru, then?

S: Well, here it's with regard to the teacher in the more secular sense. Though, of course, in India the two shade one into the other, the secular teacher and the spiritual teacher. This is more like the secular teacher, because we have later on the brahmanas and sramanas, who are the spiritual teachers. But again, for instance, parents in India, in the Pali texts, are often called pathamaguru(?), the first teachers, and the word `guru' is used here. Do you see what I mean? So here the parent, the secular teacher, the spiritual teacher, they all shade off one into the other. They're not completely distinguished. They are distinct to some extent but they are certainly not mutually exclusive. One and the same person, especially within the brahminical tradition, may be your father, your secular teacher and your spiritual preceptor. This

sometimes did happen, stage by stage.

Tejananda: What does the term patha mean?

S: Pathama, meaning first: pathamaguru.

Padmavajra: Is there therefore a sort of hierarchy of teachers?

S: Well, in this sort of way. The secular teacher, as we would say, gives place to the spiritual teacher. (Looking up text.) The word for teacher here is acarya.

: What are the connotations of acarya?

S: Here it is more like teacher, instructor, in the more secular sense; instructor in arts and sciences. Why do you think 'rising from the seat in salutation', i.e. the paying of formal respect, is insisted upon? Why is this considered as it were part of learning?

Padmavajra: Isn't it sort of ritualising an attitude of receptivity?

S: Yes, indeed. So it would suggest that where this showing of formal respect is not present the chances of learning are reduced.

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Ratnapala: It's like acknowledging a hierarchy.

S: Yes. So the fact that these things aren't kept up in the schools today is perhaps not a very positive sign. Though of course, on the other hand, one does not want to think in terms of very rigid discipline or an enforced showing of respect which is not actually felt. Some Catholic schools still insist on a very strict discipline in this way, but nonetheless the atmosphere is not perhaps in some ways very positive. This is one thing, again, one notices in India: that children show respect, say, to parents or to elders generally and are happy to show it. They really like to show it. I remember going to Buddhist houses not only in India but elsewhere, and little children would come and bow down and were really pleased to show that they knew how to bow down to a bhikkhu. They were really pleased that they were doing this. This is indicative of the general attitude.

Padmavajra: It would be good fun to them.

S: Oh yes, really good fun, yes.

And then, 'by attending on him.' This seems to overlap a bit with number four, 'by personal service.' It means not only attending on him [but] being in his proximity, being helpful in practical ways, serving him, ministering to him. This is not usually considered part of the student's duties, but it is very much considered so in India. You do things for the teacher.

Dhammarati: It implies a more personal relationship.

S: Yes, a more personal contact, even communication.

Atula: In the schools today, the bigger they get the less personal.

S: I do remember in my days at school most teachers had two or three pupils who were regarded as sort of favourites, who did things or were allowed to do things or asked to do things, and this was definitely regarded as a sort of honour.

Dhammarati: They got despised at our school!

S: A slightly later generation!

Padmapani: I know, I had that with one particular teacher at school, and I wasn't despised - it was quite interesting - mainly because it was in the area of art and I had talent that way, so I wasn't despised.

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S: Yes, because the teacher liked you or thought you had talent in his particular field or her particular field. So you were asked to do things - get the books out of the cupboard, clean the blackboard and things like that, and you felt not exactly honoured but you were certainly pleased to be asked to do those things, be treated in this way.

Padmapani: It's quite interesting, because I did feel a correlation between that and being at home with my parents. There was a correlation which I felt, and in actual fact it did help me through some difficult years, the early adolescent period.

S: So one ministers to a teacher 'by attending on him' and 'by eagerness to learn'. This is, of course, very important. I think in so many of our schools nowadays, our ordinary schools, I think from what I hear, from what I gather, often people don't have much of an eagerness to learn, especially as they get a bit older and don't want to be at school any more and would rather be out in the world, but the law forces them to remain at school. It's not a very happy situation. It's difficult to say whose fault it is. One could say it's the fault of the system, but then how does one change that, even if it is so?

Atula: Hridaya was saying ... teaching, recently, that the pupils he prefers teaching were really keen and then they slacked off, and when he asked them it was because of the whole economic atmosphere, and they felt 'What was the point of working?' ...

S: But then they clearly saw education as purely oriented towards livelihood, which is perhaps a wrong orientation or a one-sided orientation to begin with.

Dhammarati: It's very much the orientation of the schools, though.

: Very much so.

Atula: It always has been.

S: Not an education for self-development but an education for the sake of livelihood - which is clearly a part of education but certainly not the whole of it. So if there's no livelihood in sight you question the relevance of education.

But without eagerness to learn you can't learn. The teacher also requires stimulation. If the pupil is eager to learn, the teacher, on any level, will feel more inclined to teach or will be more eager to teach. There's nothing more dispiriting for a sincere teacher than rows upon

rows of blank faces, pupils yawning or playing with things under the desk [349] and throwing blotting-paper pellets at one another - or worse! Or playing truant.

Then `personal service'. This, as I said, really seems to overlap `attendance on the teacher.'

But perhaps this does stress doing things for the teacher in an even more personal way.

Though it is perhaps more like `being around', though the dictionary definition of the Pali word does mean serving him, ministering to him. But perhaps `by personal service' carries this to an even greater extent. It seems to underline the fact that in order to learn properly you have to develop a personal relationship with the teacher, on any level almost. And one of the ways of doing this is just by doing things for the teacher, as well as being around him.

I remember again when I was at school I think the biggest thing you could get asked to do for the teacher, or more often for the teachers collectively, was to make their mid-morning tea.

This was regarded as a sign of ultimate confidence being placed in you - that you made the teachers' tea.

But again I was thinking, it's interesting that in Tibetan monasteries the first lesson that you're given as a novice, so I was told, is to pour tea for the monks. How to carry in the teapot; how to actually pour out the tea; how to place the filled teacup in front of the seated monks; how to enter the room; how to withdraw; how to bow gracefully. All that sort of thing - there's a lot to it. That's what you're taught first, so I was told. It's an honour to serve tea to some superior person. Several times in my career in Kalimpong, people were pointed out to me as having served tea to the Thirteenth Dalai Lama.

Padmavajra: They were actually pointed out to you by other people?

S: Yes. `When he was a youngster he served tea to the Thirteenth Dalai Lama.'

Ratnapani: I heard a story, Bhante, from Asvajit about you - some Tibetan group in this country, or some Tibetan's house - there must have been a group of Tibetans together - being given tea, where the cup was actually put to your lips; one held the saucer or something, and someone else actually held the cup up. Was he fantasizing?

S: I don't remember that.

Ratnapani: He was very impressed that you took it entirely in your stride and didn't seem in any way -

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S: I don't remember. It's quite possible. They are very, very hospitable and lift the cup up to you. (Laughter.) Yes. Yes. I must say, had it happened, I don't suppose I would have been at all disconcerted by it. Yes, it is quite possible that it did happen. It must have been quite a few years ago, because I haven't had any contact with Tibetans for years and years. It might have been in Hastings when I visited the lama there in the Pestalozzi village. Yes, they are like this, or can be like this.

Devapriya: I've been reading a bit about feudal society in Europe, and the sons of the barons and the knights would get sent to another baron or knight as squires.

S: Yes, pages.

Devapriya: One of their main jobs was to serve at table. That was quite an essential part of

their training.

S: Yes, part of their education to learn courtly manners.

Devapriya: Particularly as service.

S: Yes. Well, this survives even in Britain today, in the court of the present Queen, because you have Ladies of the Bedchamber and so on, and ladies in waiting. This is a survival of that sort of thing. They don't have much in the way of duties now but originally, say, the Ladies of the Bedchamber would supervise the Women of the Bedchamber, who changed the sheets and things like that; but the members of the nobility rendered personal service to the sovereign.

The king - when it was a king and not a queen who was sovereign - would have his Grooms of the Bedchamber and so on. The upper ranks of the household were drawn from the nobility, and the lower ranks from the squirearchy. They considered it an honour to serve the king in what we would regard as a menial capacity, because, for one reason, the king was the source of all power and influence, so if you were helping him put on his shirt you had the chance of whispering a word in his ear in the morning. You became a very influential and important person. And also perhaps the king came to trust you. You were close to the king. This is what it meant.

Dhammarati: It's fairly hard to imagine that sort of trust between generations in institutions. I grew up really distrusting my teachers and my elders.

Ratnapani: I think perhaps we're reviving it within the Movement. Whereas - I mean to me it's a very good sign when the Mitra really [351] becomes appreciative of the Order and wants to do things for his kalyana mitras and serve them tea or whatever.

S: Yes. One has noticed this sometimes. As you say, it is quite a healthy sign, a healthy development, because it's a natural thing to do, I think. One feels happy to do it, under normal circumstances.

Ratnapani: They are pleased and chuffed to do it.

Padmavajra: It's very pleasurable. (Some laughter.) I don't mean with ordinary teachers, but I remember when you came to India and being able to bring you tea and little things like that. I must say I got an enormous amount of pleasure out of being able to just do those things.

S: That certainly is the traditional attitude, and one finds the Indians generally have that attitude, whether Buddhist or non-Buddhist.

Padmavajra: It seemed to be a very simple, direct way of just doing something.

S: Also you get to see the person concerned.

Padmapani: It all sounds rather almost a bit contrived, but when you're actually out there in those circumstances and you get it day in, day out, it has a whole effect on your being. I think one's mental level goes up, one's actual quality of communication does improve; by having that regular practice, either done to you or doing it to someone else.

S: Yes.

Padmavajra: Sort of communication can ...

S: People take so much care when you go to their house for a meal. They don't just slap it down in front of you and go off and do something else. No, they don't even sit and eat with you, usually; they concentrate on serving you. And the whole family, perhaps, is doing this and standing round beaming and bringing you things.

Padmavajra: - it's always incredibly beautifully done; very, very simple.

S: Even in the poorest and humblest families. It's got nothing to do with social or economic position at all. It pervades the whole of Indian society.

Devapriya: That family came to Sukhavati, didn't they, and served us up a meal?

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Dhammarati: A Sinhalese family, ...

S: Yes, they have much the same sort of thing, especially with regard to bhikkhus. I gather you were all made honorary bhikkhus for the occasion. Sat there looking as celibate as you could! (Laughter. Voice unclear.)

Atula: I think it was something to do with death, wasn't it?

S: Yes, I think it was the death anniversary of someone's relation. I gather that the Sinhalese people concerned were very happy to have the opportunity; even the fact that it wasn't yellow-robed bhikkhus didn't seem to bother them. This is what I was told. And that's a very interesting development indeed.

Tejamati: They've also been round since, at least twice, I think.

S: Good.

Tejamati: I don't know in what capacity but at least ...

: They're coming to a meditation class.

S: Good.

Dhammarati: [It was] very difficult being on the receiving end of it, though, actually having to sit there and have people wait on you for no good reason that you're aware of.

: It's the shock ... !

S: One doesn't need a reason. There is the good reason that they're happy to do it.

Tejamati: But it's embarrassing, though.

S: One gets used to it!

Ratnapala: The English find it very hard to be guests.

S: Ah, yes. Well, you're not in control, in a way. (Laughter.) You're on the receiving end. You're receptive, and that's not easy.

I quite enjoy this aspect of my visits to India. I just feel like being at home again, so to speak. It is quite pleasant and quite positive. It does [353] create a good atmosphere within which, yes, a degree of communication is possible. Anyway, fifthly and lastly: 'by respectful attention while receiving instructions.' The respectful attention - perhaps we can say being receptive. Respect is a form of receptivity, one could say, genuine respect. One must listen properly, listen concentratedly, free from distraction.

Padmavajra: I remember you saying in the Survey that in the East it was considered that, if you didn't have a teacher, you were considered to be without culture of any kind. This whole cultural - one would imagine that if one's imbibing or receiving a whole cultural tradition, then your whole attitude to teaching is going to be different, isn't it?

S: Yes, yes, especially if there are no books, so you can't do it on your own, or not so easily. Or if there were very few books which need to be explained by a teacher, anyway.

Ratnapani: It's another curbing of individualism, too, isn't it?

S: Yes.

Ratnapala: It's also important to communicate the fact that you are receptive to the teacher.

S: Yes. You show it in this case by your external behaviour, by your very demeanour.

Padmapani: It does bring in the whole idea of the oral tradition, doesn't it?

S: Indeed, yes.

Padmapani: Where things weren't written down in the day of the Buddha. You also find that very much in Europe: among the Celts, they relied on a whole oral tradition, before things were written. Things were transmitted from teacher to disciple, word for word.

S: So these are the five ways in which a pupil should minister to a teacher as the South. Anyway, perhaps we should leave it there, then, for today. Tomorrow we've got the five ways in which teachers show their compassion.

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Day 8

Tape 16, Side A

S: All right, then, let's carry on. We've come to the top of page 14 of the little book. Yesterday we saw finally the five ways in which a pupil should minister to a teacher as the South, so we've come on now to the five ways in which teachers thus ministered to as the South by their

pupils show their compassion.

In five ways, young householder, do teachers thus ministered to as the South by their pupils show their compassion:

- (i) they train them in the best discipline,
- (ii) they see that they grasp their lessons well,
- (iii) they instruct them in the arts and sciences,
- (iv) they introduce them to their friends and associates,
- (v) they provide for their safety in every quarter.

S: So `they train them in the best discipline.' If one wants to be quite literal, it's more like `they discipline them in the best discipline' - it's the same word which is used in both cases - or `train them in the best training.' It's not literally `best', it's `the good', `the happy', again. The positive, one might say.

Atula: We've talked a lot about education and the way that - like young people today, that the education isn't exactly the best thing for them. I was just wondering, because still in today's schools - I'm think of the arts and that, [which] are not really pushed so much as the real technical sciences.

S: I think we'll come on to that in item iii. But item (i) deals definitely with discipline. The word for discipline is binita(?), which apparently has the same root as vinaya. Well, I'll look that up, I won't take it for granted. (Looks it up.) Yes, it's training, education. I suppose one could say discipline. It's from a verb meaning to remove or put away, to lead or guide, instruct, train. So it is the same root, in fact.

Padmapani: So is this more kind of conduct training rather than - ?

S: It does seem to relate to conduct. It is ethical, one might say, rather than intellectual. Yes.

: Yes, this is the Buddha speaking, presumably, to Sigala, and he's talking about the best discipline ...

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S: Ah. Yes, I did say `best' is not a literal translation. It's *suvinītam*. *Su* has more the force of `good', or `well'; `good' when it's a substantive, and `well' as an adjective [adverb?]; not `best', literally. So it's a good training, one might say; not necessarily the best. It just says good. Well-spoken, well done, well attained. It does not necessarily denote any ethical activity but principally that whatever is done is well done. So here it is `well trained'. And of course the implication is that the training is an ethical one.

Dhammarati: Brings to mind Dhardo and what he was saying about the kids leaving school, [who] learn that actions have consequences.

S: Yes, right. You could say if they leave Dhardo Rimpoche's school realizing that, then they've been well trained from an ethical point of view, indeed, regardless of what they might have absorbed of Tibetan history or English grammar.

So clearly the first duty of the teacher - and here is meant the secular teacher, though of course in the Buddha's day that distinction of secular and spiritual didn't quite exist - his first

duty is to train the pupils ethically, to give them ethical training; as in the case of the parents, as we saw. The first duty of the parents is that they restrain their children from evil and encourage them to do good. And here we see, in the case of the teacher or teachers, they train them in the best discipline.

: So the two actually complement each other - what the parents teach complements what the teacher teaches.

S: Yes, indeed. Since both teacher and parent belong to and acknowledge the values of a common culture, both are bringing up, both training and ethically educating, the children in the same way. But sometimes it happens nowadays, in this country at least, that there's some conflict between the values that the parents inculcate, either implicitly or explicitly, and those which are inculcated by teachers at school. This would be exacerbated in the case of a child of Buddhist parents brought up at home in accordance with Buddhist ethical ideas and exposed at school to perhaps the, from a Buddhist point of view, unethical attitudes of his teachers, or of society at large.

Prasannasiddhi: I remember when I was in New Zealand, there seemed to be some sort of public conflict - well, there was a public problem or discussion over - the teachers in schools used to feel that they weren't able to give the children, that the parents weren't giving the children enough discipline; but there was some side of the public used to feel that this was the teachers' responsibility, to provide the children with some moral framework. The general thing seemed to be [356] that somewhere along the line the kids just weren't getting what they needed in terms of training, because generally they were just too much for the teachers to cope with.

S: So one might even say that if the children were too much for their parents they will certainly be too much for the teachers! If the parents haven't succeeded in bringing them up properly, inculcating ideals of personal behaviour, and then they were sent to school, what hope did the teachers have, after the parents had botched the job, of making a success of it?

: Especially in the light of today's attitude - very liberalistic - there's no sanction that the teachers can have on the children.

S: Yes, indeed.

Tejananda: I certainly know of examples of parents coming to the school complaining that their children have been disciplined. It's very subversive. There's no hope of any real discipline on the teachers' part.

Prasannasiddhi: Then again, they may be complaining because the children have been beaten.

Tejananda: No, not always. That has been the case, but not by any means always.

S: Well, if they are punished at all or kept back at all, or if there's any sanction. Well, if there's no sanction it means you just condone whatever behaviour the children indulge in. There has to be some sort of sanction, unless you assume that the children are completely reasonable beings, and that you can deal with them as completely reasonable beings satisfactorily in groups of thirty and forty.

It's difficult enough to deal with adults in a rational way in groups of thirty and forty. I can remember an early Order Convention, when there were about forty people, and there was some very irrational behaviour on that particular Convention. Yes, certain issues were raised, I think mainly by one or two of the women - yes, it's coming back to me now - the behaviour of all the women Order Members, I think with one exception, was very irrational on that particular Convention, and I was not able to deal with them. They just wouldn't listen, as it were, to what seemed to me to be reason. Or even if it wasn't reason, they wouldn't listen to it; and you always listen, even if somebody isn't speaking what is reason, and then it can be sorted out what is reason.

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So if it's difficult to deal with adults on that basis, what about small children, or even bigger children? So there has to be a sanction. Perhaps it shouldn't be any form of physical violence, but there must be some sanction. But if parents at home will not allow teachers to impose sanctions, will not allow teachers to punish or discipline children at school in any way, what then can the teacher do? His hands are tied. His position is undermined. If arrangements were such that teachers had only four or five pupils each, and had the same pupils all day, then that approach might work, but not when you're dealing with groups of thirty or forty or more children. It's impossible.

Prasannasiddhi: Maybe it's impossible to deal with groups of thirty or forty children, full stop. Maybe it just shouldn't be done.

S: Well, it can be, it seems - or at least some teachers can deal with groups of thirty or forty children - if they are backed by their headmaster, if the headmaster is backed by his board of governors, and they are all backed by the parents. Then it becomes possible. Otherwise, it would seem, not.

Ratnapani: No school I went to ever had any problems of discipline with large classes. They were both state and private, but in all of them there was a common value; in that micro-society there was a value which was upheld; and, presumably, by the parents, because...

S: A lot also depends on the personality of individual teachers. Because I can remember - and I didn't have much experience of schooling, but I drew a few lessons from what little experience I did have - the elementary school I went to, I remember very clearly, there was no problem of discipline whatever. And discipline seemed not to be imposed, either. Things just flowed along quite happily, and most of the pupils I think quite liked their teachers, and the teachers quite liked their pupils, and that was that. There was the odd sort of rather unruly boy (laughs), perhaps, or even one girl, I remember; but they didn't create at all a problem. They didn't disturb things.

But when I went to another school, but a larger one, a central school which was much bigger, and where more subjects were taught, and - er - were classes bigger? Yes, classes might have been a bit bigger - there, much more seemed to depend upon the personality of individual teachers. I remember one teacher, even in those days, who used to have pieces of chalk and wads of blotting paper soaked in ink thrown at him during the class all the time. He was French. I don't know whether that made any difference - whether it was just the incipient patriotism of the young Britishers! (Laughter.) But there was a woman teacher, and if there was any disturbance, even if the class was really noisy with no [358] teacher present, if she

just walked into the room then [there was] instant silence. She just looked and she glared at them all, and nobody dared to move; and some teachers were like that. They just had to walk into the room to impose discipline. They didn't have to say anything. But others would shout at the class and nothing would happen (laughter), no one would be quiet. So a lot even then did depend on the personality of the individual teacher.

Ratnapani: Yes, I must say we always did destroy the student teachers with sadistic glee, almost.

S: I remember student teachers coming along to the elementary school. They used to placate the class with pet rabbits! They used to bring rabbits and things to show the children and that would get them interested and, of course, they wouldn't create any trouble. I think this is a well-known ploy with student teachers, to take along rabbits and puppies (laughter) to gain the interest of the class. Perhaps it was something they'd been taught to do, you know, to just ensure that there was no trouble! You'd have these nice young ladies coming round in their summer frocks with their pet rabbits and introducing Billy the Bunny to you and telling you all about him. And then they'd start the lesson. (Laughter.)

Ratnapala: It seems that ideally teachers should carry on the training that the parents have begun - perhaps in a different aspect; because you don't normally bring up your children in a learning situation so much, or not quite so much. But in a sense, if that basic training hasn't been done, it's too late at the age of five or six for the teacher to be able to do it. If you haven't done it by the time the child is five it's too late.

S: Yes. And what about the parents themselves? Suppose they haven't been educated properly? I don't mean in the formal, in a scholastic sense, but supposing they are not balanced, sane, healthy, positive people, what hope have they got of educating their children up to, say, the age of four or five? They don't have much of a chance. So therefore one should think very seriously before one takes on the responsibilities of parenthood. Ask, am I qualified to be a parent? Am I the sort of father or the sort of mother that any child deserves to have? Has any child been so guilty in his previous birth that he deserves to have me inflicted upon him as a parent?

Of course, some people do rise to the occasion and all that sort of thing; but nonetheless it should be a matter for serious thought. I mean, here you are, you're bringing a new life, a new being, into the world, into what sort of situation? You are part of that situation. Are you able to provide for the child materially? Are you going to be able to educate him [359] properly? Are you going to be able to pass on pleasing character traits? Or is it inevitable that if he's brought up by you he's going to grow up and be a little monster? Because sometimes little monsters are produced by the best-conducted families. That perhaps is a quirk of karma. We can't help that. We're not responsible. But probably parents are responsible for a lot more than they think they are, because he may be a little monster just by way of reaction against your pseudo-goodness.

Padmapani: You mean a child can tell if it's pseudo?

S: I think a child can. I think a child detects the difference between, let's say, discipline which is - well, let's use the word 'imposed', put in inverted commas, out of love and one which is just imposed without the element of love being present.

Prasannasiddhi: Or is it not so much that he can tell, but if you are bringing up in a pseudo fashion you are going to bring up a pseudo child? Even if you're not quite conscious that your values are - that you are not quite real in a situation ...

S: Yes, only genuine positivity can have a genuinely positive effect upon the child, or upon anybody else. So if you subject the child to an atmosphere of pseudo-positivity, false positivity, that is not going to have the same results as genuine positivity, because the child can in fact tell the difference even if he cannot formulate it intellectually.

Ratnapani: It's like when you're working with three- to five-year-olds: nice, liberal Camden-trendy-type parents having absolute tyrants of four-year-old sons, and their niceness was only skin deep, based on heaven knows what, fear or whatever. Only skin deep. The more genuine parents didn't seem to get those problems.

S: Yes. So 'they train them in the best discipline.' They discipline them in good discipline; in a good discipline, one could say, train them in a good training. And then, this translation says: 'they see that they grasp their lessons well.' Rhys Davids says: 'They make him hold fast that which is well held,' which is more literal. The Pali is very, as it were, pithy here: sugahitam gahapindhi (?). They teach him to grasp - yes, to grasp that which has been well grasped. In other words one might say, yes, as this translation paraphrases it, 'they see that they grasp their lessons well.' It's as though they make sure that they retain what they have been taught. They make sure that they really learn, we could say. It's not enough just to deliver the lesson, on any level. You've got to check up, you've got to see that the pupil has grasped, that he's understood. [360] You've got to ask questions. You've got to institute examinations, perhaps, or discussion; so that you can be sure that whatever has been taught has not merely been understood at the time of teaching, but has been actually retained, has been really learned.

This applies, obviously, to Dharma study and Dharma teaching too. If you're taking a study group, it's no use rattling through the Ten Precepts; well, people might understand them as you enumerate them, but then you've got to stop and check up whether people remember them, whether they grasp what they really mean, whether they've got some understanding of them. You've got to check that they've been well learned; not merely heard and understood superficially.

: Maybe a good way of [doing] that is in the class for people to give talks on various subjects from past learning.

S: Yes, I think most Centres of the FWBO have found that that's a useful practice in classes at a certain stage. Not with absolute beginners, because they don't know enough and they'd be too shy, perhaps. But with regulars, yes, the giving of talks; with Mitras, the giving of talks, short talks, is a very useful exercise. You can get to know how much they know. They can get to know themselves how much they know. And I have said frequently that you very often don't realize how much you know until you start teaching. I've also said you don't really start learning until you start teaching. That's also true.

Padmavajra: Often one can encounter quite a lot of resistance by people to really trying to learn the very basic things, like just knowing the lists.

S: I think you've got to make it fun to learn. I think you've got to smuggle the lists in - I was

going to say almost in a joking sort of way. You mustn't kind of say, 'We're now going to learn, today, the five of this and the ten of something else.' That really makes it sound dull. You've got to find some more lively way of getting people to learn these things; maybe introducing a slight element of positive rivalry.

Padmapani: Do you think it's useful, Bhante, to use other forms of medium, like, say, slides, with maybe charts, as a form of - ? I'm not necessarily saying in the context of Order Members.

S: I think the visual medium is very important and can't be ignored. Perhaps one should have more recourse to it than we do. Perhaps - I don't know, perhaps I'm risking a generalization here - but perhaps our whole culture is too verbally oriented and should be a little more visually oriented.

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Padmapani: Visual with sound.

S: Mm, yes.

: Yes, it would be quite good, it just occurred to me, if one were studying, say, the Udana or any other text, [to] have slides of, say, what particular regions were like.

S: Yes, Indian huts with 'These are the sort of huts that the Buddha would have seen. These are the hills which were in the background when he stayed at Rajagriha and taught.' Do you see what I mean? Or, again, if one is talking about the spread of Buddhism in India and in Asia, it's useful to have maps, just with arrows pointing, so people have a definite idea of where Buddhism spread to, from where. Otherwise you mention Maghada, and Sumatra, and China as it was in the Sung Dynasty, and then Korea - people won't have the vaguest idea where these places are.

Dhammarati: Do you think it would be useful to set up some sort of system to teach people to teach? Because ...

S: To teach people to teach? I'm sure that it would help everybody to improve their teaching, but it does seem that teachers, like poets, are born and not made. Some people seem to have a natural knack, an aptitude. It's something to do with communication and the attitude towards other people. But I'm sure that even those who are naturally good at teaching could be helped if they were given a few practical hints by more experienced people.

Something that I was thinking just recently is - for instance, one of the women Order Members was telling me that she'd given a talk in a school recently. And I'm sorry to say that my thought when she said that was: 'Well, I hope, my dear, you didn't go along to that school dressed as you are now.' Do you see what I mean? Because it would not have created a very positive impression. I think things like that you have to consider - how you look, what's going to be their first impression when you just stand up and they see you: 'A Buddhist. A representative of the FWBO. A member of the Western Buddhist Order.' What's going to be their impression?

Ratnapani: Their first Buddhist, perhaps.

S: Yes, their first Buddhist, perhaps. So even in what you wear, don't go along wearing a shabby old jumper with soup stains down the front. I mean some people almost do that, I'm afraid.

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: A tee-shirt with Oklahoma University on it!

S: Just find out the sort of place you are going and just not only speak but dress accordingly. I mean are you going to go along dressed in bright yellow, or in black, or whatever? I mean just think about these things. Are you going to have a haircut or not? Or are you going to go along with an unwashed, unshaven look? Well, it might go down quite well in certain quarters, but will it go down well in a school, say? I mean what sort of impression do you want to create? One should think of all these things.

Dhammarati: [There's] a lot of things that get information over, ...

S: Yes, yes. I mean your jersey may speak much more loudly than your actual talk (laughter) and may create much more of an impression.

: It certainly does.

S: I didn't have in mind to refer to your personal individual jersey, but I was just mentioning it as an example, for the sake of the principle of the thing.

Padmapani: Do you think actual looks - well, looks must make a difference, mustn't they?

S: Of course, if you have a good-looking young Order Member, it will make a much more positive impression, I believe, than a decrepit elderly Order Member. (Laughter.) It cannot be otherwise.

: Or a good-looking elderly Order Member.

S: Yes. At least the person should look healthy and buoyant, with a clear fresh complexion.

Ratnapani: Or at least take one with you if you're a bit past it! (Laughter.) ...

S: Yes, just to show that you're not representative. They are not all like you, thank heavens. (Laughter.)

: Even though they don't do anything, just take one along and sit them down like a tailor's dummy.

S: Well, we don't want to give the impression that any Order Member, or even a Mitra, is like a tailor's dummy. But, yes, it is quite good sometimes for two Order Members to go along anywhere, because [363] people do generalize. If you're sort of elderly and a bit slow, they may think that all Order Members are like that. If you're young and brisk, they may think all Order Members are like that. So take along at least one other Friend with you, just to, in a way, offset any one-sidedness in any impression that you may produce. Not only that, if you take along someone with you, he can give you positive critical feedback later on. He can sit,

perhaps, at the back, and tell you whether you projected your voice properly. He can perhaps point out to you that unconsciously you picked your nose two or three times while speaking. Some people do that. Or that you scratched yourself in a place you shouldn't have been scratching yourself (laughter). I've seen all this! Not scratching yourself in public, at least. There was a very famous Indian politician, an orthodox Hindu - I remembered him a few days ago because his face appeared on a postage stamp - a good man who was born a hundred years ago. But he was well known for the fact - he used to wear a dhoti, a white dhoti, and for minutes together, during a public lecture on a public platform, he'd be scratching himself in a place which was the place he should least have scratched himself, even when he was on a public platform. Of course, Indians don't bother about these things much, but in Britain it might produce a very different effect! So you must be very mindful of yourself. You do all sorts of things, perhaps, unconsciously. You might twiddle with a button on your waistcoat if you wear one.

So if you take along a second person, he can point out these sort of things. You might fidget with your tie or rustle your notes and shift from one foot to another. So it is helpful. Or this other person can just watch reactions of the audience, and might say, 'When you were talking about such-and-such you really went on for too long and they started getting a bit bored and restless.' So it's always good to take along a second Order Member, if you possibly can, when you give a talk or go anywhere. Failing that, at least an experienced Mitra.

Ratnapani: Padmavajra and myself are doing some schools together...

S: Oh, good.

Ratnapani: - and they think all Order Members are short and broad (laughter).

Padmavajra: With spectacles!

Ratnapani: With spectacles, yes!

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S: (laughs) Well, you must be different in other ways. If he dresses in pink you must dress in primrose yellow.

Ratnapani: Right, we'll do that!

S: So that you don't look like heavenly twins.

Padmavajra: Wasn't there a thing you once said, that somebody in the East or something, some of the laity, were really keen on getting the good-looking monks, or something?

S: No, it's the monks. Because the Bhikkhu Sangha or Bhikshu Sangha has been going now for 2500 years, even longer than the Catholic Church, and of course in a quite different sort of way; but they have gathered a certain amount of worldly experience in the course of that time, and they have observed that good-looking monks make a far stronger impression on the susceptible laity than monks who are not good-looking, however learned and however spiritually developed. So I have been told by my Sinhalese bhikkhu friends that the bhikkhus in Ceylon keep an eye open for any especially promising young man, particularly if he's handsome, and are very keen to get him made a monk, because they know that the laity pay

more attention to a good-looking monk than to one who is not good-looking.

: Interesting!

Devapriya: I've had a bit of feedback from people - that people aren't so receptive to me as they might be, because of my strange physical manifestation (laughter), which is quite hard to overcome.

S: I think this is a fact, that this is so; that people do have these limitations, just as they usually respond favourably to a fluent, accomplished speaker; even though someone who is not so fluent and not so accomplished as a speaker may have even more to say and may have more depth in him. So one has to bear in mind these different susceptibilities of people in a quite objective way.

In the Buddha's day, there was an arhant who was a dwarf, and who was despised even by other bhikkhus because he was a dwarf; and the Buddha had to point out that he might be a dwarf but he was an Enlightened dwarf, and to be respected accordingly. (Laughter.)

Padmapani: Do you mean he was Enlightened but they didn't respect him?

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S: This is what we are told. In other words, the fact that he was a dwarf registered more strongly than the fact that he possessed certain spiritual qualities. After all, you can see if someone is a dwarf but you can't see so easily whether they're Enlightened.

So I think one has to perhaps accept that if one does have any sort of physical defect or even deformity, or what people regard as such, to some extent - probably only to a limited extent - it is going to be a handicap until they know you personally. Once they know you personally, well, they're not going to bother if you have also more solid moral and spiritual qualities.

Devapriya: So that's the way of overcoming it, presumably, just through personal communication?

S: Yes. Well, what does one mean by overcoming it? If you want people to value you for your, let's say, personal qualities rather than for the sake of your appearance, well, obviously you've got to get to know them, to give them an opportunity of getting to know you. But if you are superficially attractive, that is a point in your favour; people are more likely to want to get to know you, because they're motivated by these sort of things.

Padmavajra: That can become a handicap.

S: That can become a handicap if you're the centre of admiration. You can become conceited and swollen-headed and all the rest of it. Yes, it's better to be plain!

Ratnapani: It's disastrous - the eloquent but superficial speaker can be convinced that he's teaching Dharma when he's just putting on a good show to fellow Order Members; you're just not saying anything. He has to almost start all over again to introduce some depth.

: Dorian Gray!

Ratnapani: Running on talent rather than being ...

S: Yes, so if one hasn't got much in the way of talent or much in the way of good looks, it might be a handicap initially in spreading the Dharma but not in the long run, as people get to know you. Maybe people are, to begin with, attracted by these more superficial features, but they are not fooled in the long run.

Anyway, 'see that they grasp their lessons well,' and then 'instruct them in the arts and sciences.' Rhys Davids says: 'They thoroughly instruct [366] him in the lore of every art' - lore, L-O-R-E in Pali, that is sabba sippa sutam, sammakayino bhavanti (?). So it's sippa - silpa in Sanskrit. Silpa is more like a craft. For instance, architecture, painting; these are all silpas. Arts and crafts, handicrafts, all that sort of thing. This, no doubt, is related to what in the case of parental duties is training them for a profession. 'They instruct them in the arts and sciences.' Though what is translated as 'arts and sciences' is one word in Pali, sippa, or silpa in Sanskrit.

Prasannasiddhi: Does that include what we would term an apprenticeship?

S: It could. It could, yes. Because an apprenticeship is a seven-year period - well, it used to be seven years; it still is in some trades - where one was bound to a master, and you had to serve him and learn from him; sometimes a premium was paid by your guardians. In former times in England it was a legal contract; you couldn't break it without penalty.

I'll just see what the dictionary says about silpa or sippa. Yes, sippa is S.I.P.P.A.; 'sippa, cf. Skt. silpa: art, branch of knowledge, craft.' Eight various kinds are enumerated in the Majjhima, twelve in the Udana, eighteen in the Jatakas. 'Asippa' - that, without silpa - 'corresponds to untaught, unqualified.'

: It is quite noticeable in a lot of schools, the arts and sciences are not really given equal time. People are not encouraged to do both of them. I remember in the school I went to, we used to do woodwork, metalwork, technical drawing, games; we also did things like English but it was sort of reading, writing, arithmetic, things like that. But we never did languages, we never did English literature. I never read a poem until I left school. It's really bad, I think, that people, say, more from working-class backgrounds just don't get any artistic training at all, hardly - a little bit of drawing.

S: That used not to be the case because, as I mentioned a little while ago, I went to an elementary school; we certainly did English literature. I was there until I was thirteen or fourteen - maybe thirteen - and certainly I did English poetry. Well, I wish I hadn't, because the good lady who taught it didn't know how to teach it. She did her duty. She struggled manfully, so to speak, with the poem, and really tried to put it across, but in so doing she ruined it, unfortunately. It was a poem by Tennyson. So I wasn't able to read Tennyson for years and years afterward; the only major poet I didn't read at that time, for that reason. I remember doing woodwork. I did metalwork, which I enjoyed. I was excused games because of my health. But I did history and English literature; and this was an elementary school.

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: Did you do languages?

S: Languages, no. Not any languages. I did French when I went to the central school, because that was regarded as a commercial subject, and central schools - I don't know what the system

is now - concentrated on commercial subjects. But I don't know what the system is now.

Padmavajra: Doesn't Plato say that art should be the basis for all education?

S: Mm - I remember doing poetry - this comes back to me now - in the infants' school.

: Did you?

S: Oh yes, I remember some of the poems I did there. I remember Tennyson's (I wasn't put off this one) 'Sweet and low, sweet and low, wind of the western sea.' I did that when I was seven or eight.

But I think there is also the question of what to teach a child when. I don't think a child should be introduced to literature prematurely, because you may not be able to appreciate it. It may require some knowledge of life. Again, I remember, one of my teachers at elementary school - I've written about him in the unpublished chapters of my memoirs - he encouraged me to read, and used to lend me books, mostly history and poetry and essays. And I was then eleven, twelve, thirteen. There was a lot of that sort of encouragement. If the teachers saw you were interested they tried to develop that interest. I remember he was a teacher of the old school: that is to say he had no training as a teacher. He'd started teaching maybe towards the end of the last century, because he'd taught my father also at the same school,...

Tape 16, Side B

... a generation before, and he had no technical training - I don't think he was a matriculate - but he was just an experienced old teacher, and he was quite good. But I'm sure you wouldn't have an untrained and unqualified non-matriculate teacher let loose on children now. But he was pretty good, and I certainly remember him very well and he was certainly very helpful to me. But he did have a rough side to his tongue, but no one really minded that.

: I remember we had to learn a poem by heart once, but it was as a punishment. (Laughter.) It [was] a sort of detention, you went and you had to learn a short poem by heart. 'The quality of mercy is not strained, ... It is twice blest.' I remember it now. It was as a punishment.

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S: Well, you did remember it. (Laughter.)

: I remember it. But that would always have been my attitude to poetry: you had to learn it as a punishment.

S: Those were your associations: it was something associated with punishment. I think we have to be very careful that you don't think that children ought to be introduced to all subjects at as early an age as possible. I don't think that is so. I'm even doubtful about literature, whether children can appreciate it. I think what is more important is that at every stage of one's life there should be possibilities open to one for further study and for further education. I think that is much more important. I don't think it all has to be crammed into a few years at the beginning of life. I think that's half the trouble of our present educational system. I'd say they try to teach you too much too soon. No doubt if one acted on that principle it would require all sorts of adjustments in other areas. We can't go into that now. But I think the child should be prepared for life and prepared to make his or her way in the world, and it should

always be clear that that particular person, as he or she grows up, can stop at any time to learn something more; even to go to evening classes. But those possibilities are always there and always open, and that the process of education never stops. You're educating yourself your whole life, not just for a few years at the beginning of it.

: A universal student.

S: A universal student. A full-time, perpetual student. There are some children who are not interested in learning anything much except something that will help them get a good job when they leave school. I mean some are not interested in literature, not interested in history, not interested in arithmetic or mathematics. There were some things I wasn't interested in, I just wouldn't learn. I wasn't interested in mathematics, I'm afraid, or in science. I just scraped through.

Padmapani: Do you think that attitude - sorry - so you think, Bhante, that people's - the way they've been brought up in school and that they feel that they should be educated by a certain time, and later on in time they feel a bit embarrassed about going back to education?

S: Well, if school is associated with infancy and immaturity you appear embarrassed to go back to school because it looks as though you're with the kids again. I think this sort of embarrassment is a product of a wrong idea of education: that it is something that is limited to your juvenile years. But I think if you go along to evening classes you'll probably find people of all ages there.

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Atula: ... some of the polytechnics.

: Often when I've gone to evening classes I've found the level of teaching is very low in the evening classes, in the institutes; very, very low indeed.

S: Anyway, while we are on the subject of teaching let me just interpolate this remark. This is something that I've been talking about with Subhuti recently, and I think he or Vessantara are going to do some research. It would seem that there are possibilities for people to qualify themselves academically to teach comparative religion and similar subjects in schools or in evening classes. And it would seem that if you were qualified and teaching, say, Buddhism in evening classes, and if you did that just two or three evenings a week, you could probably earn enough to live on. And that would be a sort of means of livelihood, and a Right Livelihood. So we're looking into these things. And that would mean - well, for instance, you could even form an evening class if you got, say under the Inner London Education Authority, 14 people together and you were teaching them, the authority would pay your salary for teaching them, say, two or three hours a week in the evenings. Well, you can see the possibilities. I think we should follow these things up much more so that we get funding from the state that we're quite entitled to. And that would solve for many people the problem of Right Livelihood. They'll earn enough money to live on by teaching Buddhism, or at least something to do with religion or culture, two or three evenings a week. But you'd have to qualify yourself.

: I'm already qualified.

S: Well, there you are. Do you see the possibilities?

: When you say qualify yourself, what do you mean?

S: Well, I think they would require the normal qualifications. I think you'd have to have a BA at least or something like that. Possibly teacher's training certificate, I don't know. But perhaps that is quite a problem of Right Livelihood and people finding enough time for study and so on. Perhaps, for some people, at least, especially those who are already qualified, this would be a way out of the difficulty. You just take on evening classes for two or three evenings a week. And in any case you'd be teaching subjects which are akin to those in which you are most deeply interested anyway. So that might be a better way for some people than working in a co-op. And you'd be free the rest of the time for study and maybe giving lectures and so on, and doing other things. Anyway, Subhuti is going to be investigating this.

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Padmapani: When Buddhadasa was going to Australia he wanted to be qualified as a teacher of religion, and I seem to remember that he got registered with the ILEA as a qualified teacher of Buddhism, on the grounds that he was ordained by you.

S: I've a vague recollection that he did. But this is not quite the same thing. They might well accept just members of the Western Buddhist Order as such, without other qualification. This is not impossible, at least for evening classes. They might not [accept them] for teaching in schools. I'm not so sure about that. But I just want Subhuti or someone to investigate this whole area. It's going to be investigated, and any information that we manage to dig out will be published in Shabda. But you can see the possibilities.

: Yes, I can see enormous possibilities.

: I've got something I got sent about courses which had something about being an ordained [priest] - [as if] Christian ordination did let you off a further stage of the course.

: People at the LBC are having to teach the overseas students. We've been forced into it legally, I think. But I see that that could well be an area for development in this sort of way.

S: Yes, we've been forced into it, so to speak - I think happily forced into it - in order to meet their visa requirements. I don't know what the financial implications would be or whether anyone could be as it were supported by the state to teach. I rather doubt that.

: I suppose it would depend on how many people we had that would require basic ... course, and whether we had qualified people to teach.

S: I think, if I'm not mistaken, one of the provisions is that they mustn't be attending evening classes; they have to be day classes.

Anyway, let's carry on. `They,' that is to say the teachers, `introduce them to their friends and associates.' That's Narada's translation. Rhys Davids's is: `They speak well of him among his friends and companions.' No, I think Narada's is more accurate because I think he's drawing more on the traditional interpretation. Let's see what the text says. (Looking it up.) This is very cryptic: *mitta machesu parivedenti* (?). It's traditionally understood to mean the teacher `introduces the pupil among his friends and acquaintances.' That would seem to be, in a way,

more logical because, as your pupils grow up, as they develop their skills, they [371] are going to need employment. They are going to need contacts. So you introduce them to your friends, to your associates, to your acquaintances. This is, in fact, what happens normally.

Devapriya: That's very interesting. It implies a sort of kalyana mitrata.

S: Yes, yes.

Devapriya: So in fact you're one, in a way, extended family.

S: Well, sometimes fathers do this sort of thing. If a father is working for a certain person or certain firm, if he wants to get his own son a job there, he'll speak about his son to the manager or to the boss and he'll take his son along and introduce him. The teacher, according to the Sigalovada Sutta, should do likewise. He's just helping to launch the youngster into the world. Do you see what I mean?

Ratnapani: I see it comes up in the next section, I suppose, even more, but it means if you're undertaking to teach someone, if you are putting yourself in that position, you've got a responsibility for them to get a job.

S: Yes, indeed. 'They provide for their safety in every quarter.' If they move to another area, they go on a journey, you provide them with letters of introduction. You write to your friends that they are coming and ask them to look after your pupil.

This suggests that no end to the relationship is foreseen; not that they leave school and you wash your hands of them. That is not the sort of situation that is envisaged here at all.

Dhammarati: In one of the earlier sections you were saying how it is only possible to have four or five close friends, and it's just come to me on this section - do you think it is possible to have that sort of significant relationship, if you like, with the growing number of Order Members?

S: I think it's impossible. I don't think you can have the same kind of relationship with, say, 180-odd people that you can have with four or five people, other factors being equal - that is to say, they being at the same level of intelligence, capacity of communication and so on. Yes, I think that is inevitable.

Dhammarati: Does that mean, as the Order grows, that the sort of powerful relationship between the Order Member and yourself is going to change?

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S: I think it must - but, as again I say, other factors being equal. It could be that some people have a great capacity for communication. We might meet just once or twice a year but have an extremely good communication. That is possible. There are certain other people [whom] you might see every day but that sort of communication doesn't develop. I'm not here necessarily speaking of Order Members, but people in general.

Ratnapani: Also, if you talk about [how] you can only have, say, a really intimate friendship with a small number of people, we forget that that is a very, very strong friendship. We've got a long way to go with just - I mean you can reach quite a good level with lots of people,

which we have yet to achieve.

S: Yes, indeed. Right.

Ratnapani: Just general friendliness and so on as implied in this.

S: Yes, intimate friendship is a very big and very weighty proposition indeed.

Ratnapani: I think, perhaps, I have yet to achieve or am only beginning to achieve with a few people what I can actually achieve with many, and go on with a few to something stronger.

S: Yes. I think the further one goes, the fewer the number of people with whom one goes, if you see what I mean.

Padmapani: Would you suspect possibly, Bhante, that if somebody didn't have a strong base of friendship but they had an intimate relationship, maybe of the same sex, not necessarily sexual, that the person was proceeding correctly?

S: It's very difficult to generalize or say anything at all without being confronted by an actual concrete instance.

Padmapani: Mm. Yes.

S: How can one say? So much would depend upon the nature of those two people.

Padmapani: But do you think that one generally has to have a base of metta and warmth and friendship to quite a lot of people before one can really proceed - ?

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S: Well, I assume that every Order Member has an attitude of metta towards all Order Members. I assume that to start with. I don't think an intimate friendship, even, with one person would sufficiently compensate an entire lack of metta towards the rest of the Order. I think there is something - I think if you were not capable of any metta towards the Order as a whole, it would be very doubtful whether you could be anyone's intimate friend in the true sense. I might even suspect that you were just having a relationship.

Padmapani: Well, maybe it's a question of one's primary friendship in a way being a necessary basis for the outward-going on a more general level.

S: I think they reinforce each other. I think if you do develop a very intimate, or very close, or very deep friendship with one other person, on the basis of mutual kalyana mitrata, this will surely affect in a positive way the manner in which you relate to everybody, especially everybody within the Order.

And in the same way, if you have a positive attitude towards the Order as a whole, and all the Order Members you happen to meet, then that will stand you in good stead when you come to develop a more intimate friendship with just one other person. Therefore I say they would tend to mutually reinforce each other. I think the usual pattern will be that you have an attitude of good will, real metta, towards every Order Member, including those you've never met (because there will be many that you have never met), and an attitude of even stronger

metta, perhaps, towards those with whom you are in actual personal contact; stronger metta still towards those with whom you are in regular personal contact, and strongest of all towards the very few that you're in regular personal intimate contact with. Much depends upon opportunity. There might be an Order Member in India with whom you could be the best of friends if only you met him (laughs), but you don't happen to meet him so maybe there's an opportunity, in a way, lost. We don't know.

: Or not yet realized.

S: Or not yet realized, yes.

Anyway, let's pass on from teachers and pupils to wives and husbands, and husbands and wives. Here we have to tread very carefully, because so few of us have any experience at all in this area.

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In five ways, young householder, should a wife as the West be ministered to by a husband:

- (i) by being courteous to her,
- (ii) by not despising her,
- (iii) by being faithful to her,
- (iv) by handing over authority to her,
- (v) by providing her with adornments.

S: I'm just looking at the Pali in case that throws any extra light. Yes. All right: 'by being courteous to her,' or one could say by showing her respect. What does this suggest? Does it suggest that one should be courteous only to one's wife? Why is this mentioned?

Dhammarati: It's the other way round, almost. It means be courteous to your wife as well as being courteous to everybody else.

S: It does sometimes happen that people are least well behaved at home. I've mentioned this before. You might be very polite and well-spoken and friendly outside the home but inside the home you perhaps allow free rein to your bad temper and general grumpiness and slovenliness; and also, within the sort of situation envisaged, your wife is likely to be the person of whom you see most and whom, perhaps, you are most likely to treat, as it were, carelessly or take for granted or not bother to keep up the usual courtesies. I think this is an important point - that intimacy of any kind, whether with a wife or friend and so on, should not mean that one is no longer courteous. Not that one need necessarily keep up formal politeness, but there must be that sort of feeling and consideration which usually expresses itself in what we know as courtesy. Do you see what I mean? Intimacy does not really permit rudeness, let us say. Rudeness is no part of intimacy. You don't show that you are intimate with someone by being rude to them, though some people seem to think so. I got an interesting letter from one of the women Mitras recently in this connection. She said she'd realized she'd made a mistake in her communication with me, but she'd been trying to be friendly with me by as it were slapping me on the back. But she realized that that was the wrong sort of approach! (Laughter.)

: What made her realize that?

S: I don't know. I think just her own general development and increasing awareness. I think

simply that. I don't think it was that anybody had pointed it out or said anything to her; it was just herself turning things [375] over in her own mind and wondering why she wasn't getting on better or why her communication with me wasn't better, or even perhaps why she wasn't getting ordained. And she'd had a solitary retreat which I think helped; gave her time for reflection. I think this is quite an important point.

Some men I know never say please or thank you to their wives. But some men, of course, do, I'm quite sure! But it's the same with intimate friends. You just get so used to someone, so used to someone being around, that you hardly bother to be polite. I mean not that formal politeness is needed but, you know, the sort of consideration of which politeness or courtesy is the natural expression.

Padmapani: Why do you think people do take people for granted - you know, when they see them quite a lot?

S: It's not just taking them for granted, it's taking them for granted in a particular way, even to the point of being what would seem to be rude on occasion.

Padmapani: Why do you think that is, though?

S: Well, your guess is as good as mine, probably. Well, why does one think that this happens?

: You've made a friend, so you feel you've made a friend; you stop working at it.

S: Yes, it could be that.

Ratnapani: In a way you haven't made a friend, have you, not really? - because your own selfishness or tendency to lack of being other-regarding is just being indulged, so it's ...

S: But at the same time one must make the point that a certain kind of behaviour is consistent with an intimate friendship, which in relation to any other person except an intimate friend might be regarded as rudeness. Because with an intimate friend actually anything goes. It depends upon the emotional positivity and sensitivity, communication, everything. I mean, for instance, a friend might be sitting enjoying a cup of tea, and he may be an intimate friend, and you might just come along and finish his cup of tea off. Well, if he was really an intimate friend, that's no more than a gesture of intimate friendship. If he wasn't an intimate friend it would be rudeness. Do you see what I mean?

Devapriya: Like that story that you told about the Sufi.

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S: Yes indeed. So it's also a question of judging the degree of friendship, the degree of intimacy in the friendship. And perhaps rudeness and courtesy in this connection suggests you not knowing exactly what degree of intimacy is there, and therefore what kind of behaviour is appropriate. And rudeness or lack of courtesy is indulging in behaviour which is appropriate only to a greater degree of intimacy. One could look at it like that; as in the instance I mentioned. And, of course it is a bit different in the case of the wife because you just have one wife, whereas you might have several friends - or normally one has one wife.

: I think it is probably often worse if people don't have a range of relationships outside the

home, other men friends. Very often the situation folds in on itself and you get very frustrated and your wife doesn't make a very good mate to go to a football match with or whatever, and you get sort of quite frustrated.

S: You shouldn't expect the poor woman to. (Some men do!)

: Well, quite so, but if ... don't have those other relationships...

S: In the same way, leaving aside wife, if you think in terms of a girl friend: 'girl friend' is in a way a sort of abomination. I mean how can a girl be a friend if you are a man? Not in the way that a man can. You shouldn't expect that of her. I mean her role, to use that word, is different. So if you are very attached to her you will tend, whether it's a case of the girlfriend or the wife, to indulge only in those activities which you can indulge in her company; in other words, with which she is pleased and happy and satisfied. That limits your scope considerably.

If it was the other way round and if you were only to take part in those activities which she, as a woman, enjoyed - like needlework and embroidery and cooking - that would limit your scope too, wouldn't it? So in a way you limit each other's scope if you aren't careful, and there is a unsatisfactory sort of compromise. 'I'll do the sort of things that you like sometimes. The criterion will be that we must always be together.' But that should not be the criterion.

Devapriya: I remember Subhuti reading out at a Sukhavati meeting once the ideal Greek relations in a particular period of history. And he mentioned how, I think, the man about town in Greece would have various relationships. He'd have, I think, two relationships with different women, three relationships with [men] - one being his teacher, one being a friend, one being a person younger than himself. A wife [with whom] he presumably had children, and then a woman who he went out with but who had refined [manners].

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S: Well, such ladies were in a very small minority and accessible only to the wealthy and aristocratic.

Devapriya: But it was interesting, that whole range, spectrum, of relationships that a person had. It seemed to satisfy...

S: It does seem that in modern Britain relationships tend, especially among the middle classes and especially in South-east England, one gets the impression, have been narrowed down more and more to the relationship with either the wife or the girlfriend, and that being the only significant relationship in life for a man. That's rather unfortunate.

Anyway, I've expressed myself at length on that subject before, so I've no need to repeat myself. Also we have to push on. So all right: 'By being courteous to her.' 'A wife as the West should be ministered to by her husband by being courteous to her; by not despising her.' Why do you think a man might despise his wife?

Ratnapani: She's not so lovely as all the other women that he fancies, that he sees around the place. It's a possibility.

S: Well, that is a possibility, I suppose, yes. I do remember a friend of mine - well, since there are 180-odd of them I can mention that he's an Order Member, there is no danger of him

being detected - told me once that after getting married it seemed to him that every woman that he met was more beautiful than his wife. (Laughter.) Yes. The very fact.

Padmapani: But you can also despise her if she's very faithful to you - very sort of maybe dependent on you.

S: I think the implication is here that one despises one's wife without any objective reason to despise her. I think this is the implication. If your wife is despicable, well, that's a pity. Maybe you have to recognize the fact objectively, and it's your own fault that you married her. At least it's your fault in the West. In the East, in India, it's the fault of your parents for selecting a despicable wife for you. I think the implication here is that your wife does not deserve to be despised but nonetheless you despise her. That, you know, is blameworthy.

Dhammarati: ... of the bargain. In the West [such] relationships are not usually based on metta. It's not a mutual exchange.

Prasannasiddhi: Well, why do people get married in the West?

: There's a biological precedent.

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Prasannasiddhi: A biological precedent?

S: Well, in the sense that your parents were married.

: Well, a biological precedent expressing itself in sociological precedent.

S: Mm. I think most people don't get married for any reason at all. I think it's, they sort of, they just get married.

Padmavajra: Because it's there!

S: I mean it's part of the ongoing system and everybody gets married and it's regarded as natural to get married. And most people assume that they will some day. In India it's very much like that, even more than it is in this country, perhaps. One doesn't see any viable alternative for regular satisfaction of the sexual instinct, domestic comfort and, especially if one is thinking in terms of having children and setting up a home, marriage seems to be the natural way of going about it, or the most convenient way of going about it. Perhaps the only way that one is acquainted with.

Atula: With those pressures pushing on one, perhaps that's one of the reasons why people do end up despising them.

: It seems the only way out in the social intercourse. A lot of one's friends get married, so you do.

S: Mm, you start feeling left out. All your friends have got married. You're the only one left. That seems to act as a sort of pressure on you to get married. Especially if they cut off relations, perhaps, with you once they are married, or they only want to relate in couples; you

know, that the single man, or even the single woman, is a bit of a lone wolf. Well, you don't want any lone wolves around. But once you are also married, you can be included in the married social circuit, along with your wife. I think this is what tends to happen. But the question still remains, why do people get married? Why do apparently sensible people get married? (Laughter.) Especially when they don't seem to be getting married with the intention of having children?

: I've come across people whose parents had the sort of attitude that their child will leave home into a marriage home. That sort of ... attitude.

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S: Oh yes, I know of a woman who made the statement with regard to her son: 'My George' (his name was, let's say) - 'I'm never going to allow my George to leave home,' she said, 'until he gets married.' Yes! So he goes straight from the arms of one good woman to the arms of another good woman. That seems to be the idea.

Devapriya: It's a sort of insecurity.

S: Well, is it? I mean what makes a mother feel like that? What makes her feel so insecure - if it is insecurity - she doesn't mind her son leaving home, provided he goes and gets married. Is it insecurity or what is it?

Padmavajra: Doesn't want him to grow up.

S: Doesn't want him to grow up. Perhaps she sees the wife as a sort of surrogate mother. But she doesn't want the boy to be independent, doesn't want him to live on his own. We heard something of this sort in life stories in Tuscany. I remember one in particular. One of our Friends - one of our Mitras as he was then - related how when he wanted to leave home, oh, there was such trouble at home. (Perhaps it is a bit relevant that this was in Scotland.) But when he wanted to leave home, there was such trouble, and he had to shut his mother up in her room and lock her in while he actually left home because she was trying physically to prevent him from leaving home. She felt so desperate about it. And it led to a lot of trouble. She took it as almost an insult and a rejection, that even though he was a grown-up young man with a decent job she took it as an insult and that he was rejecting her in even wanting to leave home. She saw no reason whatever for him leaving home; especially as he wasn't thinking of getting married. Yes. And she broke down and stormed and raved and wept, and in the end he had to just put her into a room and lock the door and just leave. So these are very strong emotions, it seems; but what on earth gives rise to them in the case of some women?

S: Do you see this as being an aspect of the Female Will?

S: Possibly, possibly. I don't want even to think about the Female Will too much (laughs) - a fearful thing.

Dhammarati: Could it be a sort of lack of trustfulness?

S: But trust, I mean to trust him to do what?

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Dhammarati: Look after himself.

Padmavajra: Surely, in that situation, I mean the mother, the boy going, her whole function, her whole role as mother, is presumably ended.

S: Yes, it seems to be more like that.

Padmavajra: Traumatic.

S: Though there were others. He was just one of, oh, eight or nine children. And he was the eldest, too! Yes. But it seems really terrible.

: But isn't it an insecurity? Aren't women more insecure, generally, than men?

S: I don't think there have been any statistical inquiries. (Laughter.)

Prasannasiddhi: It would be going psychologically against the basis of the mother's security, if the son was saying, well, first of all he's leaving home - some mothers can cope with that - but then to actually leave home and leave all women, and not have anything to do with women at all, well, that ...

S: They can sort of accept, sort of understand, if he leaves to get married, because he's going into another situation which is virtually the same as the one he came from, so he validates the one he as it were comes from or goes from.

Padmavajra: There is also the whole possibility of grandchildren, which I think is quite important.

S: Yes, that's true. Yes, again the mother sees a continuation of her function on another level. Yes. But if he isn't leaving to get married and set up a home of his own, it's as though he's not just leaving home; he's in a way calling into question, she feels, perhaps, her whole role, her whole function, herself. Some mothers seem to feel that if the son ever leaves home, apart from getting married, it means they've failed in some way.

Padmapani: Do you think there is some sort of primitive instinct in man and woman which is pulling in opposite directions, in a way?

S: Well, this is the impression I often get. I think at best between men and women you can probably get an armed truce. (Laughter.)

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Padmapani: There's a very archaic form in the I Ching. The woman is represented by earth, the man is heaven. And they seem to be, you know, completely different...

S: Well, rereading literature, some of which I have, about relations between men and women in 'primitive' tribes or societies, one gets the impression of two quite separate societies, very wary of each other and coming together only with great circumspection, for certain specified purposes, usually of course to do with procreation and the continuation of the tribe or the

society. Therefore I think the sort of happy indiscriminate way in which we mix up men and women on all possible occasions is a sort of flying in the face of - what shall I say? - biological and psychological facts, very often. So I think most of the separation that has occurred within the FWBO is quite healthy. Clearly, you can't separate men and women in all cases, on all occasions, completely. That is quite impossible. Though I think we could do with a lot more separation in our society in this country than usually is the case. I think it makes for a more healthy relationship between men and women if they don't see quite so much of each other, and aren't together on all possible occasions.

Padmapani: I must admit I intrinsically, deep down, I don't trust women. I must admit, deep down, on a deep-down level, I do not trust them.

S: I'm sure deep down they don't trust you either. And I think this is the natural state of affairs, so to say. I'm not saying it's the state of affairs which would continue on the spiritual level. But it does seem to be the natural state of affairs. So one might as well acknowledge it and deal with it openly, rather than try to cover it up.

Devapriya: Maybe it's only on the spiritual level that you can get beyond it.

S: I think it's only on the spiritual level that you can get beyond it.

Padmapani: It seems like quite a few people have that view as well, and it seems like in that sense they use it as a means of actually separating themselves from that situation; in other words they are actually propagating that even more.

S: I don't follow you.

Padmapani: Well, they actually want to remain separate all the time. I thought you were actually saying that on a spiritual level they can come together. Have I got it wrong?
(Laughter.)

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S: This is what I believe Devapriya just said and with which I agreed - that on a purely spiritual level they can come together. He made the point that it was only on the spiritual level that that sort of conflict could be overcome, and this is what I believe. But one mustn't assume that one is on that level. Most people aren't. One must take stock of where one actually is and act accordingly.

Devapriya: I remember you saying that within the Order people think that they've resolved it, and the mixed situation can arise because they've evolved to a certain level, and very often it's premature.

S: It's premature. Yes, I would say within the Order as a whole it's premature to think in those terms. Though a few individuals might have risen to that level, in a way they can relate to members of the opposite sex within the Order on a purely spiritual basis - or at least a predominantly spiritual basis. But the vast majority, even within the Order, have not risen to that level, and therefore need to experience quite a measure of separation; maybe more than they experience at present.

Ratnapani: I think - I mean, the most obvious difficulty is sexual tension between men and women, but this is suggesting something that is a lot stronger even than that, or it's much psychologically deeper.

S: Yes, I think so. Yes.

Ratnapani: So someone who has resolved this is, well, on(?) a quite deep and far-reaching ...

S: Yes, I believe so. Yes indeed. I think resolving it means, to some extent at least, accepting that men and women are different and they are going to function differently, and there are many areas in which women will want to function just with other women and men will want to function just with other men. Not insist that, in the name of some so-called abstract equality, they all do everything together, which seems to be ridiculous. I mean even this current fashion, as it almost is, for men to attend childbirth: it seems really quite odd to me.

Devapriya: I always felt that was a trick of the woman to get you caught so that you are in a quite powerful emotional situation. You're caught.

S: Also, 'look what you've made me suffer!' Well, some husbands seem to take it like that.

: To provide you with a child.

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S: But it also suggests that, the woman hasn't much sense of solidarity with other women; or perhaps she doesn't have any close women friends or relations to be with her on that occasion. Perhaps she is isolated and that's why she wants the husband to be there. He's the only person that she has any really close contact with. Under those circumstances, maybe, it's natural. But it's a reflection on the general situation that she doesn't feel as it were more at ease having around her other women, some at least of whom would have gone through the same thing. After all, a man can never go through it. You might as well have with you on that sort of occasion other people who have been through that very thing, and could therefore feel, presumably, more for you and understand what's going on and help you, instead of some husband sort of hovering there, just as a spectator almost, a sort of voyeur, you know? (Agreement.) He might be able to help in minor ways, but I think not in the way that a woman who had been through it all herself could. He couldn't empathize with the woman in the same way that another woman could, presumably.

I mean just like most men don't like women being around when they are doing certain things, like when they are working. It's a different kind of situation. You'd prefer to have other men around you, working with you, rather than a woman who might be distracting rather than helpful, and who perhaps wouldn't be interested in the work anyway, so you couldn't really work with her. She'd just want to be around you, which is quite a different sort of thing. Most women don't like men in their kitchens, which is quite a healthy sign, you might say, on a certain level. I'm not saying that men shouldn't ever cook or have no aptitude for it. No, that's not true. But you can understand a woman wanting her own sphere, and doing things in her own way, not having men around complicating things.

Padmapani: I don't like women in my kitchen.

S: (laughs). Anyway, enough about that. So 'not despising her.' I don't think...

Tape 17, Side A

... that means treating her as an equal in every sense, but certainly not looking down upon her. 'By being faithful to her.' Ha ha, this is something a bit more controversial, or even more controversial. The husband is expected to be faithful to the wife.

Atula: ... in the West Indies.

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S: In?

Atula: West Indians and ...

S: But then again, who is your wife? Could you have more than one wife? I mean does this necessarily imply monogamy?

: In the Pali, does it necessarily imply sexuality, faithfulness in that sense?

S: I expect it does. Anaticaniya(?) I will check it with the dictionary. That is the usual implication of the English word, isn't it? (Looking it up.) I'm afraid I don't find it. No, it doesn't seem to be in the dictionary. Both translators take it in the sense of faithfulness or fidelity; I assume it must be sexual. But...

: So does that mean it would imply monogamy?

S: Well, not necessarily because Buddhism generally does not insist upon monogamy. In fact, it doesn't lay down any particular pattern of marital relationships. It certainly expresses no disapproval of polygamy. But supposing you had two wives, or three wives, the principle would still hold good. But what about - to face the issue directly - what about this so-called double standard: that it doesn't matter so much if the husband strays a little bit? That [that]'s less important than if the wife strays a little bit, in this respect?

Devapriya: Probably, sociologically, contraception has changed that quite a bit, and the line of family property and so on.

S: Yes, I think those factors are very relevant; because formerly you wanted to be sure that your son was your son so that you could hand your property on to him. But, as you say, the two factors of contraception and maybe the increased value given to property and handing on property have rather altered the situation. So I think one has to consider it perhaps more, you know, just psychologically.

Prasannasiddhi: If the man strayed in times when there weren't contraceptives, there is a danger that he [begets] a child with another woman, so there is that to take into account as well.

S: An additional expense, at least.

Prasannasiddhi: Yes. Well, and there's another woman who's got a child and probably needs support.

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S: Yes, so he's divided between the two households; unless he brings the other woman into his present household, which of course his existing wife might not be happy about. So infidelity does complicate things. I think, also, there is another psychological aspect: that under most social conditions it involves a lot of secrecy and therefore deception and dishonesty and untruthfulness. Do you see what I mean? And that, surely is not desirable.

: Also there's the simple factor of contentment, isn't there? - the positive aspect of the sexual misconduct precept?

S: Yes, indeed. Why should you stray?

: Yes, so it's tied up with the idea of loyalty to a friend.

S: But in the case of the wife, supposing, just for the sake of argument, the husband does find after, say, seven years (I think [that] is the time usually mentioned) he doesn't find his wife sexually attractive any more and he just doesn't want to have much more to do with her in that respect and finds his fancies straying outside? Well, then, what is one to do? What will be the best thing to do?

: ... not be married ...

Ratnapani: No, I think you can make, within the marriage, if there is - well, I've never - ... happened, but if people were sensible, he could go out and experience sex with other women.

Padmavajra: It depends, I guess, if it's going to disrupt his wife and the family that has developed, and ...

S: Clearly, one has to weigh, in those circumstances, one thing against another.

Padmavajra: He would have to be very, very careful.

Ratnapani: Well, my parents achieved something a bit like this, but they are pretty rare.

Prasannasiddhi: It almost implies why doesn't the husband find his wife sexually attractive?

S: Yes, there is that question too.

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Prasannasiddhi: I remember in one of your taped lectures on 'Zen and the Psychotherapeutic Process' you mentioned that there was some, I think, German philosopher, he said that we limit sexuality to just the body...

S: Yes, it was Soloviev; Russian, I think.

Prasannasiddhi: Whereas you should be attracted not just to the body; it's an insult to be attracted sexually to just the body. You should be attracted to the whole...

S: Person.

Prasannasiddhi: The whole being, yes.

S: So one might say that after seven years the sexual element in marriage should become less important or less central. Perhaps one should have achieved something resembling friendship after that length of time. And if one has, presumably one would then be able to discuss these other matters quite openly and frankly without giving rise to unnecessary tensions or emotional disturbance.

: I think that if the man does feel that he wants relationships outside the marriage, often it could be quite neurotic. I know it does happen to people about my age, when they realize they're getting a bit past it and it would be quite difficult to get another woman anyway, and people start feeling they're getting old and...

S: - want to prove themselves again.

: That's right. Their last fling, sort of thing. It's quite neurotic, the idea that were he to have sex outside with the agreement of his wife that would satisfy him. The chances are that it wouldn't.

S: Right. I do know of an instance, in the case of a married friend of mine - who afterwards became an Order Member, actually - and this was his experience, that he ceased to find his wife attractive after a few years of marriage, and he did have - I don't think it was a sexual relationship, but an emotional relationship outside; and this caused a great deal of disturbance and a great deal of unhappiness for him, for his wife and also for the children. But his wife, fortunately, was a very patient sort of woman and she weathered the storm, she just sat it out; and in the end it sorted itself out quite satisfactorily and there was no longer any problem. Luckily for him, and maybe for the rest of the family, she didn't react. She certainly suffered, but she didn't make the situation any worse than it need have been.

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: The same situation [as] with William Blake when he goes off with another woman and [his wife] remains faithful to him and then he comes back to her.

S: Well, that's the reading that some biographers give to certain facts or writings of Blake. We don't know that that is definitely what happened. Some biographers think that this is probably what happened.

: This idea that a man's sexual urge should be satisfied at all times...

S: Mm, at all costs!

: - whenever he feels it, is a very arrogant male way of looking at things: that if he doesn't find his wife sexually attractive any more, he's perfectly at liberty to satisfy his sexual urges elsewhere.

S: Yes, as if that is the only factor to be taken into consideration.

Ratnapani: That's one way round. The other way round is almost assuming that a woman will be jealous. I mean she might not be. She might think that [if] she isn't interested in sex any

more and he still is, she might be quite happy to say, 'Well, off you go, dear. I don't want you getting all tense and worried, you know,'...

S: ' - bothering me all the time.'

: I can hear her saying it, Ratnapani! (Laughter.)

S: I know, or I believe, that there are women of this kind who find their husbands' continued attentions, especially if they've had two or three children, a bit of a nuisance. They put up with them rather than enjoy them. Well, you might say that there is something a bit neurotic about that, but maybe that's another story. But one would assume that if a couple, if a husband and wife have lived together reasonably happily for six or seven or eight years, they will be able to sort out these sort of things on a friendly basis through mutual discussion. This is what one would hope. And that reasonableness, sweet or otherwise, would assert itself.

: [I wonder if] it's ever happened?

S: Fidelity is not so much that you continue to be attached. It's more that you are prepared to be objective about the situation in which you find yourself; in which, in fact, you've placed yourself, which you've [388] created. You can't at once withdraw from the responsibilities of that situation.

This is why I have been a bit disappointed, as I think I mentioned some days ago, when people who have been having a relationship [and] separate or find themselves separated due to force of circumstances for a short period immediately start looking around for another sexual partner. This seems dreadful, in a way. Anyway, that's another story.

So 'by being faithful to her.' Then 'by handing over authority to her.' This is usually understood to mean authority within the household; that is to say he works outside, maybe in the fields, maybe in the town, and so on. So she's left at home and he leaves her with full authority to run things in the way that she thinks best. He is not constantly interfering with the domestic management. In other words, there's a sort of division of responsibility. He looks after that side of things, she looks after that side. And just as she trusts him to look after his share of the responsibility, he fully trusts her to look after her share of the responsibility, and leaves it to her; and is not, as I say, constantly interfering or checking up on her.

: Is it exactly what you said, Bhante, he hands over the authority to her?

S: Yes, it would be usually considered, certainly in the context of ancient India, that the man is the head of the household. One might question that, but such a discussion would lead us, perhaps, far astray. But at the very least the husband recognizes that the wife has her own individual or separate sphere of responsibility, which he doesn't interfere with. In other words, he has confidence in her, either because he's chosen the right wife himself and all that, or that he has confidence in his parents' choice.

I think perhaps, in ancient days, a wife was responsible for much more, because it wouldn't be only shopping; it might even be growing food. You do find this in a lot of countries. It's the wife who grows the vegetables and looks after the chickens and raises the chickens, makes sure there's enough eggs and all that sort of thing; and maybe supervises servants and employees. Very often in former times the wife did all that, was responsible for all that.

: What did the man do, then - I mean if it was an agricultural situation?

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S: Well, he would be working in the fields. He might be, you know, going to the towns in search of customers for his produce, looking after the draught animals.

Padmapani: And of course there could have been a household of maybe twenty people.

S: Could be, yes.

And then `by providing her with ornaments [adornments].' You might say this is the human touch. I mean, Indians believe - I don't know whether this is any sort of traduction(?) of female nature - but Indians believe that women love ornaments, so the husband is expected to provide the wife with ornaments. In other words, the approach mustn't be just utilitarian, as it were. There's an aesthetic element which enters into it. One could extend this to the whole home. It's not just enough to live in a utilitarian shack, as it were; one should live in beautiful surroundings. Not that they need be over-decorated, but simple and pleasing and harmonious in colour and line and so on. And also for one's own sake. One doesn't want a scruffy, slatternly sort of wife around; one wants a wife who is well dressed, beautifully dressed and adorned on occasion. Not when she's scrubbing in the kitchen, necessarily, but certainly when guests arrive or when you go out together.

Padmapani: I noticed when I was out in India, Bhante, quite a lot of the women wear the jewellery on them all the time. Their earrings - they always have their earrings and armbands (?), bracelets.

S: The safest place - because if they are of gold and silver that's the safest place to keep them.

: I think it's the Tibetans [where] the wife would wear some of the wealth of the family.

S: Well, this is also the case in India: the ornaments, the gold ornaments worn by the woman are a sort of investment. Well, not an investment but a safe deposit. (Laughter.) Because there were no banks in the modern sense. Where would you keep your wealth, your reserves? So usually one bought gold ornaments and the women wore those gold ornaments and in time of need you could sell them. This is still the case. This is why I believe in India the price of gold is double the world price; there's such a great demand for it. Even now, as in France to some extent, people don't trust money, paper money, banknotes. They trust gold. So they want to have gold. They feel secure with gold around them, with a bit of gold on their womenfolk. The womenfolk themselves feel secure if they've got gold. Supposing something happens to the [390] menfolk, supposing they die: well, they've got some gold or they can sell their ornaments, they can sell their jewellery. They can survive in that way.

I knew a family in Kalimpong, an Indian family: a widow with her two grown-up children, one son, one daughter. They were all three known to me, and they came from a rather, originally, well-to-do family in Mysore; and they lived like that. They sold a bit of jewellery every now and then. I know because I helped them sell it through friends of mine. That was how they were managing until the son got a job. They were selling little bits of jewellery all the time.

So `by providing her with adornments' he not only decorates his wife but he also, indirectly, perhaps, provides for the wife's future should anything happen to him.

Anyway, let's provide for our refreshment now, if not adornment.

(TEA BREAK)

As you know from reading *The Thousand-Petalled Lotus*, I spent some time with - well, connected with - the ashram of a woman spiritual teacher in India. And it was - I think I point it out in my memoirs - it was certainly noticeable to me even at that time, though I was very young, that she was attracting young men who had lost their mothers, and they had that sort of attitude towards her and that sort of devotion. And it seemed to get very sticky sometimes.

: Wasn't she called the Mother or something?

S: Well, yes, they called her Ma, Anandamayi Ma. And they used to sing in chorus (sings) 'Ma-a, Ma-a,' (laughter); they used to sing like that for hours with different tunes, and they believed that the future religion of the world would be called Ma-ism. (Laughter.) Oh dear, let's not talk about it! (Loud laughter.)

: Is she still going, this woman?

S: I did hear that she'd died. One of our women Order Members saw her, I forget where it was, in Poona maybe, just before she died.

Tejananda: There is one in Bristol called Ma something.

S: Is that Nirmanadevi Ma...?(?)

Tejananda: Yes, that's right.

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S: Some of them have been writing to me recently. I don't know why, I don't know them.

Ratnapani: Looking for a father figure. (Laughter.)

S: (laughs) Looking for a holy father.

Padmapani: One of their disciples came up to Glasgow.

S: Anandamayi?

Padmapani: I think so, yes. He claimed, if it's the woman, that one of the reasons why Rajneesh was ill, and why he went through a period of ill-health, was that this woman had zapped him.

S: Well, that's not Anandamayi, that's this Nirmanadevi whom I heard about.

Padmapani: Ah yes. She zapped him or something. That was his expression.

: He'd been a naughty boy.

Padmapani: He'd been a naughty boy, yes, he'd been saying bad things about her.

S: She'd been smacking his metaphysical bottom. (Laughter.)

: War on the - no, not the Transcendental - the psychic level.

S: Anyway: 'The wife thus ministered to as the West'...

The wife thus ministered to as the West by her husband shows her compassion to her husband in five ways:

- (i) she performs her duties well,
- (ii) she is hospitable to relations and attendants,
- (iii) she is faithful,
- (iv) she protects what he brings,
- (v) she is skilled and industrious in discharging her duties.

S: There doesn't seem to be too much difference between (i) and (v): 'she performs her duties well' and 'she is skilled and industrious in discharging her duties.' But you notice the emphasis on duty, and work?

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Prasannasiddhi: Perhaps v) could be related to v) of the previous one. It could be an aesthetic quality, 'being skilled and industrious in discharging her duties.'

S: That's true, yes. Not only does them well, does them beautifully. This statement 'she performs her duties well,' suggests a division of labour, so to speak, between husband and wife which in fact, I suppose, there usually is. She has her duties just as he has his.

: Although that gets - bringing up children now, sometimes it can be all very 'us.'

S: Well, if one didn't even want to distinguish, for the sake of argument, between wife's duties and husband's duties, at least they are sharing the same duties, one might say. So she should, in her case, perform her share of the duties well - one could at least say that - within the more 'emancipated' context.

I used to have to talk about these things quite a lot whenever I used to bless weddings in the good old days in India. I used to give a regular discourse on the duties of the husband towards the wife and the wife towards the husband. So this is very familiar ground for me, theoretically.

Padmaraja: It's interesting: when I did a wedding down in Croydon, I got together with the husband and wife-to-be beforehand and read through everything, and they begged me not to read out the instructions at the end of the ceremony.

S: Why was that?

Padmaraja: Well, the woman particularly felt that she didn't want a list of things that she had to do. She felt it wasn't in keeping with her emancipated status.

S: Oh dear. The husband didn't object? He didn't want to be emancipated?

Padmaraja: No. It was interesting.

: Was this an Indian couple?

Padmaraja: No.

S: Anyway: `(ii) she is hospitable to relations and attendants' - literally the folk around, parijana(?). This is sometimes interpreted as meaning [393] that she should welcome her husband's relations especially, and her husband's friends, when they come to the house. Some wives, you know, rather resent husbands' old associates or even husbands' relations, so the point is made that the wife should be hospitable to them when they do turn up.

: That means - like you were saying earlier on in the lecture, I think, Bhante - dropping what you're doing, in a way. (I mean, not literally.) Like dropping what you were doing because you've got guests here, and entertaining them. Well, this was in an Indian context, wasn't it?

S: Yes. I think one can't simply think in terms of hosts and guests. I mean the guest also has to be considerate. You know, you shouldn't call on someone when you know that they will be working. You shouldn't require them to interrupt their work. The implied context here is one of great leisure, where people have got a lot of free time and it doesn't matter that you go along; they don't have anything much to do and they are only too happy to receive you. I think, even in India, they wouldn't be really, in modern times at least, too pleased if you turned up unannounced because they'd like to do some extra shopping or at least arrange the place, keep it tidy. So it's only fair to give due warning - maybe not to close friends, but people you don't know too well - so that they aren't inconvenienced by your visit, which surely should not be the purpose of your visit.

: I think I remember your making a contradistinction between the Indians and the Chinese, where in India it seems that the onus is on the host, where in China it's on the guest, or more so.

S: Yes, in the sense that, in India, it is the host who is as it were in the subordinate position. The guest takes over, everything is placed at the disposal of the guest. But in China the custom seems to be that the guest subordinates himself to the host, and is very humble and so on, whereas in India it is the host who is very humble. There seem to be two quite different traditions.

In India, if you arrive at someone's house and you act as though you belonged there and everything belonged to you, and ask for this and ask for that, they'll be really happy. But in China this wouldn't be regarded as good behaviour. The guest is instructed, in little manuals of good behaviour, to take the lowest seat and sit near the door, and only allow himself to be pulled forward and given a better seat after putting up a great deal of resistance. Tibetans tend to follow in this respect Chinese etiquette rather than Indian.

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: That's interesting.

Ratnapani: Must be an interesting mix of the Tibetans and the Indians!

S: Yes, indeed. (Laughter.)

Padmapani: I remember, when I took this shot of Dhardo Rimpoche's school, I inadvertently walked across somebody's lawn - I think it was their back garden - climbed up this banana tree, was learning over the tree with the camera, and realized when I looked back that people

were having their [dinner on the terrace?]. Instead of the usual, as one would expect, rudeness and maybe getting the police, they invited me to the table; the woman went off to get some tea. (Laughter.) I ended up spending the whole afternoon talking about what I was doing there, and then they introduced me to the family and...

S: Well, you could imagine if you'd done that sort of thing in Purley, if you'd just climbed over into the garden (laughter) ... You could imagine! You wouldn't be invited to tea. They'd probably call the police, or spray you with the hose!

Padmapani: Although it sounds quite extraordinary, it's quite an easy thing to do in India. You can quite easily walk into somebody's back garden, not knowing it's their back garden.

Dhammarati: Searching through the etiquette books to find out what to do with a man up a banana tree! (Laughter.)

S: But you were lucky that you encountered an Indian family or Nepalese family, not a European family or a missionary family. You would have been soon sent about your business and probably handed a small tract! (Laughter.)

Prasannasiddhi: One does get a definite impression from these things of a level of kind of civilizational positivity or something, which all these things are just different aspects of just living on that kind of level. They all add up.

S: The Indians have got a lot of social skills that people in the West don't have, and it goes right down to the lowest level of society. That's the amazing thing about it. Ordinary, uneducated, illiterate working people are not crude in their social behaviour in India. So the idea that if you are working class you have got to be all rough, you know, this is purely a Western sort of superstition. It might be true in the West but it's certainly not true in India. It's certainly not true among Tibetans. People have the same, as it were, good manners at all levels of society, [395] except those who have been corrupted by contact with the West perhaps, or confused, at least, by contact with the West.

It's really noticeable: you go into the houses of the ex-Untouchables, who were the lowest of the low, but they are so as it were polite, they're so courteous, they're so gentle in their manners. You would imagine from what you hear from caste Hindus about them that they'd be savages, but they're not in the least. They compare very favourably with, say, working people in the West, who can be crude and unrefined. They are not like that there. I'm not saying they are always perfect, and I really mustn't idealize them, but it is quite noticeable that there is a definite refinement of manner and feeling even on that social level. One might even say a degree of emotional positivity. That is quite difficult to find over here in similar circumstances.

: Social manner is included within the meaning of sila, I think.

S: Yes, I mentioned this the other day. Guenther translates sila as manners and ethics, or ethics and manners.

So 'she's hospitable to relations and attendants'; and, of course, 'she's faithful.' In India this is regarded as very, very important for the man; they consider it even more important for the woman. Perhaps in this country we have no idea what a blot on a woman's character any sort

of - well, sexual interest, even - outside marriage is regarded as being.

Ratnapani: It's interesting, that. I think there's a sort of atmosphere that it creates, because I can see a beautiful Indian woman in the street who is obviously married, and there is no real sexual response no matter how beautiful she is. I can appreciate that, but it's - that's only just occurred to me, the normal response shouldn't be there.

S: Well, she's sort of self-contained. She's content. She's not even unconsciously looking around her for anything else. She's ... self-absorbed.

Ratnapani: You would be intruding.

S: Yes, you really would be intruding, not to say invading.

Padmapani: Maybe that answers my question a few days ago. That's why I felt that the women [were] so, in a way, mature. They actually are content.

S: Well, the idea that Indian women are in any way subservient or enslaved is ridiculous ... it's almost an insult to ... They do serve their [396] husbands first; they do eat after their husbands; they do disappear when their husbands' guests come, etc. But they are not subservient. They've a great deal of self-respect.

: Is that the difference between subservient and subordinate?

S: They serve. They don't regard it as a disgrace to serve. They are proud to serve. They regard it as an honour to serve. That's their attitude. So they bear themselves in a corresponding way. They even hold themselves in a dignified way - I mean, very ordinary women. They hold themselves as though they respect themselves, which they do.

Ratnapani: Well, I feel much more respect for Indian women I see in the streets here than for the average Western woman, at first glance, quite definitely. No doubt they are utterly unliberated at home.

Padmavajra: It's incredible to see the way [in which] an Indian woman, with a great big pile of pots on her head, going to get the water, moves. It's very beautiful and incredibly, as you say, self-respect[ing]. Even though she's doing something which apparently, to our eyes, would be something quite menial - getting a lot of water for the day.

S: Yes, but she's doing it for her family. She [would say] 'What's subservient in that?' She's working for her family, including herself.

Ratnapani: And you're not beautiful if you are unhappy, are you, or downtrodden?

S: No - nor handsome either. This applies to men as well.

I have been thinking more and more that sexual promiscuity is psychologically damaging to women. I think we touched upon this some years ago, didn't we, so [there is] no need to overemphasise the point? We don't want to go to the other extreme, the extreme of the Roman Catholic Church, insisting on the sacramental nature of marriage, insisting on strict lifelong monogamy and all that sort of thing. But we mustn't throw away the baby with the

bath-water.

All right, `iv) she protects what he brings.' It must be very discouraging for a husband to work hard to earn money, then it's squandered by the wife, spent on rubbishy things or not looked after carefully, when he relies upon her in that way. Well, we know there are wives like that, just as there are husbands who don't work hard and earn. So a wife who really cares for her husband will surely protect what he brings, and not waste money and not squander money etc., just as he will work hard to provide her and the children with whatever they need.

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And then, fifthly and lastly, `she is skilled and industrious in discharging her duties,' which in a sense sums it all up, with perhaps that added aesthetic element.

There is one thing I want to comment on that perhaps nobody has noticed. For instance, if we go back to pupils and teachers, the pupil is not represented as showing compassion to the teacher. That would be inappropriate. But the teacher is represented as showing compassion to the pupil. That is appropriate. But you notice, in the case of husband and wife, it says, `the wife shows her compassion to the husband,' as well as the husband to the wife; or, as I mentioned some time ago, compassion should really be kindness. So it makes, almost, the point that in marriage there should be this mutual kindness. And this is something that I've thought about from time to time - that not only with regard to marriage but the usual sexual/emotional relationship between men and women, it's really sometimes surprised me how little kindness there is. And this is something that one must think about and take, as it were, very seriously. If a relationship seems to preclude kindness, it isn't really worth very much.

Dhammarati: They actually use different words: `the husband ministers to the wife.'

S: Yes, yes. That's also true.

Ratnapani: It's funny(?), the pupil ministers to teacher, husband ministers to wife, and then compassion is the return.

S: Yes. Yes.

Ratnapani: It seems to elevate the wife.

S: Well, I think this is only if one renders *anukampa* as `compassion', which has a sort of as it were superior flavour in a positive sense, whereas I think it's more like the colloquial `kindness'. It's *anukampa*; it's not *karuna*, certainly not in the Mahayanic sense.

Ratnapani: But I was thinking of `ministering'. I suppose that's pretty much on a level, isn't it?

S: Mm. One could say that it is pretty much on [a] level. It could be that there is a certain uniformity of terminology throughout the section, whether it's exactly appropriate in each case or not. But at least it clearly indicates a positive and kindly attitude, an attitude of service mutually on the part of husband and wife. And really sometimes it has astonished me in the case of relationships, whether within marriage or without, how [398] little kindness there is. And that seems in a way very sad. It's supposed to be your closest relationship, your most intimate relationship, but there's often so little kindness in it.

Perhaps sometimes it is due to the fact that people do insist on spending too much time together - I mean men and women, or husbands and wives; that if they gave each other a little more space and men could spend a bit more time with men, and women a bit more time with women, then they could meet, when they do meet, more happily. Because I think if the woman is only with a man, and the man is only with a woman, a certain frustration builds up because there is a natural tendency to associate with your own kind to some extent; in other words, women with women and men with men. And if you're frustrated, how can you be really happy or friendly or kind?

I mean you mustn't carry it to extremes: not necessarily the less you see of someone the more you like them, and therefore if you saw nothing of them at all you'd like them most of all. I mean there is a point after which there is a law of diminishing returns. But certainly I think if husband and wife didn't cling to each other so tightly they'd probably enjoy each other's company more. That's my guess as, perhaps, an informed observer.

: Maybe, also, there is an element in the relationship between husband and wife, if they stop sleeping with each other for periods of time the actual quality of their life would go up - if it was mutual and understanding.

S: Yes, right. Within the FWBO there has been a big change, a big improvement in this respect. I can remember occasions when, years ago - the first couple of years - people used to come on retreat, husbands and wives, and just insist on not being separated; the wives just not wanting to be separated from the husbands for one night and sleep with other women. No, no, they just wouldn't. I remember the wife of an Order Member (who was only an Order Member for a short time) - they came on retreat together at Keffolds, and when the wife learned that she couldn't actually stay in the same room as her husband because there were dormitories, she just wouldn't stay. She insisted that they left. They both left, they had to leave; she just would not stay unless she could be with him every night.

Prasannasiddhi: Perhaps it sort of reflects the insecurity of the social set-up, where the woman actually does feel that if she leaves her husband for a night there is the possibility -

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S: Yes. Well, she herself feels insecure with other women, and she feels she can't trust him. At least if she's with him all the time he's under her eye (laughter) and observation; so that's not exactly - and, actually, I know in the case of this particular Order Member he was in fact, I afterwards discovered, carrying on an affair with another woman. So perhaps his wife had reason to be insecure. It doesn't seem a very happy situation, does it?

: It sounds like either way you're going to be ... in that situation.

S: Well, I know in India if a woman arrives at a strange household - maybe her husband is visiting and she's taken along - she at once goes along to the other women and she's received with open arms and `she's one of us' sort of thing, just because she's a woman. And they make her very welcome, and she's glad to stay with them and make friends with them. Not to keep aloof from them and stick with her husband all the time. That's not at all the attitude.

Padmavajra: Well, it's an interesting thing that in India you can never, if you're out walking in the street, even if you are with your wife, you don't walk with her.

S: Not unless you are very Westernized; it occasionally happens but it's not the custom.

Padmavajra: You certainly never hold her hand or anything like that in public.

S: Well, that would be regarded as very indecent, that you should behave in public in a way that is appropriate only within your own room. It would be regarded as very - people would sort of spit as you passed by if they saw you doing that. And this is what the Rajneesh people were doing all the time in Poona. It outraged local feeling. Even if you think, well, maybe local people were wrong and backward, at least you shouldn't deliberately do something that you know is going to upset people in that way. But people were almost flaunting it - the Rajneesh people.

Padmavajra: It's interesting, as well, it certainly is not frowned upon if you were to walk down the road with your friend and put your arm round him and hold his hand.

S: No, that's not frowned upon.

Padmavajra: That's perfectly OK.

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S: No one takes any notice at all of that.

Padmavajra: Well, everybody does it. It's strange in the beginning.

S: Yes. But Indians on the whole regard any expression of sexual - what shall I say? - relationships in public as undesirable, because it just is inappropriate. It sort of upsets, so to speak, or stimulates other people, or disturbs, at a time they don't want to be stimulated. It's sort of thrusting it upon them at a time when they don't want it, or they don't want to be concerned with it.

Padmavajra: It's that whole exclusivity as well, isn't it?

S: Yes. There's an amusing essay by Lamb that I was reading recently, about the behaviour of married people, and he says it's amazing how superior people become in their attitude when they get married, and they start thinking that an old bachelor like himself can't know anything. And he relates one or two instances [of how] he goes to call upon married friends and there's some discussion, and the sweet young wife remarks at one point, 'How could an old bachelor like you be expected to understand - you know, some quite simple matter? - as if an old bachelor, or any sort of bachelor, is an inferior sort of creature altogether. You notice this, I think, more with women than with men, that they really plume and pride themselves on being married, as though they are at once exalted to a superior status. Well, in a sense, perhaps they are. But they tend to look down upon others.

Tape 17, Side B

So it's interesting that the Buddha is saying, in effect, that things like courtesy and kindness are certainly not out of place within marriage.

So let's go on to 'friends and associates as the North' - at least we'll do half of it. We are pushing on rather rapidly, but we've only got one more day and I don't want to repeat things

I've said on other tapes.

In five ways, young householder, should a clansman minister to his friends and associates as the North:

- (i) by liberality,
- (ii) by courteous speech,
- (iii) by being helpful,
- (iv) by being impartial,
- (v) by sincerity.

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S: This does to some extent overlap some of the material in the previous section, so to speak, though perhaps we can concentrate more on new points.

'By liberality': a clansman ministers to his friends and associates as the North by liberality, by generosity. That's pretty obvious, isn't it? You treat your friends generously.

Padmavajra: What's the Pali for clansman there?

S: I was just going to - it's probably kulaputta, but I'll check that. (Looks it up.) Kulaputta, yes.

: `Clansman', would that be like - ?

S: Just `young man of decent family.' It's no more than that.

Padmavajra: That's the term they defined in the Pali Canon, described as the bhikshu, isn't it? - a clansman who rightly goes forth and...

S: Yes, yes, that's true.

: So what is putta, then?

S: Putta is son. The Sanskrit is putra.

Ratnapani: `Son of a good family.'

S: Actually it says `family son', in other words a son of a family that is a family, a recognized family, a respectable family, a decent family.

Danina - by liberality, dana. Then peyavacana(?), by courteous speech. I take it that peya is from priya(?), which is affectionate. This hasn't struck me before, but don't these first four correspond to the four pratisamvids - or the four means of conversion, rather?

: Well, certainly liberality and peyavacana.

S: Well, priyavacana(?) it would be in Sanskrit. And arthacarya, helpfulness, and impartiality - treating alike, making no distinction between oneself and them. So these are qualities of the Bodhisattva, aren't they? Is there a Survey here?

Dhammarati: Do you want the old edition or the new one?

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S: The new one, please. (Looks it up.) Yes, p.448: yes, it's sangrahavastus, isn't it? The first is, of course, dana - yes, giving; that is the first perfection, also the first means of conversion, sangrahavastu. Then there's loving speech, priyavacana, peyavacana in Pali. Then arthacarya, devotion to the good of others, their artha. Then samanattatha(?) in Pali becomes exemplification. Let's see if I've referred to it in Sanskrit here; I might not have done. Ah, samanarthata, p.446. Ah, yes, samanarthata seems to correspond to samanattatha. Yes, it's making oneself like the other, which could be exemplification in the sense of setting an example or taking the other as oneself. But, yes, these four do seem to correspond to the four sangrahavastus. I don't think that that has, in fact, been noticed anywhere before. So what does this suggest, in a way?

Devapriya: Reinforcing what you said the other day: the path to Stream Entry is the path to friendship.

S: Yes! If you're practising friendship in this way, well, eventually you'll be thinking in terms of the Bodhisattva Path. This is the way to win friends. This is also the way to win over beings to the Path of Enlightenment.

: How to win friends and influence people!

S: Yes, right. Supposing somebody turns up at the Centre or at your community; well, first, what's the way to win them over? To be liberal; offer them a cup of tea, speak kindly, be helpful, help them find a book that they want. And one could say, yes, set them a good example. Then there is a fifth here: sincerity.

: Could I just get this clear, Bhante? The four means of conversion - what exactly is meant by the four means of conversion?

S: It means four ways on the part of the Bodhisattva, four means or methods employed by the Bodhisattva, to win people over to the Path of Enlightenment. 'Means of conversion' is a very approximate translation or even paraphrase.

Padmavajra: You've done a lecture on this, haven't you: 'On being All Things to All Men'? You discuss it...

S: Yes, that's right. Yes, in the Vimalakirti series. Yes, that's true. Yes, one of the women Order Members wrote to me recently that she found that the most helpful lecture in the whole series.

Padmavajra: It's fantastic. It's very, very good.

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: Where was that page in the Survey, Bhante?

S: Oh, 446, that was, and the four following pages.

Padmavajra: In that lecture it was as an example of upaya-kausalya, wasn't it, skilful means?

S: Ah, yes.

: Is that the Vimalakirti Nirdesa series?

Padmavajra: Yes, third lecture, I think.

S: So by treating them as he treats himself, and being as good as his word - that's more literal, actually - sincerity: being as good as his word.

: Is this still iv), impartiality?

S: Pardon?

: Sorry, I'm not sure - sincerity?

S: No, sincerity is the fifth one. 'By being as good as his word.' Rhys Davids translates it in that way. Narada simply translates it as sincerity. Rhys Davids translates iv) as 'by treating them as he treats himself,' and Narada translates it as 'by being impartial', that is to say impartial with respect to himself and them.

Ratnapani: Where does 'set a good example' come into that, then?

Padmavajra: Impartiality. It's the translation.

S: Mm. It's an alternative translation of samanarthata.

Ratnapani: I don't see any connection between the two.

S: Well, you act in such a way as to make him the same as yourself. Otherwise what's the purpose, what's the meaning, of setting a good example? You act in a certain way, and because you act in a certain way others act in that way too. In that way you make them the same as yourself. You treat them the same as yourself. Do you see what I mean? So you can either translate samanarthata as setting others a good example or as treating them the same as yourself. It's either treating them the same as yourself or making them the same as yourself. The word will bear both interpretations. But it is quite an interesting point [404] that these 'four ways in which the clansman should minister to his friends and associates as the North' become - within the Mahayana context, within the context of the Bodhisattva Path - the four sangrahavastus; suggesting a very intimate connection between friendship and the Bodhisattva Ideal, the Bodhisattva being the friend par excellence. He's everybody's friend and he wants to help all beings towards Enlightenment. That means he's got to win them over. He's got to be friendly. So he's friendly in the same way that any ordinary friend is friendly, to begin with. He just carries those sort of qualities to the nth degree as it were.

Padmavajra: It's interesting, I remember in the Survey when you were discussing the six paramitas (I think it was in the Survey or in the Bodhisattva series), you said it was like a certain set of practices which were recommended to the upasaka, and a certain set of practices which were recommended to the bhikshus, certain paths of conduct, and they were as it were put together in the Mahayana realization. It's interesting that there is another thing here, found in particularly a layman's - you know, as they say, an upasaka's practice, which developed into

a path for the Mahayanists.

S: Yes, well, an aspect of the Path, yes.

Atula: It's like you're taking something that's important [but] mundane and raising it...

S: At a higher level, yes. Which does suggest, at least up to a point, [that] spiritual qualities are not separate from ordinary human qualities; they are those human qualities raised to a much higher degree or a much higher power, to so speak.

Needless to say, the courteous or affectionate speech does not exclude strong speech, just as friendship itself doesn't exclude fierce friendship.

: What does priya mean in this context? Is it just - ?

S: Just affectionate in an ordinary sense.

I was going to leave the next five things, that is to say the ways in which `friends and associates show compassion to their friends in five ways', till tomorrow, but I see that actually the points enumerated are all points that we've covered pretty thoroughly already, so perhaps we could just read them and just comment in any way that seems necessary, so that tomorrow we've got just two directions to deal with and then conclude.

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The friends and associates thus ministered to as the North by a clansman show compassion to him in five ways:

- (i) they protect him when he is heedless,
- (ii) they protect his property when he is heedless,
- (iii) they become a refuge when he is in danger,
- (iv) they do not forsake him in his troubles,
- (v) they show consideration for his family.

: The last two are new.

S: But the fourth is implied, because something was said before about being the same in misfortune. And also showing `consideration to his family': something like that was mentioned, wasn't it?

Padmavajra: Yes, we were talking about protecting his property - it came under - `they protect his property when he is heedless' - it mentioned that if the family couldn't be looked after you would look after - bottom of p.10.

S: Yes. `He guards the heedless, he protects the wealth of those in danger, he becomes a refuge when you are in danger, when they are commitments he provides you with double the supply needed.' Then, later on: `In misfortune he does not forsake you.' So we have in fact covered all this ground. Anything requiring any additional comment?

Dhammarati: One thing that strikes me is that the whole kind of emotional feel of these, how it can contrast, it is almost a very deep-seated distrust, in this culture - an unwillingness to

serve.

S: Yes. Well, it's as though in England, very often - well, I mustn't generalize too much - but I have certainly noticed it with the FWBO, even women are unwilling to serve. And that would suggest a certain degree of degeneration. In other words, unwilling to behave in accordance with what - though they might not, some of them, agree with this - seems to be, at least, their own nature. You really see this in action in India again. And as I mentioned, I mean serving is certainly not incompatible with self-respect; far from it. Women there would find the idea that you demean yourself by serving others, even other members of the family, absolutely ludicrous.

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Dhammarati: It's almost paradoxical; it's almost [as if] you're defending your own individuality in this culture by an attack on everything else... surrendering your...

S: Yes. And the surrender is not just a giving in. It's not allowing oneself to be trampled by other people. Well, you just don't think in those terms at all.

: You do get the flavour that, in the context of the Movement, we have to strengthen very much our own moral and ethical ground in order to create a flower which is very beautiful. It's almost the equivalent of guarding the senses, with morality and ethics, you know, ... the senses.

: But in this list - well, no, in one of the lists - dana actually precedes that - generosity precedes that.

S: In the paramitas, the reason that is usually given is that even if you find it difficult to observe the precepts - though in a way dana is one of the precepts - at least you can give.

Prasannasiddhi: I tend to feel that - it seems that in the West, or even in England, we do seem to have the energy to do all these things but the energy is kind of tied up in other modes of being, other habitual - just a sort of general state of society. There is a lot of energy within society but it's just channelled into the wrong areas.

S: Oh yes, there seems to be an enormous amount of energy around, one might say, when one looks at what is being done all the time.

Prasannasiddhi: ... materialism.

Atula: It does seem to be like the difference between my own childhood and the values that I found, say, when I came to London, are very different. It does seem that, especially the time we're living in now, as though the values - the reason why there's no values is because in some ways, perhaps, in the past the family's been abused or whatever - it does seem a deeper-rooted sort of aversion. I have noticed sometimes when you are talking about morality in a class, people react, just react to the word, and when you start trying to define the word it's as though ...

S: Well, perhaps we just have to avoid words which spark off undesirable emotional reactions: speak, for instance, of skilful behaviour, or uprightness, or something like that.

Morality for many people is a loaded word.

Prasannasiddhi: It's a restrictive word.

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S: Yes.

Prasannasiddhi: It's not a word which encourages them to create. It's a word which seems more to confine their energies.

Atula: But at one time it was a value, and now it seems to be a dirty word. It's a word that people react to.

S: I think one needs to make it clear to people what you actually are talking about. You can also even ask them; even make the point that they should try to dissociate from the words that you use [the] connotations that they might usually associate with them. Unless you are to speak using many Pali and Sanskrit words you have to use existing English words, and you may be using them - you will be using them - in a very different sense from which people are accustomed to hear.

People shouldn't, ideally, be so reactive as just to react to mere words before they've understood what the words mean for you and what you are trying to communicate through those words.

Atula: Unfortunately that is the case.

: Sila's meanings are a lot wider than just morality. Maybe we should transpose the word.

S: Yes. I sometimes get the impression that some people want to react against almost anything that we care to mention to them. One can't get really very far then. (Agreement.) What does make people so reactive, I wonder? Well, maybe it goes back to their childhood and the way they were brought up.

Dhammarati: I don't think it happens nearly as much in small groups. Because it was quite interesting in the case of a girl who'd done an eight-week Dharma course absolutely without a flutter, but on the Battle retreat, where she was with fifty people, [she] all of a sudden discovered...

S: Ah. Yes. There's probably quite a bit in that. But why should she feel more threatened in that particular situation? I mean that isn't particularly clear.

Dhammarati: You can address your language much more sensitively in a smaller group, whereas in a bigger group you've got to generalize so much more.

S: Mm.

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Ratnapani: It seems that the more other egos there are around, the more your ego feels on the defensive. It seems to come down to that sort of level.

S: Yes.

All right, let's leave it there for today, and tomorrow we finish. `With masters and servants' (oh, what a dirty word, `servants!') and `ascetics and brahmins'. Well, ascetics is another rather grubby word. It's not actually dirty! Anyway, we'll try to use them in a proper sense.

Voices: Thank you very much, Bhante.

S: I hope we've thrown a little light to day on married life and the life as between friends. [We've] had to go rather quickly though some things.

Ratnapani: I think this little text is really very surprising...

Day 9

Tape 18, Side A

S: We come on now to masters and servants.

In five ways should a master minister to his servants and employees as the Nadir:

- (i) by assigning them work according to their abilities,
- (ii) by supplying them with food and wages,
- (iii) by tending them in sickness,
- (iv) by sharing with them any delicacies,
- (v) by granting them leave at times.

S: I'm just looking up a word in the dictionary. Yes: I was just trying to find out here what the word for master is. The word for servant is dasakammakara(?) Dasa is literally servant, sometimes even translated as slave. Kammakara - one who does work - a servant and worker, one could say, or servant or worker. But actually there is no word for master. Rhys Davids translates as `the Aryan master'. The original word is ariyakena, which means `by the Aryan'. There is a grammatical form in which certain letters of a word are reversed, so instead of `Aryan' you get ayira; so it is the same word, actually. This is called metathesis. It's an obscure point of grammar. So it means `the Aryan', and by implication `the Aryan as master.' But the word master is not actually used; simply the word Aryan, in that metathetic form, is used. Do you see what I mean? So that is an interesting point. It simply says `the Aryan' - by implication Aryan master - and the servant or worker. What do you think that means? Why should it not say simply master?

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Padmavajra: Does this have the - well, the Aryans were the, er, is this an ethnic thing - the Aryan?

S: It could be. It could be that, yes. Sometimes in the Vedic literature one gets the antithesis of the Aryans and the Dasyas(?).

: And ethic ...

Prasannasiddhi: How does - ?

S: Aryan originally meant the member of a particular race, that is to say, the people who invaded India at a very remote period, who came down into India through the passes of the North-west, and gradually conquered at least northern India before penetrating to some extent into the south. They were called Aryans. And indigenous people they referred to as the Dasayas. They conquered them and to some extent enslaved them, and upper-caste Indians, as they became - upper-caste Hindus - were of Aryan descent; the lower ones tended to be of Dasya descent. Do you see what I mean? Though there was quite a lot of intermarriage from time to time and fresh castes created. But very broadly speaking that was the picture. But gradually 'Aryan' came to be used not in the sense of someone belonging to a particular race but someone of a certain degree or level of culture, even civilization. Then it came to have an ethical sense and a spiritual sense. And Buddhism uses it almost always in the spiritual and ethical sense, as in Arya Sangha, Aryamarga, and so on. But first there is the idea of nobility in the ethnic sense, then nobility in the cultural sense, and then nobility in the spiritual sense. Anyway, let's go through these. 'In five ways should an Aryan', or Aryan master, 'minister to his servants and employees as the Nadir,' the lowest point. Perhaps one should say, before that, that the provisions that the Buddha lays down here don't apply exclusively to the relationship between master [and servant] in the - what shall I say? - industrial employer and industrial employee sense at all. Do you see what I'm getting at?

Padmavajra: They're more like servants who aren't employees, who actually live in the same [household], are almost part of the family.

Devapriya: Or even broader, where the master would be of the ruling class, more generally.

S: I think I'm going even further than that. The master here is not only not to be identified with a particular person; 'master' seems to suggest here whatever factor, whatever force it is [that] actually determines the [410] working arrangements. Do you see what I mean? In other words the master can be a fiction, as when you say that the master is the locus of authority. It could be a Council; it could be even a co-operative meeting. The co-op meeting decides that - well, in a sense, that is the master, except that here the master coincides with the servants. Do you see what I mean? So I think one shouldn't regard these provisions as applicable only to one particular kind of socio-economic structure. For instance, you come to 'by assigning them work according to their ability'. That does not mean that there is necessarily one master employing all the servants to work for him personally and that he should assign them work according to their ability. This would apply within a co-op; because suppose all the co-op workers got together, then they'd sort out among themselves who was fit to do what work. That should be one of their governing principles. Do you see what I mean? It doesn't require necessarily a master observing this principle and as it were applying it to you from the outside. It is also a principle which you as co-op workers should recognize and apply to yourselves or among yourselves. Do you get the idea? So one could even say, not 'by assigning them work according to their wages' [work?], [but] 'by assigning yourselves work according to your abilities.' Do you see what I mean? That is the principle in co-operative terms.

Prasannasiddhi: So is it that there isn't actually any master as opposed to the workers? The master is just the workers...

S: Yes, what I'm saying is in the co-operative set-up the fact that there is not a master as opposed to servants and employees, which is what seems to be suggested here, does not mean

that these principles are not applicable within the co-operative framework. The application of the principles themselves does not depend upon a particular socio-economic framework.

Devapriya: It would apply to the ruling body.

S: The ruling body, whatever that is; and that ruling body may be made up of workers themselves.

Devapriya: I was thinking that you could extend that in terms of a government of a state or a country or a village, and you would take into account everybody including yourself ...

S: Yes. These principles wouldn't necessarily apply merely to, say, a monarchy. They could apply to a republic as well.

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Dhammarati: So it doesn't actually necessarily sanction a particular hierarchy ... ?

S: No, it's the principles which are important, not the particular means by which they are implemented. The fact that it is the master who is called upon here to implement these principles does not mean that the Buddha is sanctioning the master-servant relationship in the ordinary sense. What he is sanctioning is these principles of work.

For instance, in a co-operative there is a sort of dialectical element because you as worker are both employer and employee. So you as employer should apply to yourself, or yourselves, as employee or employees, these principles. There was a discussion some time ago - I don't know whether any conclusion was reached - as to whether such a thing as self-exploitation was possible! That suggests the same sort of thing, doesn't it? That you as employer could be exploiting yourself as employee! So it's the principles which are here important, not the particular framework through which the principles are applied. So it's not a question of saying, 'Well, in these days we don't always have masters and employees - we certainly never have them within co-ops - therefore what the Buddha says in the Sigalovada Sutta isn't applicable because he's talking about masters and servants.' One could not say that. So 'by assigning work according to ability' - you can even leave out the personal pronouns and not say 'by assigning them work according to their ability' [but] 'by assigning work according to ability'. Surely that is a principle to be applied within a co-op. You see what abilities you have among the workers and work is assigned either by the workers themselves directly or by somebody whom they elect for that purpose in accordance with those abilities: not only abilities in the sense of talents and skills and know-how, but in accordance with strength.

Devapriya: And in a co-op, presumably, in accordance with one's spiritual needs.

S: Are you speaking in terms of spiritual need to work?

Devapriya: Er...

S: Here it is only the work, the assignment of work, that is under consideration. You should be given work, or give yourselves work, according to your abilities. The work should suit your abilities. You shouldn't be asked to do something for which you're not equipped.

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Devapriya: I was thinking, I suppose, of somebody who is a labourer, say, on a building site. For their spiritual development it would be desirable, say, to help them to refine their energies rather than just leaving them in that particular job, which they are well suited for in a physical sense.

S: I think that would come under another consideration. I'm not even sure whether it is considered here, though we have v) `by granting them leave at times,' presumably for retreats! But here the consideration is that you are suited to the work, not that the work is suited to you. That the work is suited to you, that is another principle, one could say. The question to be considered here is, are you suited to the work? Whether the work is suited to you, that is a separate question and possibly comes later.

And then, (ii) the Buddha says, `by supplying them with food and wages.' Let's see what the word for wages is; it's obviously of some interest. (Looking it up.) It doesn't look as though it's included. The word is *vettena*. The nearest we can get is *veta*, a word meaning `a twig' (laughter) - to be used in punishment? Recompense? That's strange. Maybe it's part of a compound *phata*(?) which means food. *Vettena*; I'll look it up under the compound.

Padmavajra: ... Do you want ...?

S: Yes, look up wages. That's English to Pali, isn't it? Look up wages and see what it says.

Padmavajra: Wage: *vetena*, *vati*(?).

S: It's the same word, *vetena*. Yes, it's not in the dictionary, then. I'll see if it's under the compound. *Phata* is, of course, rice, literally. Presumably originally your allowance of rice. Ah, here - yes, I see, *vettena*. Ah, that's interesting. Yes, in the text it's printed with two Ts but I see in the dictionary they've got it with only one T. It might possibly be under one T here. Ah, yes, they've spelt it differently: *vetena*, wages, hire, payment, fee, remuneration. The text spells it with two Ts but the dictionary spells it with one T. Anyway, it doesn't help us very much. It could mean food and wages, or it could mean, as it's a compound, food as wages. It doesn't actually say money. Wages can be paid in kind.

Prasannasiddhi: Do we know what kind of wages - whether they had wages in those days?

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S: It does seem that wages were sometimes paid in cash; especially I think from the Jataka stories, which tend to be a bit later, we get that impression. But how common cash wages were in the Buddha's day it's difficult to say. Rhys Davids in one of his books might have some information on that point. But it could be that often wages were paid just in food. That is still the case sometimes in India. Someone works for you and you just give them food and maybe a bit of pocket money.

But anyway it suggests that you supply those who work for you with what they require to live on. There's no actual statement of the principle, so to speak, in Western terms, `from each according to his ability and to each according to his need.' In a way it's implied, because you assign work according to their ability so from each according to his ability, and you supply them with food and wages. You don't say `in accordance with the amount of work that they do.' They do the work that they can, they are given the work that they can [do], and they are supplied with the food and wages which they need. So one could say the principle of `from each according to his ability and to each according to his need' is involved here, or at least

implied here.

Dhammarati: Where is that principle, where did you derive it from? Is it in the Dhammapada?

S: Which one?

Dhammarati: `From each according to -`

S: The formulation is usually quoted as from Marx, but actually pre-socialist writers previous to Marx do use that expression. Marx certainly adopted it.

Devapriya: So the whole idea of commission would work against this?

S: Yes, would work against this. Yes.

Devapriya: Also somebody working four days, somebody working five days?

S: No. They would be working according to the amount of work that they were able to do, and they would be given what they needed to live on. But of course the business, from a business point of view, would need to take into consideration whether it could afford to maintain people on that basis. Because in order to keep the business going you would need them to put a certain amount of energy into it. Before the business could pay them what they needed it would need a certain [414] amount of work from them otherwise the business would not be able to produce the wherewithal to support them.

Devapriya: Or anybody else.

S: Yes. I mean, to give a hypothetical example, you could have, say, ten people working in a co-op, and they might pass a resolution that each person would work, say, one hour a week, and that they should pay themselves full wages for working full time. Would it work? Well, you can see at once it wouldn't! So there comes a point when you need a certain amount of work for, so to speak, a certain amount of support. There is a natural relation between them even though you are thinking in terms of supplying someone's needs and just allowing him to do what he can, so to speak. Do you see the point I'm getting at? I mean there is a connection, from this point of view, between input and output. You can't support too many full-time - you can't give - you can't speak in terms of full-time wages. You can't give more than a certain number of people all that they need to live on, unless either those people or other people are putting sufficient energy into the business for the business to be able to give them that amount of support.

Devapriya: You come primarily from the principle and then interpret it in practical terms?

S: Yes; yes.

Dhammarati: The communists actually [have an] intermediate stage, don't they? `From each according to his ability, to each according to his work.'

S: Yes, they do, yes; because they recognize that the communist state has not yet come into existence; that it's on its way, hopefully.

Dhammarati: ... It seems that you're applying this principle, the obligations in a master-servant relationship implied under a number of terms of socio-economic ...

S: This is what I said earlier on: the principles don't depend upon the implementing structure.

Dhammarati: Extending the Marxist argument here, there are particular elements in a capitalist relationship between the owner and the employee that in the long run aggravate egotism and alienation. You've got economic conditions there that so influence people that you're going to push them towards a certain kind of competitive egotism ...

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S: Well, every particular structure has its own particular dangers. For instance, supposing ownership is in the hands of the state, as it is in Russia: there also the dangers are of bureaucracy and all that sort of thing, stagnation.

Dhammarati: But, for instance, I suppose the pattern of ownership, in the Movement, anyway, is quite a specific one, and the relationship of the people working in co-ops to the money that [they earn] is quite well defined. I suppose that that actually has an effect on the attitude of the effect of the people working in the co-ops. Do you think that that in itself is a good economic relationship? Is it qualitatively better than some others?

S: Which one?

Dhammarati: The idea that the Movement owns all the resources, for instance, and the workers are only getting support, that none of them actually own the ...

S: Ah, the original idea with which the co-op businesses were set up was to support Centres. This was the reason for their being set up in the first place. Not primarily just to support individuals, especially inasmuch as individuals, especially Order Members, have it as their intention to use the business, regardless of structure, to support the Centre. So that was built into the structure from the very beginning.

Dhammarati: Do you see advantages in that for people involved in the structure?

S: There is an advantage, a very big advantage, inasmuch as they're not working merely to satisfy their personal needs. They're working, so to speak, for an Ideal.

Dhammarati: So does that imply that that economic structure as such is better than the economic structure that most people in this culture work in? - that you've actually got, if you like, ethical ... ?

S: Well, when one says better, it depends what one's criterion or standard of judgement is. But certainly from a spiritual point of view, or from a Buddhist point of view, it is better that the work which you do is tied in with that with which you are most deeply concerned anyway. If, for instance, you are involved, say, with a spiritual movement, you are working for that movement, you want that movement to succeed so you are involved in businesses which are trying to earn money so that that particular movement may be supported and flourish, and [416] incidentally you are supported. To support yourself is not the primary objective. I think this is quite important to spell out, say, to part-time workers, because there are quite a few

people (I think this has happened in the case of people working in the Cherry Orchard) [who] just think of the co-op, or the particular business run by the co-op, as providing a quite convenient source of part-time work and a bit of extra money. But the primary interest is not to work, say, for the Cherry Orchard, [but] to run a successful restaurant which will make a profit and, in addition to supporting its workers, will be able to contribute to the Centre. But I think if one doesn't grasp this point - that the businesses were founded as means of support for the Centre and that one shouldn't really be involved in an FWBO co-op unless one fully accepts that and is enthusiastic about it - if one doesn't understand and accept that, confusion is introduced. People may start thinking in terms of, well, the Centre draining the co-op. Well, that is nonsense, because the co-op was set up by the Centre for the sake of the Centre, primarily.

Devapriya: But is that to say that, from later developments in setting up other co-operatives, that their primary function, again, is to support the Centre?

S: Well, it is quite possible for people to set up co-ops the purpose of which is not to support a Centre but only to support themselves, [but] I think that sooner or later that co-op will turn itself into a business in the ordinary sense; because there will be no spiritual principle there, as it were. They won't be working for anything outside themselves.

Tejamati: Unless they were set up with the aim to provide support for, say, Mitra convenors or something like that.

S: Oh, that's something else. That's again part of, as it were, Centres - an objective outside themselves, not just their own personal support. But if they set up a co-op just to provide for their own personal support, I think this question of wanting more and more for themselves would automatically arise, and the people would eventually insist on wages and then more wages, higher wages unrelated to their work or even proportionate to their work. Someone might say, 'I'm more skilled, I should get more money,' or 'I'm the manager, I should get more money because I'm the manager. Not because I need it, just because I'm the manager.' And in that way the co-op principle would break down.

Devapriya: So whether it's specifically a Centre or not, there needs to be something greater than just supporting yourself on a spiritual basis.

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S: It would seem so, yes. I mean I haven't thought this out fully, but it would seem to be so.

Dhammarati: If that principle holds within the Movement - if you want a work structure that supports you in your efforts to grow - could you extend that and say that if you want growth to be as widespread as possible in society generally then some economic structures support it better than others?

S: Not necessarily just structure. It's a question of admitting this spiritual factor, and the structure and the product of the business organized in accordance with that structure being geared to spiritual ends. Because you could set up a limited company, but for the purpose of making money which could be donated, so to speak, to the nearest Centre. I mean the function and the purpose would be the same, even though the set-up was different.

Dhammarati: The pattern of ownership is quite different from that in the society ...?

S: Yes, but there would still be that spiritual factor and orientation.

Dhammarati: I suppose what I'm saying is that certain structures more appropriately express our spiritual orientation than others.

S: I used to think that the co-operative structure did. To a great extent I still believe that, but I begin to have some doubts, not about the structure itself but about, perhaps, people's reaction to that structure and people's power to understand that structure and really make it work successfully.

Tejamati: I suppose when you start to deal with any business structure you do start to deal with people's reactions to that structure, which people obviously have according to their own previous conditioning. But if you actually talk about Right Livelihood, nobody has come across it before so nobody has any preconceived ideas about how they should be functioning.

S: I'm talking about the actual structure, regardless of what you call it. I just call it co-op type structure for the sake of convenience. I'm not thinking just in terms of people reacting on account of giving a wrong interpretation of the word co-op. The sort of reaction or attitude I'm thinking of could be present even if it was just called a Right Livelihood project or something of that sort. I'm thinking of the difficulty which people seem to experience in accepting an equal share [418] of responsibility. If you've got a co-operative set-up, then everybody has an equal share of responsibility, and if everybody in the co-op does not exercise their share of responsibility the co-op does not function properly. Whereas in the case of another type of business structure you've got, for instance - I don't know what the term for this would be - one person owning it and employing all the others. He's the one with the initiative, the drive and he just pays them, or you could say he bribes them, with money to work for him. The initiative and responsibility entirely rests with him. If they don't work satisfactorily he kicks them out. He hires and he fires. A co-op is not like that. So if the owner of the business doesn't work, he knows jolly well his business is not going to succeed. The responsibility is on him. And he just has to pay other people. But in the co-op responsibility rests with everybody. So if certain people in the co-op, or even a majority of people in the co-op, do not fully accept their responsibility to make the co-op a success, it doesn't work. And my doubt is that it is possible for eight or ten people to accept full responsibility for it. Part-time workers certainly don't seem to do so. Do you see what I mean? By co-op members I don't mean just people (I don't know if there are any such) who are nominally members of the co-op for certain legal purposes, but those who actually work.

Dhammarati: Partly what we're trying to do with this Movement is turn out responsible individuals. Is there any argument for accepting some of the difficulties that [the fact of some] people not being fully responsible brings [to] the business?

S: Well, if they are only difficulties - but if they cripple the co-op to such an extent it doesn't even function, it isn't earning much money, maybe you have to think of a more effective kind of set-up, even though it isn't ideally such a good one. I do know some capable people get really annoyed and frustrated by some of the co-ops, or the co-op structure, because it means that their hands are tied. They are capable; they want to get on with things; they know how to do them. But they are just held up by other people who have got equal rights, so to speak, or

equal voice, let us say, but not that same sense of responsibility.

Atula: This has been the problem right the way through. At Sukhavati we were still arguing three years into it whether work was a benefit to people.

S: For instance, this is why, at the beginning, we thought in terms of co-ops being manned by Order Members who, since they were spiritually committed, could be expected to be responsible. Now we have got co-ops practically run by non-Order Members. So where does that leave you? You haven't got your fully committed responsible people to run the co-op. That sort of co-op structure presupposes that kind of [419] person. So if you haven't got in your co-op people of that sort, maybe you'll have to adopt another type of structure. I'm only saying maybe. I'm not being very positive or very definite about this. I'm just airing alternatives as it were.

Devapriya: The other alternative would be for more Order Members, surely, to work in the co-ops.

S: Yes, this is obvious. I mean really work and really accept responsibility. But around the LBC there seems to be a surprising reluctance - at least as seen from a distance surprising - on the part of Order Members to do this.

Dhammarati: Yes, it's surprising close up.

Prasannasiddhi: Maybe we're also suffering just from the fact that there is such a high turnover of people in these different situations.

S: Yes, because experience is not accumulated and handed on.

Prasannasiddhi: So if all the responsible people from FBS who have been responsible for FBS over the last two years were still there, you'd have a team of perhaps ten or fifteen Order Members - all Order Members - who would be fully responsible, all quite hard workers, and they'd all know what they were doing.

S: I sometimes have had the impression in the past - [that] an Order Member working in a co-op would look around for a likely Mitra and as soon as he could he'd push the Mitra into the co-op to take his place and he'd be off. (Laughter.) That's the impression, maybe wrong, that I've had.

: Not so wrong.

S: Oh dear.

Padmapani: What about this - what about the element, Bhante, of even full-time people in the co-op but they are not staying very long in the co-op? Would that have a debilitating effect on the ... ?

S: Well, it seems to me, as Prasannasiddhi has said or suggested, that you really need in a co-op, for a co-op to be a success, not only committed people but they must stay quite a long time. That means that length of time is an integral part of commitment itself to the business.

Whereas a lot of people seem to regard the co-ops, as I said, as convenient sources of part-time work and pocket money. And you're not going to run [420] co-ops on that basis any more than you are going to run Centres on the basis of a bit of part-time help from various people. In other words - wholeheartedness. When you consider how hard a man works who is running his own business - he really works; he thinks of it day and night, because he knows he's only going to make a success of his business if he works in that sort of way. But how many people working in co-ops think in that way? And the tendency, I assume - I'm not speaking from knowledge but only from knowledge of human nature - the tendency, I guess, will probably be for responsibility, real responsibility, to be left with managers and so on, even though the manager is not really the man with responsibility. He has a certain executive responsibility, but the actual responsibility for the co-op rests with everybody in the co-op, not just with the manager. He's not the boss. He's not the owner of the business. He's not the boss's representative - not boss in the sense of someone separate from the workers. He's the agent of the workers themselves.

Prasannasiddhi: I think one thing which would help this would be if the people within the given co-op were to share the same community. In that way they would develop a feeling for each other and then the people who were running the business would tend to become more supported by other people. It would become one whole sort of situation geared to running the business and living as a community.

S: Well, experience does seem to suggest that the best results are obtained, from all points of view, when the work team and the community more or less coincide.

Devapriya: There's some debate about that: whether it's, I suppose, a bit too intense for some people.

S: I'm sure it is! I don't doubt that for one minute!

Tejamati: Or maybe a little bit too narrow. It's like you - some people say you need splitting up ...

S: The 'in' term is 'incestuous'.

Tejamati: Well, yes. Do you agree with that? Do you think it has any merit, that criticism?

S: I think intensity is necessary to generate momentum and achieve results.

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Prasannasiddhi: And also, if the leader in it, or the leading Order Members, perhaps, in a particular co-op or a particular business were to...

Tape 18, Side B

... set up a community of people in that business - well, maybe they shouldn't expect too much initially; maybe they should look more, you know, slowly, not kind of making their workers work really hard, long hours and fully committed right from the start, but to think of maybe a few years or possibly a year or possibly two years, over which those people in their community and in their business would slowly learn more about Buddhism, and more about

what's being done, and therefore be able to commit themselves more...

S: Well, this is being done already, or will be done, I hope, in the case of the Cherry Orchard; because there is going to be a Cherry Orchard community in one of the houses in Approach Road, and that, I hope, will be a step in that direction.

Prasannasiddhi: There does seem to be a bit of a tendency to - you set up a community, so you think the community should be perfect right from the start; whereas the idea of the community is almost that you are setting it up in order to create a perfect finished product. The process of changing the individuals within the community so that you do have a proper community seems to be half the idea of setting up the community in the first place. But you shouldn't expect the community to be perfect right from the start.

Devapriya: But, practically, to get anything off the ground you need a core of people working very, very hard to facilitate the latter developments, and I think one of the responsibilities that, I suppose, the spiritually committed in that situation have is not to leave; not just to bung a Mitra in at the first opportunity [but] train him up. You've got a responsibility to make sure there is a continuity of growth, which I don't think...

S: That he can at least take your place.

Devapriya: Yes, which I don't think many people really take seriously. I think that's quite a responsibility to your co-op - that you don't leave until...

S: To go back to the point I mentioned at the very beginning, I think it's very important for all those working in a co-op not to work in it simply [422] for the sake of the money. I think it's as simple as that, really, or a lot of it is as simple as that.

Atula: It does seem as though the co-op structure itself does call for a high degree of maturity in its workers.

S: Well, this is why we expected at the beginning that Order Members would man co-ops. But it's difficult to get, I won't say full commitment but a full expression of commitment, even from Order Members, not to speak of Mitras, some of whom have in fact done very well.

Atula: I was just thinking of just even two years. In two years ... developed ... nothing at all. It does seem as though in the Movement there's a hell of a lot of mobility, so people do one thing for six months and move on.

S: One possibility that is being considered is what Subhuti tells me is called the wholly-owned subsidiary: that is to say the business would be owned by the relevant Centre, which would of course take full interest in it and responsibility for it. That is an alternative. There are advantages and disadvantages. But it would mean that there was a definite body of people actually responsible and accepting that responsibility and implementing it.

Devapriya: That would seem to suggest that, say, in terms of co-ops around the Centre, the Council don't actually have that responsibility. It is more with the co-op.

S: At present. Yes, under this arrangement the Council would have the direct responsibility.

Padmavajra: Would Council members and co-op members be the same people?

S: Well, it would simplify things in that case if they just wore one hat instead of two. But anyway, this is just a possibility that has been mooted. I don't know whether anyone is going to adopt it. But there is this actual practical question [that] the co-op structure, however perfect ideally, does not work without all co-op members accepting responsibility for the successful running of that particular co-op business. I think people think that since it's a co-op and it's sort of idealistic and all that sort of thing, it's going to run itself and they don't have to do very much. Well, it is certainly not the case.

Devapriya: Two practical questions come to mind. Firstly, somebody [should] research - say I wanted to spend two years studying and to do [423] that I needed support. Well, how valid will it be for me to, say, work part-time? Again...

S: Well, it would be valid for you, but can your co-op manage with that degree of interest or participation on your part? In other words, how many part-time workers can a co-op support or include without the co-op itself suffering? If too many people are only working part-time and not really involved with the running of the co-op, the co-op is inevitably going to suffer and the confidence of the few people who are running the whole thing may well be undermined.

Ratnapani: I think from experience the most important factor with part-timers is obviously one of numbers, but also [that] their attitude, when they are there, is full. And I get the impression in the Pure Land Co-op that - well, if they didn't have to do it, they wouldn't, but since they've got to they will, and they get the money and that's that. Which would be very disheartening for others. I've been working with a lot of volunteers and part-timers and all sorts on building, but they have all been enthusiastic. So it's excellent, and then it's fine.

S: If you get someone working just for the sake of a bit of pocket money, there'll be a sort of grudging attitude. They've got to come and work. They don't really want to. They need a bit of extra money, the co-op needs a bit of extra help, so they come along. That isn't really in the co-op spirit. And it's not going to be, in the long run, of much practical use. I definitely got that impression last year with some of the people working in the Cherry Orchard. There were reports which came back to me, mainly from people not really much connected with the Movement who had gone along and patronized the place and been served, and not very well served, or not even very well treated in a few cases. Clearly the problem was resentful workers, resentful staff. They didn't really want to be there. Presumably just there for the money.

Devapriya: So maybe, practically, rather than taking on a few people just for the help, to get the job done, you should actually allow it...

S: (interrupting) Do it yourself!

Devapriya: Well, do it yourself and accept that it will take longer but it will be a lot more sound. (General agreement.)

Ratnapani: We had this situation where we desperately needed people to work. A Friend wanted some money and asked if we could employ him but we said no because we didn't want someone who was only in it for the money. We just didn't want that sort of person around. We'd rather not do the job, almost.

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S: I think that's right.

Prasannasiddhi: In a way the money consideration should be quite low down in the values - well...

S: The ideal co-op member is the person who thinks: 'I'm involved with the Dharma, I'm involved with the FWBO, I really want to support the LBC. What is one way that I can do that? It being accepted that I also need something to live on but that what I really want to do is to help the LBC, OK, there's a vacancy in that co-op which is geared to supporting the LBC, so I'd like to join that co-op. Well, I like doing that work and I like some of the people in the co-op, and it's geared to supporting the LBC which is what I want to do. Therefore I would like to join that co-op and be a worker in it.'

Padmapani: But it does imply that you can't have rotten apples in the barrel.

S: Yes. I'm afraid there are quite a few rotten apples in some of the co-op barrels!

Padmavajra: So you come to the co-op primarily with the attitude of giving. You don't come at all with the attitude of [taking].

S: Certainly in so far as the LBC co-ops are concerned. Otherwise, if you're just living in the area, you are living on the fringes of the FWBO and you like it a bit but you're not all that involved and you think, 'Well, they're pleasant people, they let you get away with quite a lot, so it's quite easy working in one of their co-ops; and you get the money for a couple of days' work; well, OK, it's just down the road. They are nice easy-going people, they don't make you work too hard' - so, OK, you work a couple of days in the Cherry Orchard or somewhere else perhaps. That's not good enough.

Atula: The case now in the Cherry Orchard is that it seems to have taken a lot of beginners, which I think is quite good ...

S: Well, whether it's good or bad it's a question of proportion. If you've got too many beginners and not enough Order Members to give them contact, that's not a good arrangement. You'll spoil your beginners in that way. There are only two women Order Members working in the Cherry Orchard, and I don't think either is full-time, as far as I know.

Tejamati: One is full-time but the other one is very much part-time.

S: Now. So that's not a lot, with all those part-time workers.

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Devapriya: By extension, maybe, one could suggest - this would apply to joining a housing co-op, or the Phoenix Housing Co-op in particular - that unless one is in some way willing

and able to contribute to the situation in one way or another then there's, sort of, no vacancies.

S: Yes, indeed. Otherwise you're just filling your barrel with rotten apples, and if you have got one or two good ones in the barrel perhaps they'll be affected. Even you may be affected and just get a bit disgusted, a bit disillusioned, and then you're not able to give of your best. The Bengalis have a proverb which I always used to quote in India: 'Better no car than a bad car.' It's a bit like that with co-op workers.

Devapriya: Even if that doesn't happen, people are less and less going to want to give, because they're not having the inspiration, the vision of being co-operative.

Padmapani: This must be linked up with a strong community, then, mustn't it - this whole structure around the LBC?

S: Well, they are all interdependent, strong communities, strong Centres and strong co-ops.

Padmapani: Not just one particular strong Centre, in this case the ...

S: You said Centre. But there is only one Centre - the LBC.

Padmapani: Sorry, I mean Sukhavati community; only one strong community around that area. Or are all communities [strong]?

S: Well, the more strong communities there were, the better it would be.

Prasannasiddhi: I tend to feel that the aspect of community as part of a business is quite an important aspect. I think that the solid core of people in the business should not only be running a business and efficient at running a business, but they should also have an active concern with the actual people in the business. Because a business situation is - quite often the work isn't perhaps the most inspiring thing you could be doing, but the communication with the people in that business is something quite important. I think that the people running a business, as well as running a business, should also be in quite good contact with the members of the business and that may include being involved with them in activities outside the business, so that the communication within the business has more of a spiritual emphasis, as well as the work. It means then when you work you can work in a more [426] harmonious way. I think it helps with the workers being more keen to work if they are in good contact with the people running the business or leading in the business. It seems to affect the way they work, in a sense.

S: That means having an Order Member in the midst of Mitras, in practical terms, usually. I did get, at one point - maybe not so much now - the impression around the LBC that Order Members really would have liked to just hand over the co-ops to the Mitras, and sort of forget all about them and get on with their own interests; which didn't seem a very sensible attitude. But I did get this impression last year.

Tejamati: After Subhuti's article it did get a little bit like that.

S: Anyway, that's been corrected, I trust. Anyway, that has all arisen out of 'by supplying them with food and wages.' (Laughter.)

: Can we have an extra day on this?

S: Well, the principles are clear, aren't they? The most general principle of all is one which applies in co-ops, in communities, in the Order, the Movement generally; applies in everything: that you can't achieve anything unless you put yourself into it wholeheartedly. It shows itself when people try and set up a new Centre. They've got to go absolutely all out to set up that Centre, they've got to have no other interest for a few years. If you're trying to set up a new Centre, you've no time for private studies; you've no time to go to college; you've no time for girl friends, you've no time for boy friends. You've not got time for anything except setting up that Centre, and anything that is going to help you get that new Centre established and off the ground, so to speak. So with setting up a business that is going to be really successful: you've got to really put yourself into it. Or even running a big Centre like the LBC, not to speak of establishing it, even running it, some people - quite a good number of people - have got to put themselves into it wholeheartedly. It can't be just a part-time interest for the majority of people who are running it.

Devapriya: One thing that I see is that maybe instead of trying to expand everything in terms of the Centre we've rather got to come back on to our sort of foundation.

S: Well, you've got to do both, I'm afraid. But if the LBC doesn't expand it's not going to really succeed. It's got to expand. [There's] a lot of room for expansion. And more people have got to commit themselves to it, and therefore I don't feel that you can generate this kind of commitment and intensity of operating unless you live together [427] as a community. This is why I make the point that eventually the Sukhavati community will have to take over at least the main responsibility for running the LBC. It won't completely exclude other people who are not living in the Sukhavati community, but they will have the main responsibility. I think they'll have to take it on. Assuming, of course, that the community itself is in a position to do that. I think, apart from that structure, apart from being part of a community or having a community as a sort of base, it is going to be very difficult, in fact probably impossible, I think, for the LBC to reach its optimum functioning, or even a considerably higher degree of functioning. There must be a number of people who are thinking about the LBC all the time and who are living together.

Devapriya: And dreaming about it!

S: Yes!

Tejamati: I do already!

S: Dreams, not nightmares!

Prasannasiddhi: Also I think there needs to be respect between different people around a sort of given situation (general agreement). Say you are involved in a business, it is going to mean that your energy is going wholeheartedly into that, and you use the bulk of your energy during a day's work and you just won't have the energy to put into the Centre.

S: This is where Order Meetings come in, and people being part of a regular Chapter meeting or regional meeting, and letting it be known exactly where they are at and what they are putting their energy into.

Prasannasiddhi: Then people will have to respect that and not get on to people that they should be doing more when they have done a good day's work. And, in a way, in the evening you can't do any more than rest. Whereas, like, people running the Centre, their energy goes in the evening. (Laughter.)

Padmavajra: That's ideal. It doesn't work in practice!

Ratnapani: No, I find it more fun, actually, to do a day's work and then a night's work after it. It's not ideal but it gets your energies moving. There's loads more inside people than they think, actually, and until it is demanded of them I don't think they realize it is there, half the time.

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Padmavajra: Maybe you wouldn't expect it of Mitras. I mean, we don't expect it of Mitras.

S: Well, you don't even expect it of Order Members, but if they are able to function in that way so much the better.

Ratnapani: It's a bit like karate, though, in some respects. You think you've got a certain limit, and then the sensei sort of persuades you to do some more, and you've done it and what's more it didn't hurt, and your limit is extended.

S: But you don't do it every day?

Ratnapani: Oh, well, no. Perhaps not every day.

Padmapani: In that case you have great respect for the teacher.

S: (interrupting) Yes, there has to be a teacher.

Padmapani: You know that that person has more experience than you, and if he says you can go further, you go further and you experience that.

S: Well, some people would say that you can't put your full trust in these karate teachers and yoga teachers and so on! They don't always know exactly where you are at. There is that point to be considered, too.

Ratnapani: I wasn't talking about pushing others, I was talking about pushing myself. Telling others that they can do a six-day week - I was talking about myself.

Devapriya: Showing yourself that you can do an eight-day week!

Ratnapani: I usually do.

S: Anyway, let's go on to the next point: 'by tending them in sickness.' Perhaps we don't need to go into this very much, because whatever I said in connection with the spiritual community when I spoke about 'A Case of Dysentery' applies to a great extent within the co-ops. You don't just abandon your workers, or workers don't abandon one another, when they fall sick. You support them. You go and see them, give them moral support, keep in touch with them

when they're sick. Of course, no co-op that is wanting to function as a business can support too many sick people for too long. I mean you can't take on an invalid. It must just be a bout of sickness on the part of a normally healthy person. I mean you might, if they have to leave the co-op, keep in touch [429] in your personal capacity, but that's rather different. I mean the co-op would like to take a sort of humane attitude, but it can't go on supporting too many people who are off sick without the business, as such, just failing.

I think people must be much more conscientious, much more on the ball. This is going a bit off the track, but I was scrutinizing the auditors' report on Aid for India accounts, and it was really quite deplorable: people taking money out of the petty cash and not, say, putting a signed receipt or a proper voucher in, etc. etc. etc. - no need to go into details - but it seemed to be terrible slackness. And one can just see all that is tightened up. I suspect sometimes it is the same within the co-op.

Tejamati: Yes, it is, it's very difficult in some cases.

Devapriya: Maybe we can persuade you again to take a Co-op Day, or even weekend?

S: Maybe when I see the co-ops are functioning better, perhaps I'll be persuaded to. But I have laid down general principles, and I've got together with people from time to time. If they don't listen to what I've already said there is not much point in my going down and saying it all over again. I tend nowadays to take that view, as time is getting precious. 'To him that hath shall be given,' to quote the words of the Bible, '... but from him that hath not shall be taken away even that which he hath.' In other words it's the strong who are going to be helped, not the weak. If your co-op is sagging at the knees, don't ask me to come and help prop it up! But if it's really successful, I'll be glad to come along and...

: Rejoice.

S: - perhaps say a few words.

Padmapani: We certainly do rejoice in our merits for being invited on this seminar.

S: Good. Good. Anyway: 'by tending them in sickness' and 'by sharing with them any delicacies.' Well, one can imagine the original paternalistic context. But here it means, I suppose, that if the co-op has got a surplus - assuming the needs of the Centre are met - by all means give a bit extra to the workers, or the workers would be justified in giving a bit extra to themselves, but as it were equally. I say 'as it were' because it's not a question of a quantitative equality, of giving everybody exactly the same amount. But if there is anything over, say something for extras or - I won't say luxuries, but things which you could do without but which enhance life - by all means share out the profits among the workers. Or [430] the workers, as I said, would be justified in sharing it out among themselves. So that they gave themselves a bit more than the bare necessities of life. In other words, they would be able, it really means, not to indulge themselves in luxuries but to interpret their needs in, so to speak, a more liberal sense: that their needs were not simply shelter and food and clothing; their needs included books, their needs included tapes of seminars; and that money could be made available for the purchase of such things.

Tejamati: Ah! That's interesting. Are you saying that maybe it should not be included in basic support, that kind of thing? (Laughter.)

S: I'm not making any such statement! But I mean people need to be provided with food, clothing and shelter, and medicine, from a Buddhist point of view. Everything else is extra. But if the co-op is making a surplus, then the co-op member should feel at liberty to interpret 'needs' more liberally than just food, clothing, shelter and medicine, and provide money for books, flowers, incense etc. etc. Do you see what I mean?

Tejamati: ... to interpret that ...

S: But you would seem to be including already in basic support what would be included here under 'delicacies'.

Tejamati: Yes, yes, I see ...

S: You are already providing delicacies, as it were, as part of the basic support which, perhaps, they are really not.

Padmapani: It sounds like you are going to take part back!

S: In other words, you are almost adopting the Oscar Wilde principle that 'I can do without necessities but I can't do without luxuries'. (?) (Laughter.)

Padmapani: Classic, isn't it?

Ratnapani: And retreats, I suppose, go in with that level, for us, of a necessity?

S: Yes - no; I think that necessities are definitely material necessities, otherwise where is the end of the other necessities? I mean a complete recording of all Haydn's symphonies might be a necessity!

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Ratnapani: I meant with regard to retreats; in practice they seem to go in with the rest of it as a necessity.

S: I think this comes under another heading. It will be the next one. We might as well go on to that, then: 'by granting them leave at times.' It doesn't say anything about paid leave; it doesn't say whether it's paid or unpaid. But 'by granting them leave at times'; and perhaps that could be included. I think from a Buddhist point of view it wouldn't be a truly Right Livelihood situation if from time to time it was not possible for you to be spared so that you could go on retreat. There might be times when you'd have to just work and forget about time off, and even forget about retreats, but not for more than a few months, at the very most.

Atula: You'd soon dry up.

S: Well, some people would; not necessarily everybody. Some people thrive on work, can't get enough of it. There are one or two such people even in the FWBO! (Muffled laughter.) Anyway, let's knock off for a cup of tea now. I think we deserve it.

(Break in recording. When it resumes, para (i) and part of para (ii) of the next section have been omitted.)

But you see what I'm getting at? By way of a general sort of psychological principle - that everybody is holding back, everybody wants to do less, or everybody is afraid that he may be doing more than somebody else. So to counter that you should be thinking if anything in terms of doing more than others. Or at the very least not thinking in terms of doing less than anybody else.

Devapriya: Well, there's no stretch then, is there? - leaving aside other people, just try and do more than you are, you yourself, just...

S: You shouldn't leave things to other people. This is what happens when you don't accept full responsibility yourself. One does find this happening, I think, within co-ops. A lot of people perhaps are quite indifferent to the co-op as a whole, are just concerned with doing their bit and no more than is really necessary and just drawing their money and that's that. If too many people develop that attitude, it starts affecting others, and they start thinking, 'Well, those people aren't doing very much but they're getting their money just the same; why should I work twice as hard as they seem to be working? I'm getting no more money than they are.' That sort of spirit, that sort of attitude starts developing, and it's very undermining. So if you don't put yourself thoroughly into the co-op you'll always have one eye on the other man [432] to make sure you're not doing more than he's doing; and that's a really dreadful attitude in any such situation.

Atula: I don't think ... understand.

Padmapani: It does mean you've got to have a very thorough moral and ethical basis, and also there is an element of...

Atula: I'm not so sure that is true actually, that you've got to have - because some I don't know, it just seems that some people do have to put themselves wholeheartedly into things. They don't have to have some ...

: Well, they've already got it.

Atula: I don't know, it's...

S: You don't necessarily consciously think of the principles that you are putting into practice. Every time you tell the truth you don't think, 'Oh well, telling the truth is a good thing and I've got to do that.' You just do it. You are trained to do that. The work of education has already been done.

Atula: Yes, because some people do actually just throw themselves into what they are doing. It doesn't seem often as though they have much thought about ...

S: Well, if you do throw yourself into things you don't need to think about it. But if you aren't throwing yourself into things then you need to think about it, so that you start understanding the principle involved and putting it into practice.

Padmapani: Maybe I was coming a bit from the negative, but it seems more like that: people need to be trained in moral and ethical values. I think you're talking about a minority.

Atula: Well, no, I don't think so.

Padmapani: Oh, come on, there's loads of...

S: Well, if you practise any moral quality naturally, you don't need to learn it, but if you don't, if you're not in the happy position of practising it naturally, out of your existing level of spiritual development, you need to learn it and you need to be taught it. And such people are in the majority.

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Padmapani: It is a matter of sometimes keep going back over the same ground.

S: Yes, and reminding yourself.

And then, '(iii) they take only what is given', which suggests they are satisfied with what is given. They don't try to take extra. There are all sorts of ways of taking extra: by arriving at work late; by going early; by borrowing money from the petty cash and forgetting to repay it. You actually take more than is given when you don't do a proper day's work, so to speak. You are not necessarily connecting a specific wage with a specific amount of work, but it's understood, if you work in a co-op, that you work wholeheartedly; that your day's work is a day's work.

Dhammarati: Is this sort of attitude only possible if you've got the reciprocity? I was going over ... was coming to the LBC, and he reckoned that it's an absolute mug's game; as an employer, the more and more he made available to them the more and more and more [they] ...

S: Well, I'm talking about the co-op situation specifically here. Very often, unfortunately, in ordinary businesses, it's a question of who can exploit the other party most. If that's the attitude it is a very bad working situation indeed for everybody concerned; and one that, as a Buddhist, one should get out of as quickly as possible. It mustn't creep into a co-op. It's again trying to do as little as possible, to get away with as little as possible. If you do less than is rightfully expected of you, then actually you are taking what is not given. If you know you've lengthened your tea break or your lunch break - all these sort of things - you're doing less work, you're putting less into it. It's a really quite sickening and quite disgusting attitude when people are always trying to give as little as possible, and put into something as little energy as they can possibly get away with. That's really bad. If you don't feel enthusiastic about what you're doing, get out. That seems to be the best thing you can do for that business perhaps, in the long run; just leave it, if your heart isn't in it and you can't really give yourself to the situation. That's not to say that you should be, that you can be expected to be, equally enthusiastic every day. You have your ups and downs as a human being, but your intention is to put as much of your energy [and] work into that business as you possibly can. You don't want to hold anything back. You want to give as much as you can. It's really dreadful having people around you thinking more in terms of giving as little as possible.

Ratnapani: It is sort of disgusting, isn't it?

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S: Yes. Well, I mean, they've no self-respect. They're mean. They're cheats, you could say.

Ratnapani: They can't - there's not even communication with such a person.

S: They don't care for their fellow workers. They're selfish. They're individualistic. They're childish. They're infantile. One can say all those things - yes! (Laughter.) You can repeat this, if you like, and play this part of the tape back to them, if you know who those people are, if you can identify any of them.

Dhammarati: Does this principle have an application beyond the co-ops? Is this a way of improving a work situation? Can one ... employee take it upon himself to improve his work situation by applying these principles?

S: I think you can, but I get the impression - judging from things I hear on the radio and such things - that if one particular employee tried, he'd be very unpopular with a lot of his workmates. I have heard stories of new workers being told, 'Come on, don't work so hard, otherwise the boss will give us more work to do. You know, make it last the whole day.' And he wants to finish it in an hour. He feels like finishing it. He's got lots of youthful energy; and the other workers say, 'Slow down, slow down, you're going too fast. We don't want to be given any more work today.'

Padmavajra: I've actually heard that said in a co-op.

S: Oh dear!

Padmavajra: An Order Member told me that he was really working quite hard and he wanted to work hard, and the Order Member who was actually managing the business came up and told him to slow down, from the point of view that he thought he wasn't pacing himself properly; but, knowing that person, it seemed a bit suspect - it seemed as though he was holding back, a bit threatened by the fact that he was working so hard.

Dhammarati: I'm sorry to ... on this, but I just wondered what the implication is ... I know that that attitude of a feeling of caution isn't as bloody-minded as to some extent it [seems], because historically employers have demanded so much for so little.

S: Yes. Anyway, I didn't actually finish what I was going to say. If you are just one person, say, working in a firm, an ordinary business firm, [435] and you try to apply this sort of attitude with the hope of encouraging a more reasonable and human approach on the part of your boss, you may be able to do it if there are just a small number of workers and if you have direct personal contact with the boss. But I think if it's a big situation, a lot of workers already into bad working habits, and the boss is quite remote - maybe you never even see him - I think it won't work. I think, therefore, the best thing you could do would be to withdraw.

Atula: There's usually two levels - the worker and the management.

Dhammarati: And maybe it's too abstract. For me that raises the question that if you're talking about, in the long run, a new society, how do you change institutions like that? Most people work in those situations: how do you gradually get the shift from...

S: I think you can't, within that particular sort of situation, that sort of structure. You have to close the structure down. I mean how can you exert personal influence, especially personal

ethical influence, if you can't even meet the people that you want to influence? Well, perhaps you could; perhaps you could insist on an interview with the boss. Some people have got more boldness and self-confidence than others. Perhaps you could; perhaps you're a good speaker, perhaps you could insist on meeting the boss and put it to him. You might even have some success. It's not impossible. You could try. You might find that bureaucracy bogged you down more than actual ill will.

Devapriya: Taking this particular situation of co-ops with regard to the Centre - if that is where they are giving their energy, moneys and so on, would the Centre Council be seen as the boss? I know this, maybe it's been a...

S: Order Members - they are responsible for the running of the Centre. They are responsible, I hope, for the running of the co-ops. The nearest Order Member is the man to see, I would have thought; especially, perhaps, one especially concerned with what you are actually doing. If you're a Mitra, you presumably have got those connections with certain Order Members. Or it could be that the boss, so to speak, in the administrative sense - but bearing in mind it's the co-op as a whole that has the responsibility for the co-op. If there is anything wrong with the co-op, in a sense, it is the responsibility of all the co-op members. There is no boss to go to except the whole of members of the co-op. It rests with them. Success or failure rests with them. Because even the manager is only carrying out their brief.

Devapriya: When you have that connection with a Centre, though, it's not autonomous in its own right.

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S: No, it's not spiritually autonomous, but it may well be, under the present set-up, organizationally autonomous. I mean the Council is not going to tell you which particular kind of beans to buy. It is not going to tell you what particular kind of beans is more profitable. If you have any doubts or complaints about that sort of matter, you will have to take it to the whole body of co-op members. No use carrying it to the Council.

Devapriya: I know in the past that was a split - [they] felt that there were orders coming down from above.

S: I'm afraid under the existing set-up people always seem to have this impression, even when it's quite false, or not justified, of orders coming down from above. I think this is part, very often, of people's own personal hang-ups, psychological conditioning and reactions and so on. But, clearly, if they have that impression, you have to do something about it to resolve it. But it very often is their personal problem. It can only be resolved if there is closer personal contact.

Devapriya: That's why it seems to happen ... under-communication ... very quickly.

S: It doesn't have to be communication about co-op matters but just communication on the personal level.

Padmapani: I think it's very much down to friendship.

S: Yes.

Padmapani: It is very much down to friendship. I experienced this up in Glasgow. A particular Order Member ... the building, in the Glasgow Centre and because I related through friendship he could relate to me, although he was having difficulties with everyone else, but that was all right.

S: Not that you knew more about such matters but just that you were better friends with him. Anyway, 'they take only what is given.' The more positive counterpart of that is that they don't hold back. They put themselves wholly into the situation. And therefore, as iv) says, 'they perform their duties well.' Again, this goes without saying. Whether it's a co-op situation, a Centre, a community, put yourself thoroughly into it. Be a perfectionist.

(Break in recording.)

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.. nature is that people don't always learn very easily, and constant repetition of principles is necessary. I remember the time when the majority of Order Members - it was quite a small Order then - seemed to have great difficulty in distinguishing between your membership of the Western Buddhist Order and your membership of a particular Centre of the FWBO. This was explained over and over again. It was long, in the case of a lot of people, [before they could take it] in. Even at a comparatively recent date, some Order Members seemed to think that to resign from a particular FWBO was somehow tantamount to resigning from the Order. Someone, in fact, said to me that he didn't want to be involved with a particular FWBO any longer. And I said, 'Well, why don't you resign?' He said, 'Oh, I don't want to resign from the Order.' This is comparatively recently.

So I remember how long it took to hammer in this principle that your membership of the Order is quite a separate thing from your membership of a particular FWBO. You may or may not, as an Order Member, belong to an FWBO. The fact that you are a member of an FWBO does not make you any more of an Order Member than if you are not. It does not make you any less of an Order Member. It took years to hammer ...

Tape 19, Side A

S: So therefore, in the case of people working in co-ops, don't take it for granted that they understand all the principles involved. They may know nothing about co-ops or your conception of co-ops. You've got to educate them. You've got to go on repeating and repeating and dinning these principles into their ears until they are firmly implanted in their minds.

: In their subconscious minds.

S: Well, in their conscious minds first. Otherwise, Mrs What's-her-name living down the road who has started coming along to classes - she likes the FWBO; she doesn't even know anything about the FWBO except it's some vaguely Buddhist group - and she sees there's a vacancy in the Cherry Orchard, and she thinks it would be a good idea to work there: as I said before, friendly people, a bit of money. What does she know about the principles of the co-op? Someone's got to explain them. And ideally that's an Order Member, a well-briefed Order Member. Otherwise, if the people working for - and especially working in - the co-ops as members of the co-ops don't understand the basic ethical and organizational principles in accordance with which a co-op functions, how can you hope to run the co-op successfully and

have a general understanding of things and a good spirit?

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Padmavajra: It seems to be the problem where the Order Members aren't actually clear on the principles.

S: Or not actually present. You've got a well-meaning, perhaps, Mitra, trying to give his or her idea of what a co-op is all about, and perhaps hopelessly wrong. So this needs to be looked after. Anyway, that was just in passing.

And then, fifthly, 'they uphold his good name and fame.' I think this is important. And I think I'll come straight to the point here, because one does find sometimes people, say, working in co-ops just running down that particular co-op and grumbling; the same even with Centres and communities. So you should 'uphold the good name and fame' of your co-op, which doesn't mean blowing its trumpet unnecessarily or taking an exaggerated view of its importance or beauty, but being proud of it. I mean if you're not proud of it why do you belong to it? You shouldn't work for something that you can't feel proud to work for. You shouldn't have to feel apologetic about your co-op or your Centre or your community. If you feel that way, well, do something about it, quickly, to raise the level, so that you can be proud of it and speak well of it. And I would apply this principle to the FWBO generally; if you can't feel you can speak well of the FWBO when you go outside, feel proud to belong to it, well, what's the point of belonging to it, unless you're prepared to make a really all-out effort to raise the level? Do you see what I mean? But don't take the attitude: 'Oh, it's not much of a co-op, and, yes, there's not much going on, people are pretty awful but anyway I'm working there for a while, just for the time being. Just need a bit of money so that I can go to Greece.' You should be proud of your co-op and proud of working in it.

Devapriya: Or if you do have criticisms you are willing and able to do something about it.

S: You don't air it outside the co-op; you bring it up in the proper place to the proper people, with the idea of whatever is wrong, if it is wrong, being rectified, in everybody's interests. Anyway: 'The servants and employees thus ministered to as the Nadir show their compassion towards him in these five ways. Thus is the nadir covered by him and made safe and secure.' So there is quite a bit here that is relevant to co-ops. You could give a whole - well, you could probably give two lectures, two talks at least, on these two groups of requirements. Perhaps one of you will.

Right, let's go on to the zenith.

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In five ways, young householder, should a householder minister to ascetics and brahmins as the Zenith:

- (i) by lovable deeds,
- (ii) by lovable words,
- (iii) by lovable thoughts,
- (iv) by keeping open house to them,
- (v) by supplying their material needs.

S: Don't be misled by the word 'ascetics'. It's sramanas in the original - sramanas and brahmanas. This is a well-known phrase, or well-known compound, in Pali Buddhist

literature. Sramanas are sort of non-Vedic religious people and the brahmanas are the Vedic religious people, roughly, one can say. The sramanas were roughly co-extensive with the wanderers, the non-brahmin wanderers; they didn't accept the Vedas, didn't accept the superiority of the brahmins, didn't accept the caste system, and just wandered, either looking for a teacher or, having found one, practising his teaching. And the brahmins, of course, were, well, just the brahmins. A few were wanderers, but most of them were householders who lived at home, either teaching students or performing Vedic rituals.

Atula: So the Buddha is saying there that ... involved in the tradition ...

S: The Buddha is here using the phrase sramana brahmana just to indicate or suggest those who are devoted to the spiritual life, whether within the sramanic or brahmanic tradition. He's speaking here of spiritual teachers in general, and he's using the current phrase.

: [He] expressed quite a liberal attitude towards ...

S: One could say that, yes, but bearing in mind that the Buddha sometimes referred to bhikkhus as brahmins in the true sense. Even the arhant is called 'the brahmin.' In the Dhammapada there's a section on the bhikkhu and there's a section on the brahmin, and the Buddha says much the same things about both of them, or about each of them. So first of all 'he should minister to them by lovable deeds, lovable words, lovable thoughts.' It's not so much 'lovable' as 'loving', and the word for lovable is here metta. It's with actions, words and thoughts of metta. That's quite interesting. There are several implications here. In other words, the attitude to begin with towards those who are spiritually superior, those who are spiritual teachers, should be one of emotional [440] positivity. It should be one of friendliness, should be one of love, so to speak. You notice the Buddha doesn't say respect or faith, he says metta. Do you think there's any significance in that?

Padmavajra: That paying respect will arise out of metta.

S: Yes, will arise out of closer contact with them. You don't know to begin with, perhaps, whether they are really deserving of respect or faith, but at least you're prepared to feel metta. You do feel metta. And as you get to know them better, more deeply, as genuine communication is established, that metta may well be transformed into sraddha. But the point is that sraddha cannot be expected of you immediately. It would not be right, it would not be fair, to expect you to feel sraddha towards some brahmana or sramana whom you did not in fact know. Sraddha must be based upon your personal experience of him, arising out of your personal contact. So have metta, yes, even from afar; but have sraddha only upon closer acquaintance.

Padmapani: How do you spell sraddha, Bhante?

S: S.R.A.D.D.H.A.

Prasannasiddhi: This in a way harks back to the very beginning of the sutta, when Sigala doesn't want to worship the...

S: Yes. Well, according to the commentary he's not keen on going to see monks, bhikkhus, because he may have to show them respect. Well, yes, he will have to show them respect and

perhaps he doesn't yet feel ready for that, but it's putting things perhaps from Sigala's point of view rather than, say, his father's.

Padmavajra: It takes away any kind of possibility, if you start with metta, of seeing a spiritual teacher in authoritarian terms.

S: So many followers of different teachers, of gurus, will tell you, as soon as they tell you about this wonderful teacher, [that] you're supposed to feel respect for him. But that cannot be expected, not at that early stage. The most that can be expected, or all that can be expected, is good will. You have good will towards him as you have towards anybody else. You may note the fact that he has a great reputation for this, a great reputation for that but personal faith on your part cannot be expected simply on the basis of his reputation.

Of course, apart from that, it does sometimes happen - we know from the biographies of spiritual teachers themselves - that sometimes great faith arises on their simply hearing the name of a great teacher, as I think [441] was the case with Marpa and Milarepa or, rather, Milarepa and Marpa; but that is quite exceptional. That belongs to a different order of experience altogether. But no one can insist that, because he believes that someone is a great spiritual teacher and he is his particular teacher, you must accept that person as a great spiritual teacher and feel corresponding respect. Good will can be expected inasmuch as you are a human being and he's a human being, but no more than that. I think that is a quite important point.

But if the metta is there, faith will arise spontaneously out of the metta once the real personal contact is made, if there is any basis, any justification, for that faith arising. That sort of faith cannot be demanded. You can't say to anybody, for instance: 'You must have faith in Jesus Christ,' or 'You must have faith in the great guru So-and-so,' - or the great teacher or the great lama or the great reincarnate lama So-and-so - 'you must have faith because he's this or because he's that.' That shows extraordinary insensitivity and lack of spiritual understanding.

Dhammarati: It's amazingly liberating just having that amount of responsibility given to you.

S: But it may be that that particular teacher is worthy of faith; you're not saying he isn't. You remain open as regards that possibility; he may be. But until you can actually feel that through your personal contact, you direct metta towards him. You can't really honestly experience faith or be expected to experience faith. As I say, note the fact that people that you respect have got great respect for him. Well, yes, you can take that into consideration and think it very likely that he is what he's said to be. But you can't feel personal faith without some degree of personal contact.

So 'by lovable words', or rather loving deeds, loving words, loving thoughts - deeds, words and thoughts of metta - that's how the young householder should minister - that's how a householder should minister - to sramanas and brahmanas at the Zenith. In a way, it's a bit contradictory. Here they are, they're at the Zenith. They are above you, admittedly, but all you are being asked to feel for them or express towards them is metta - not faith, not at this point. The Buddha is only saying be kind to sramanas and brahmanas; be kind. He's not saying necessarily believe in them; be kind to them.

One has encountered this very much in India. You meet someone who's full of enthusiasm about his guru and wants to convert you to be a follower of his guru, and he's astounded that you don't, as soon as you hear the name of this guru, want to involve yourself as his disciple. They seem sometimes to overlook the fact that you might have a guru already, [442] which shows really a great disrespect on their part, you might say, for your guru or for you, to ignore

or brush aside the fact that you have a teacher already in whom you have faith.

Padmavajra: Very often in that situation ... I've encountered particularly disciples of Tibetan teachers - they've had absolutely no personal contact with the particular teacher but they seem to expect because he's a specialist in ... that immediately you should have a great devotion and you should be seeking teaching from him. I've had people get quite upset when that isn't your response.

S: Well, I made this point on a seminar which I've just been editing - years ago, but you may remember it. (Padmavajra was there, actually.) Sometimes people try to impress you: 'Oh, this lama is the sixth incarnation, the seventh, the thirteenth incarnation of such-and-such teacher!' and I say, 'Well, if you're thinking in terms of those sort of claims, what about Christianity? The present Archbishop of Canterbury is the one hundred and second Archbishop of Canterbury, and the pope is the three hundred and somethingth pope. What could be more impressive than that, if you're going in for that sort of thing?' (Laughter.) We have got something in the West, even if it has gone a bit wrong - you see what I mean? If you're after authority, which is what it basically is, well, there are very powerful religious authorities around in the West, if you're looking for that sort of thing, very long established. Supposing an English bishop, say the Bishop of Winchester or somewhere like that, was introduced to an Eastern gathering: 'This is the Bishop of Winchester. He is the ...' - well, he must be probably nearly as anciently established as the Archbishop of Canterbury - 'he's the ninety-fifth Bishop of Winchester.' And all those Easterners say, 'Oh, he is the ninety-fifth! There have been 95 of them! All that spiritual power handed down! You know, 95 generations of bishops!' Well, we know what bishops of the Church of England are like, or at least we've got some idea, though not quite of that sort. But then when it all comes in lamas' robes and things people expect us to swallow it, when we've already rejected that sort of thing in Christianity.

Prasannasiddhi: Although the lamas of the present day are presumably putting forward a different case than actually the situation of the bishops.

S: Yes. In the case of the lamas it is reincarnation. But if you want to follow with regard to the bishops, well, there is the apostolic succession coming right down from Christ himself - the Holy Ghost, the Holy Spirit, transmitted from Christ to the first of the Apostles by laying on of hands. [443] They laid their hands on the next generation of disciples, who became the first bishops. They laid their hands on the next generation of bishops, right down to the present. That's the Catholic and Anglican and Orthodox teaching. So you can make that sound very impressive: the same 'Holy Ghost' has come down all those centuries, through all those bishops, and it can come down to you if you're received into the Church and are confirmed. That same bishop will lay his holy hands on your head and - I won't say receive you into the Church because you were received on your baptism - but confirm you in your membership of the Church. What could be more wonderful than that? I mean, it's better than any wong, you could say, any Tantric initiation. You could make out that sort of case to susceptible Eastern people interested in Christianity. It's basically an appeal to authority, which really has, in that sort of way, no place within a spiritual tradition or spiritual life.

Padmavajra: I get the impression that a lot of Westerners involved particularly in Tibetan Buddhism have that attitude. That's a fundamental kind of motivation or a kind of bias.

S: Then you hear people, for instance, say about the Karmapas, 'It is a very powerful lineage!', but [from] the way they say 'powerful' you know what they are after: power, you know, (laughter), spiritual power, psychic power, Tantra. You know, 'Padmasambhava. It's all power. It's a very powerful lineage!' Well, what do they mean by that - a powerful lineage? As though he has got a particularly sort of effective recipe that's been handed down from father to son; or where they've got a big sort of vajra. (Laughter.) It's almost like that. It's so childish when you really think about it, really childish.

Padmavajra: Are the Tibetans themselves like that about it, or do you think it is the sort of - ?

S: I'm afraid there's a bit of that in the thinking of some of the Tibetans. They take things a bit literally, as so often people do. You can't blame them too much. Sometimes I think the FWBO is the only sane Buddhist organization.

Padmapani: It is, isn't it?

S: Well, I hope it isn't the only one. I would be really sorry to think that. But sometimes I wonder.

Anyway, 'by deeds, words and thoughts of metta; by keeping open house to them.' What does that mean, do you think?

Atula: Receptivity to -

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S: One could say in the broadest sense receptivity. Allowing them access to the house, welcoming them, being hospitable to them; not making excuses that you haven't got any time or that you're not at home; letting them come in. It's more than receptivity in a way; it's allowing them to enter in. Your home is your hearth, you know, it's where your heart is, where you live. It's allowing whatever they represent right into your life, being open to them.

Dhammarati: It's the first part of the Puja - ... a distinguished guest.

S: Yes, indeed.

And 'by supplying their material needs.' This is in the context of the monk/layman binary, one might say, or dichotomy even, one might say. Those who are working and earning support, those who are leading, so to speak, a full-time spiritual life.

I'm not too happy about this aspect of things, I must say, within the FWBO context. No doubt there are good reasons why some people should be supported to study or to meditate, but I'm a bit wary of allowing as it were a particular almost class of people to arise who are the full-timers and supported by the others. I think it's more a question of you're all in it together, you're all committed to the Three Jewels. There's a certain amount of spare time available or a certain amount of support available; it should be distributed around, I won't say equally, but to those who really can make the best use of it - though there may be some people who make such good use of it that they really need to be supported in that way indefinitely. But becoming this, that or the other should never mean that support is automatically guaranteed. I think this is what I'm getting at; for instance, you become a monk in Ceylon, regardless of your fitness, and you can expect to be supported for the rest of your life. I don't think support should be automatic because of certain professions on your part.

Devapriya: It does seem that there's some sort of jobs, positions, offices, which almost preclude you having enough time to make a livelihood.

S: I think they do, yes. I think that's true; though I wouldn't exactly say jobs or livelihoods; it's things you're occupied with, like full-time writing, meditation. But nonetheless I think we must be very careful within the FWBO not to allow a sort of class of people to develop - class in the sense that you can become a member of that class by some external means, [so that] you are supported because of your status as it were, not because of what you actually are and what you are actually doing.

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Ratnapani: But in practice, surely, as Devapriya was saying, status goes along with position - status if you are a secretary or a treasurer or a chairman. And along with that go demands which will take up all your time.

S: Yes. No, the sort of situation that I'm thinking of would be: supposing somebody is elected as secretary but doesn't ever do any secretary's work. It shouldn't be that somebody is elected as secretary and regardless of whether he does actually do a secretary's work he is supported, just because he has been elected to that position. That's a bit like someone, say, in Ceylon becoming a bhikkhu and being supported even though he doesn't study the Dharma, doesn't meditate and doesn't teach.

Ratnapani: Or if someone has had a position of great responsibility, no longer has it, could work, but still expects to be supported when he's got nothing else to do. He's sort of reached that class and can never crawl out of it again.

S: Yes, yes.

Ratnapani: You do have that status in the Order, I think.

S: I think it is quite important that those who are in, or who vacate, responsible positions act in such a way as to counteract any such impression or in such a way as to prevent any such sort of precedent being set up. As though you've worked for a couple of years as a Chairman so you can't go back to being an ordinary Order Member. That sort of attitude, if it does exist ever, should be nipped in the bud.

Padmapani: It does imply, though, that people actually do get inflated by their positions.

S: I think sometimes people do - or maybe not get inflated always, but identify themselves with their positions and carry them around with them. I mean this happens in India. I've pointed out [that] in official life if you are, for instance, the postmaster, you're the postmaster when you go to a social function; and if the district postmaster is there, he's given a higher position in the function than you, because you're only the ordinary postmaster. And it applies in all sorts of ranks and grades. So that you carry your government position over into ordinary social life and are deferred to accordingly. This is one of the things we've been up against in our own work in India, because Mr So-and-so, who happens to be a big government official, comes along and expects to be seated up on the platform with the bhikkhus and anagarikas and so on. And people expect him to be seated there. If you try to put him down [446] even on a chair in the front, there will be a certain amount of resistance, and you may earn his ill

will - that you don't give him the recognition in a Buddhist function according to his government position.

So I've explained, for instance, that in England, even if, say, a cabinet minister attended a religious meeting, unless it was an official occasion, he'd just take his seat like an ordinary person and wouldn't expect any special treatment. This is almost unthinkable for the average Indian. They can't imagine such a democratic state of affairs. Even a very small official will get as much mileage as he can out of the fact that he holds that particular post and will expect deference from other people on all occasions; not just when he's in his office or when they come to him in his office.

It's a bit tied up with the caste system: if you belong to a particular caste you belong to it for all purposes and on all occasions. The same with your official position.

Padmapani: I think that is also one of the factors whereby trouble in the co-op happens, because people do have authority hang-ups.

S: Yes, on both sides of the divide, so to speak. That is why I emphasize that at an Order meeting the fact that you are a chairman or a secretary is quite irrelevant, unless you've got particular knowledge on that account which might be useful when a certain discussion comes up. But you are there just as an Order Member. That's why at the very beginning, when we started having these Order weekends, it seemed to be expected at that time, I remember, that the Chairmen should take it in turns to chair the Order weekends. But I made the point that, no, let the very junior Order Members chair the Order weekends, because after all it's just Order Members; they're easy enough to keep in order. Also to reinforce the fact that the chairman is not a chairman on all occasions. Let the chairman be there just as an ordinary Order Member, so to speak. Therefore I said, 'Let junior Order Members chair the Order weekends.' And that is what has usually happened; and now, of course, chairmen usually are quite pleased not to have any responsibility at that weekend.

But that was the tendency at the time - that people seemed to expect, and I think chairmen seemed to expect, that they would chair the Order weekends. They got accustomed to being in that sort of position of, so to speak, authority.

That's why I want in each Chapter that there should be a sort of 'Father of the Chapter' with whom I deal as such, and that he should not be the chairman of the local Centre. I don't want the chairman to be [447] automatically the leader where the Chapter is concerned - to concentrate too much as it were authority in one person.

Devapriya: Is that part of the reason for having sort of two-part Council meetings at one time? Part was formal business and the other part was construed as an Order meeting.

S: I'm not sure. I don't know, because I didn't suggest this. I think maybe it was more to discuss things like perhaps Mitra requests and things of that sort. I think - I'm not sure about that.

Dhammarati: ... took minutes ... second part.

S: And also there might have been at times some people attending Council meetings who were not Order Members, and it would be appropriate at certain points for them to withdraw and let the Order Members discuss certain things on their own.

So by all means supply the material needs of people who are engaged full-time in, say, meditation, study and so on. But it should never be sort of automatic on account of a certain

supposed status, irrespective of what the person is actually doing.

Atula: The sort of thing about letting people who have, say, artistic abilities - I wondered if [for their] talent or whatever to develop they do need, given their circumstances, it would be good if they could be supported.

S: It would be good if everybody could be supported except those who need to work for psychological reasons! But resources are limited, so we have to establish an order of priorities.

Atula: I know it's been a particular difficulty in the past, so people have come to expect...

S: Well, at the very beginning people couldn't support me. I wasn't supported by the FWBO for the first few years. I was supported by certain friends privately. Anyway, we are moving on, aren't we, quite well? Let's go on to the concluding section.

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The ascetics and brahmins thus ministered to as the Zenith by a householder show their compassion towards him in six ways:

- (i) they restrain him from evil,
- (ii) they persuade him to do good,
- (iii) they love him with a kind heart,
- (iv) they make him hear what he has not heard,
- (v) they clarify what he has already heard,
- (vi) they point out the path to a heavenly state.

S: It's much the same as in the case of the secular teachers and even the parents. 'They restrain him from evil; they persuade him to do good; they love him with a kind heart.' This is not actually mentioned in connection with teachers, is it, and parents? Not quite in those terms, anyway. Let's look at the Pali. (Looks it up.) Yes, the wording is the same: papa n..., kalyanamanasa anukampanti (?) Yes, 'they love him with a kind heart.' 'Kind heart' is not kalyanamanasa - what does Rhys Davids say? 'They love him with kindly thoughts' - no, the word is kalyanamanasa: kalyana, a spiritual mind; a lovely mind, a spiritual mind. It's kalyana as in kalyana mitrata. And it's anukampanti; I talked about this the other day. It's not quite [kind], it's more like sympathy, vibrating in accordance with: 'they sympathize with him with a spiritual mind.' You could paraphrase it more like that, or you can translate it more like that. Do you see what I mean? Or, if you like, even: 'they feel sympathy for him with a spiritual mind, with a lovely mind.' It may be just 'positive' - 'with a positive mind,' emotionally positive, spiritually positive.

It's interesting, kalyanamanasa: kalyana, a spiritual mind, just like kalyanamitrata, spiritual friendship. It's the same word. You could even say 'they love him with a spiritual love'; you could even render it like that.

'They make him hear what he has not heard' and 'they clarify what he has already heard'; in other words, they teach him. 'They point out the path to a heavenly state'. Well, they are not represented here as doing anything more than secular teachers and parents have already done. In a way, that's interesting. There are further stages ahead, but the Buddha is as it were addressing a householder. But it is as though the influence of the parents, the secular teachers and the spiritual teachers is all tending in the same direction. Whatever you hear from your parents you hear even more forcibly from your secular teachers as regards [449] ethical

matters, and whatever you've heard from your ethical teachers is reinforced and carried even further by your spiritual teachers.

Padmapani: A sort of hierarchical tier, in a way.

S: Yes. Not that they contradict whatever you've heard, not that you make a sudden new departure. They are carrying you forward a stage further. They are reinforcing what you have already learned, what you've already heard; they are clarifying it, they are refining it. You are passed as it were from the hands of your affectionate parents to the hands of your affectionate secular teachers, and finally from their hands to the hands of your affectionate spiritual guides. There's no conflict; all is harmony. They are all co-operating, doing the same work as it were on different levels.

So 'In these six ways do ascetics and brahmins show their compassion towards the householder who ministers to them as the Zenith. Thus is the Zenith covered by him and made safe and secure.' Any further point arising out of those six qualities?

Dhammarati: The first section (?) is in six qualities; everything else is ... five.

S: Hm, I don't know whether there's any significance to that. One could, of course, make one out of two: one could say 'they restrain him from evil and persuade him to do good.' Or even 'they make him hear what he has not heard and clarify what he has already heard.' It wouldn't be difficult to make five if one really wanted to.

Atula: Six points seems to sum up.

Devapriya: A technical point about the last point, (vi) 'the path to a heavenly state.' The other day we came across it in the secular teacher, I think.

S: Yes.

Devapriya: Only I've felt for quite some time - I understood that the sort of path to heaven and the path to nirvana were actually two different paths; it was like an either/or situation.

S: Well, that isn't the case. I did touch upon this, didn't I, some days ago? Because the dhyanas correspond to heavenly states, but from the dhyanas you go on to develop Insight.

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Devapriya: Yes, but the idea has been, as I've understood it, that the dhyanas are going too far into the hedonistic and that is to be avoided, and that the true path is somewhere else.

S: It's not that the true Path is somewhere else, but that you don't exhaust the Path by simply traversing the dhyanas. The dhyanas are still mundane, you still have further to go. The Transcendental Path lies beyond. But for the vast majority of people - perhaps for all people - it lies through at least some experience of the dhyanas.

Padmapani: What does it mean, Bhante, at the very bottom where it says 'the Zenith is covered by him and made safe and secure'?

S: That no danger will come from that quarter.

Atula: In iv) and v) he pushes home the point that he's making earlier - that just because you tell someone once it's not necessarily going to sort of make any difference.

S: Yes. Yes. I've sometimes wondered recently whether we do this sufficiently within the FWBO generally - especially at Centres, in classes: just remind people sufficiently of basic fundamental principles. Perhaps we take a lot for granted.

Devapriya: An attitude of one particular Mitra - at least to some degree - which other people do as well, is: 'I've heard it all before. We've done that.' You've done it once or twice, or three times even, and that's as if it's been done. But I'm finding more and more that I'm reading over the same ground again, and again, and again.

S: That's a somewhat different thing, because here it's a question of making sure that people really have understood. If they really have understood and have retained something, presumably one doesn't need to be just going over that thing again and again; they need to go on to something more. So people may justifiably complain that they have heard that particular lecture three times already, or that they have gone through that particular chapter already three times. Nonetheless, there is the point that sometimes people want to go on to something new before they have even learned the old thing.

Devapriya: If they have understood it then they should be in a position to give a talk or something.

S: Well, it can be tested whether they've understood it or not.

Atula: It seems like a hell of a lot of patience [is needed] in being teachers that they keep checking out...

S: Yes, and a willingness to repeat things constantly and from different points of view, in different words. But don't take things for granted, especially very deep underlying principles. I was thinking the other day of something that struck me when I was very young, in my teens, which in a way I've taken as a principle since. But I don't think I've ever spelled it out on any occasion, not even in a lecture. So I was wondering how people would agree with me as regards this principle, or how many people in the FWBO have really grasped it consciously. The principle, or the point, was this: When I was in my early teens, studying English literature and especially poetry, it came to me 'Why should I confine myself to English poetry?' So I started reading translations of Persian poetry and Chinese poetry and so on. But I clearly formulated to myself at that time - I couldn't have been more than...

Tape 19, Side B

... 13 or 14 - the principle that whatever has been produced by human beings in one part of the world can be understood by human beings in other parts of the world. I did not accept that there was an absolute breach between people of different races, nationalities and cultures which made mutual comprehension impossible. I did not accept that, and I still don't accept it. In fact, I accept it less than ever. Do you see what I mean? Now this may come up, because people may say: 'Buddhism is an Eastern religion, how can we understand it?' Do you see what I mean? Or 'These scriptures are translated from the Sanskrit; how can we understand them?' Or 'These teachings were given 2500 years ago; how can we understand them?' So the

fundamental principle here is that one human being can understand another, even through the medium of different languages, different cultures, different conditionings of all kinds. There is a common human element on the basis of which you can establish an understanding and a communication. I've never spelled this out, actually, though it's implied, I think, in a lot of the things that I've done, a lot of the things that I've said. So maybe this sort of thing, principles or assumptions of this degree of generality, need to be spelled out. Buddhism is not an Eastern religion in that sense, for instance. Do you see what I'm getting at? (Agreement.)

Dhammarati: It means we have to be clear ...

S: Yes. But the basic point here is that one human being can speak to another even across the gap of centuries or unfamiliar cultures, that humanity is, in a sense, one. And any individual anywhere is potentially [452] intelligible to any other individual in any other place - that barriers of language, race, culture etc. are not fixed and final. I would even go so far as to say that it's possible for men and women to understand each other - because some people say, some men, for instance, say (no, they don't usually; women sometimes say, feminists) that no man can understand a woman. Or sometimes men do say this. But I don't agree, because inasmuch as they are both human beings mutual comprehension, despite difficulties and obstacles and barriers, is possible if you make a genuine effort. You can't write off the opposite sex as absolutely incomprehensible, any more than you can write off someone belonging to a different culture or speaking a different language as ultimately incomprehensible.

But, for instance, sometimes women have said, 'A man will never understand what it means to have a child.' Well, yes, admittedly women are in a better position to understand this, but any human experience can be understood to a degree by any other human being. It doesn't become a monopoly just because you've had the experience - 'Nobody can understand it at all.' Well, if that is the case, it's not a human experience, it's probably something diabolical. So once you admit mutual incomprehension as an absolute, you're finished as regards communication - finished! - whether it's with regard to someone of a different colour or a different culture or, as I was saying, different religion, different sex.

Devapriya: Even different ideologies.

S: Even different ideologies. I think, given mutual good will and willingness to communicate, some measure of communication is possible by virtue of the fact that you are both human.

So if you do find in the course of discussion that you can't communicate with someone, it really means he's cut himself off (if you haven't cut yourself off) from your common humanity, as is the case sometimes with very orthodox Christians, fundamentalist Christians. You can't enter into communication with them, they won't enter into communication, they've cut themselves off from your common humanity. They don't really regard you as another human being, basically. They see you so much as a non-Christian or as a sinner or someone to be converted; they don't see you as a human being, and the possibility of human communication is therefore precluded.

Devapriya: An extreme example of that, from reading, has been the time of the Inquisition. It just seems like this to its nth degree.

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S: Yes, indeed, indeed.

Ratnapani: It's not so uncommon, I think, to find people who apparently go through the motions of communication but actually don't experience people as alive in some sort of way - and I don't mean mentally disturbed people, I mean just people around the Movement. They don't seem to experience other people as really being very valid, they don't sort of see them somehow, and communication never seems...

S: Well, sometimes it happens that you yourself don't raise your voice loud enough. If you just murmur or mutter, what you are trying to say is not going to get across. It will not strike the other person as an effective communication, and therefore they won't respond. You can't get a response to a non-communication, except another non-communication! - or non-response. Or one can say [that] to a non-communication you'll only get a non-response.

Ratnapani: I was thinking of people who don't seem to see people in general as human, somehow.

S: Anyway, can we have the concluding verses - from someone who reads poetry rather nicely, perhaps?

Thus spoke the Exalted One. And when the Master had thus spoken, he spoke yet again:

The mother and father are the East,

The teachers are the South,

Wife and children are the West,

The friends and associates are the North.

Servants and employees are the Nadir,

The ascetics and the Brahmans are the Zenith; Who is fit to lead the household life

These six quarters should salute.

Who is wise and virtuous,

Gentle and keen-witted,

Humble and amenable,

Such a one to honour may attain.

Who is energetic and not indolent,

In misfortune unshaken,

Flawless in manner and intelligent,

Such a one to honour may attain.

Who is hospitable and friendly,

Liberal and unselfish, [454]

A guide, an instructor, a leader,

Such a one to honour may attain.

Generosity, sweet speech,

Helpfulness to others,

Impartiality to all

As the case demands,

These four winning ways make the world go round

As the linchpin in a moving car.

If these in the world exist not,

Neither mother nor father will receive

Respect and honour from their children.

Since these four winning ways
The wise appraise in every way,
To eminence they attain,
And praise they rightly gain.

S: By the way, the word translated here as honour is *yasha*(?), which means more like fame or glory. And also Rhys Davids notes that the word which Narada translates as 'keen-witted' - the word is *patibhanava*(?) - is interpreted by Buddhaghosa in this connection as 'eloquence on the occasion of worshipping the quarters.'

What became in the Mahayana the *sangrahavastus* come in again: 'Generosity, sweet speech, Helpfulness to others, Impartiality to all As the case demands, These four winning ways make the world go round As the linchpin in a moving car. If these in the world exist not, Neither mother nor father will receive Respect and honour from their children.' The inference is that if even parents aren't respected there won't be any respect in the world. There will be no looking up to anything. And we begin to see the truth of that nowadays, don't we, in many parts of the West? Nothing is respected, nothing is looked up to, not even parents. And from the traditional Buddhist view you could hardly sink lower than that. What is worse, perhaps, parents aren't even deserving of respect, in some cases.

Padmavajra: It seems a very good thing to be worthy of honour.

S: Yes, a glory. Respect and honour. Yes, let me see what the words for respect and honour are in respect of the parents. Yes: *pujam*, worship, respect. There's *mana* and *puja*. You could say respect and worship.

Atula: That's a very ..., that line 'As the linchpin of a moving car' on an ethical basis, when everything just sort of separates.

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S: Right, yes, disintegrates. Would someone like to read the conclusion? - the whole of the rest of the sutta, now; we have come to the end.

When the Exalted One had spoke thus, Sigala, the young householder, said as follows:

'Excellent, Lord, excellent! It is as if, Lord, a man were to set upright that which was overturned, or were to reveal that which was hidden, or were to point out the way to one who had gone astray, or were to hold a lamp amidst the darkness so that those who have eyes may see. Even so has the doctrine been explained in various ways by the Exalted One. I take refuge, Lord, in the Buddha, the Doctrine, and the Order. May the Exalted One receive me as a follower, as one who has taken refuge from this very day to life's end.'

S: Just try to follow it in the English: I'll read in Pali what Sigala says. I think you can get the meaning and something of the flavour of it if you listen carefully. (S. reads.) That's what Sigala says. And you notice the translation says 'Sangha' but the text says 'bhikkhu sangha'. Maybe we can discuss that some other time.

Devapriya: Didn't it say *upasaka* after - ?

S: It said upasaka, yes. Upasakam mam bhagava taretu (?), which means 'may the Lord bear me in mind as an upasaka.' In other words, 'Please accept me as an upasaka.' Ajatage pa panupetam saranam gatam ti (?) - 'one who from today has gone for refuge.'

So we have come to the end. It's interesting that this little volume called Everyman's Ethics contains not only the Sigalovada Sutta but the Mahamangala Sutta and the Parabhava Sutta, on both of which we have had study retreats. And the Aghapaja Sutta. I don't think we've had a study on that; perhaps we should some day. Yes, we haven't had one on that. Perhaps we should do that. That would be all right just for a weekend or even perhaps just for one day. Anyway, any final point before we do break up?

Atula: I'd just like to say thank you very much.

Voices: Mm. Thank you very much, Bhante.

S: Mm. I think we have covered some useful ground - which will no doubt filter through to Centres, co-ops and communities. All right, then.

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Padmavajra: Excellent, Bhante!

E N D

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