

Sangharakshita in Seminar
Questions and Answers on the Chairmen's Retreat 1981

Those Present: Not noted but those identified by the transcriber as well as The Venerable Sangharakshita are:

Manjuvajra, Subhuti, Devamitra, Nagabodhi, Lokamitra, Prakasha, Vajradaka, Mangala, Abhaya, Padmaraja

Sangharakshita: So what is it this morning? We're discussing those general points which emerged from yesterday's reporting in of chairmen as such. You have a list of these points? Perhaps you could each read them in turn.

Manjuvajra: The first thing I've got was the discussion of privacy and private life and the need for privacy.

S: Just go through them. It may be possible to do them in a natural order.

Manjuvajra: The second was what qualities are emphasised by being chairman and performing that function. What particular qualities do we feel and which ones are excluded.

The third one was what I called Chairmen's Cold Turkey, or Chairmen's withdrawal symptoms.

The next one was patience, the development of patience and how to overcome the result related drive.

The next one was sources of inspiration. The difference between work and the forms of meditation as the source of inspiration.

Related to that is how do chairmen lose inspiration, how do they regain it?

How do they get out of contact with their activities as being a spiritual practice?

And the last one was working with people who you like, dislike, and the operation of teams.

S: So is there a natural starting point? Have you got anything different Subhuti?

Subhuti: Results. The need for results.

S: Ah, that's connected with patience, isn't it.

Subhuti: The temptation to question is another one. Attracting the sort of people that are like one. The people that one attracts.

S: Yes, this is connected with working with people you like, dislike and so on, isn't it. Is there any natural starting point, or any particular topic which stands out as the most important or as leading into all the others?

Devamitra: Inspiration?

S: Those three related points. What were they?

Manjuvajra: Basically it's:

How do chairmen lose inspiration?

How should they regain it?

What are the sources of inspiration for chairmen?

How do they get out of contact with their activities as spiritual practice?

S: Perhaps the third comes first. What are the sources of inspiration for chairmen, and then how you lose, how you are to regain, and as a more specialised form of all that - well how is it that one's activities cease to be spiritual practices.

So what are the sources of inspiration and how is it that they seem to dry up sometimes? I think people should just not go round one by one but as the spirit moves them just say what they feel are the sources of inspiration, and then perhaps we can move on to discussing how it is they can dry up.

Nagabodhi: Meditation (unclear)

Devamitra: I would have thought sources of inspiration for different people would be different. There would be a different emphasis within maybe that area. For instance in my case I find that I think I take my greatest inspiration from contact with other people, rather than, say, meditation or the arts or anything else.

S: Perhaps you should first of all make it clear what you mean by 'inspiration'. There seems to be some ambiguity here.

Manjuvajra: What I mean by it is to me inspiration is when you get something inside you which gets motivated and you feel that you want to express that experience. You find a source of energy inside and it just bubbles away and you just want to express it in some way. I find writing inspiring, because when I sit down quietly and start to do some writing then the energy starts to rise when I write and it's just a really satisfying experience to have that whole process. And I also find the actual idea of changing the society, I really see the kind of spiritual, political aspects of that. Really going out and making a definite change. But I really feel I'm actually doing that. The sort of circle is complete (unclear)

Lokamitra: It's a sort of vision then isn't it, that is connected with that.

Prakasha_____: I find it's highly important if I find I can use my imagination in a creative way through study and in that sense provide a vision. (unclear)

Manjuvajra: I find meditation good because it acts as a reminder. Sometimes you kind of forget what you're doing it all for and it all gets to seem a bit pointless, but then all you've got to do is have a few clear meditations and suddenly the whole thing transforms.

Nagabodhi: (unclear) for me it's retreats rather than meditations. In fact my daily meditation isn't necessarily inspiring because my mind just isn't able to meditate very well, but if I go on a retreat I actually can get into the practice and if it's devotional practice too which is really important. Then

that really is my central source of inspiration. [Pause]

Vajradaka: The main way that inspiration comes to me is when I verbalise the Dharma. It seems to bring all the digested Dharma that I've sort of heard and read to the surface and then I can see whether I've understood it correctly and when it comes up it has a kind of a freshness in a sense a bit like a feedback. I very often just think about the life of the Buddha.

S: I remember Buddhadasa saying at the Convention he found the life of Dharmapala very inspiring.

Vajradaka: In terms of work it's just remembering why I'm there. Sometimes, when things get a bit flat you forget, so if you just remember why...

S: (chuckles)

_____ : I think sometimes just reflection can bring you back to the space where you keep your inspiration.

Prakasha: I find it quite important to do nothing for a while, to just sit there and do nothing and just sort of stop everything. In that way I can get back to experiencing myself again. So often I just feel like I've experienced myself through so many other things and that sort of takes away the experience of myself. I'm always engaged in work or other activities and I actually need just to come back.

Kamalasila: I used to do that in West London when I was getting really flat I'd just do nothing for a while and it would be a really quite boring thing to do but afterwards I'd find that (unclear)

Vajradaka: It's interesting because this implies that we can't produce inspiration, manufacture it.

Manjuvajra: You have to create the space for it to arise of its own accord. You can't force it. But if you can push back the activities sufficiently just to get that space. It could be either in meditation or just stopping and looking out of the window, then you can get an opportunity for (unclear).

S: More specifically it does seem, and here I think we come back to how Chairmen lose their inspiration, that you mustn't allow things to get on top of you. The initiative must rest with you, because if you allow things to get on top of you, you are having simply to respond to the situation - perhaps respond is not quite the right word - you have to cope with the situation, instead of setting up the situation. If you're always on the defensive and simply have to deal with things that people bring to you to deal with, then your inspiration dries up because you've become essentially passive to circumstances, instead of being active. I suspect that this is one of the ways in which Chairmen start losing their inspiration. So when you say create space for yourself or even when you go and meditate, among other things you are keeping all these pressures at bay, and you are creating the possibility of yourself taking initiative. So it does seem very important that Chairmen shouldn't allow circumstances and things to be done to get on top of them, so that they're functioning entirely in accordance with the pressures that are being exerted upon them. Do you see what I'm getting at? Because if you feel passive, which means you feel weak, well then you lose your sense of initiative, you lose your drive, you lose your inspiration, you become resentful perhaps. You feel pressured, you feel you're being forced to do something. Then you feel that you're just acting out of duty. Actually you're not acting at all.

_____ : You have to be quite crafty to dodge that.

S: Well crafty and firm sometimes.

Mangala: I happen to be experienced in this area. I think if you're working with perhaps let's say five other Order members in a Council, presumably that's much less likely to happen. Where responsibility is shared.

S: Well it depends on the size of the situation.

Mangala: But I mean isn't this supposed to be (unclear) (unclear) was originally being set up as having five Order members, and maybe mitras as well and so on, but I don't think it's ever happened anywhere. There's still not going to be five Order members, which means that in a sense the Chairman's job is perhaps not working as part of a team like the way it ought to be.

S: But whether you are working individually or whether you are working as part of a team, the same principle holds good - don't let things get on top of you, remain in control of the situation. Some people are more capable of handling a lot of things without allowing anything to get on top of them than are others. For instance Sona's in Stockholm and he's one Order member there by himself. It hasn't yet grown very much but he's handling everything himself, and it does seem as though he's very much on top of things.

There's also the point that if there are other Order members associated with the chairman they must be people who are really supportive and not people that the chairman is also having to carry and to cope with, in addition to all his other work. The ideal situation is certainly with five Order members functioning as a real team. They could run a really big centre, but I think one individual Order member by himself can still do a very great deal.

Nagabodhi: So what do you do if things do get on top of you and if the people you are working with aren't supportive? We've stated the ideal.

S: No it isn't an ideal, simply that you shouldn't allow things to get on top of you - it's a necessity. Because if you allow that to happen you will definitely lose your inspiration in due course. It's only a matter of time, unless there is some change. So what you mustn't allow to happen under any circumstances is for things to get on top of you, and that is more a question of a psychological attitude than it is a question of any amount of work.

Nagabodhi: What's the basis of that psychological attitude?

S: Well what do you all think? You are all prone to it, or most of you are prone to it, what's the basis of it? That you allow work to get on top of you?

Lokamitra: You have to, if only for self preservation, you know that if that happens you just won't be able to work properly. It's going to make things much worse.

S: Well that's a way of preventing it happening but what are those factors which tend to bring it about? I think one of them - I'm just sort of talking off the cuff here but one of them is just unmindfulness. You're not keeping a sufficiently close eye on the situation. You are not realising that people are beginning to do this, that they're beginning to impose upon you or to be a bit unreasonable. Or, even if there aren't any such factors, the work is becoming more, there are more

things to do, and therefore you have to be all the more careful that you don't allow the situation to impose itself on you. Do you realise clearly the sort of situation I have in mind or the sort of thing I'm seeing as happening?

Prakasha: I find there's a conflict between there between the needs of expansion, the so-called objective needs of the situation. There's a continual emphasis in that direction and there's also a very definite sort of personal need as well to keep one's own practice together, and the two are quite definitely opposed. It's a real sort of juggling act to keep oneself in balance with the situation. It's constantly sort of demanding (unclear)

S: I think that the thing that is most likely to throw you off your balance is not the amount of work but allowing it to get on top of you.

Lokamitra: It's like a personal discipline.

S: Your attitude should be one of initiative with regard to the work, not simply of coping all the time. Sometimes - I've found this myself in the past - that if there's a lot happening that you're supposed to be coping with, one of the best things to do is to take on more work. Not in the sense of taking on, but just to start doing something just because you want to do it. Not because anyone has suggested it or circumstances require it. You just feel like doing it, and that will add to your sense of initiative and enable you to handle all the other things better too. I felt something like that was happening with regard to Prakasha when he spoke of the Blake study groups. Because he really felt like doing them and did them for that reason, my guess is that the interest and enthusiasm that was aroused in him by doing that feeds back into the other things, and enables him to keep on top of them, rather than just having to cope with them. So make sure that you are doing something that you are really interested in, and that you even take complete initiative with regard to. As your ideas, not things that you have to do because of the surrounding circumstances. Do you get what I mean? I really don't think it's a question so much of the amount of work to be done, but more that one loses the initiative with regard those things.

_____ : You feel yourself a pawn.

S: Right, and the pawn of people. People constantly asking you to do this and asking you to do that, and you lose the ability to say no. In that way you lose the initiative. In a way I don't think that people really ever do lose their inspiration in principle. They may feel that they've lost it but actually they haven't and they know it. It's deep down where it always was, but I think what they lose perhaps more is the initiative, and that gets them down.

_____ : It's that real feeling of freedom.

S: Freedom yes. Supposing you go into your office, let's say, if you have an office, and there's a whole pile of stuff. There is someone waiting about this and someone waiting about that, and you really start feeling a bit pressured. Well in a way the best thing to do is just to put it all aside for a day or half a day and say 'OK I'm not going to put up, I'm just going out'. You just assert your independence of the situation. All right you just go out for the day. Chances are it can all wait until the evening or the next morning, and then having, as it were, asserted yourself that day you'll be quite on top of it next morning and quite able to deal with it. These are sort of strategies, so to speak. When you feel that you've got so much to do, you're absolutely overwhelmed and you don't know what to do next, all right take the day off. That's sometimes the best thing to do. And then perhaps

you'll realise well these things aren't all that urgent and well I can deal with them and so on.

I know that's not always possible because sometimes things do arise which do require a decision here and now, but I'm just citing this as an illustration of the fact - you must safeguard your own initiative, and yes, as you say, your own freedom with regard to the work, and not just allow yourself to be ground down by it, don't become passive in regard to it. Then it starts feeling like a duty that you are rather grudgingly performing.

So perhaps in a way the question is wrongly set - 'how do we lose our inspiration?' - we don't actually lose our inspiration, not in principle, but we surrender the initiative I think, very often. [Pause]

That leads to a loss of emotional positivity. The two are very closely connected. If you're feeling emotionally positive you will feel free and feel like taking the initiative, and vice-versa. Also I think one need to examine very carefully one's state of mind when one agrees to do something. People very often agree verbally, which means that they've agreed so far as other people are concerned, but they haven't really agreed. We find that with Mitras and Friends, not only amongst Order members or not only amongst Chairmen. You know what I mean here, don't you? If you agree to do something, you give your wholehearted agreement to it. Don't just give a verbal agreement and then have to be reminded about it afterwards. Then you start again feeling pressured, but that was your own fault because you didn't give wholehearted assent to begin with. You didn't realise what you were doing. You thought that you were agreeing but actually you weren't, only ten percent of you perhaps was agreeing.

_____ : You really have to have your emotions involved.

S: Yes. But that must start from the very beginning. When you say, 'well yes I agree to do that', you must be absolutely behind what you say, not just think, 'ah well OK, I agree, I'll do it'. That's not good enough. Obviously you mustn't adopt that sort of attitude towards being chairman itself. 'All right, I'll be Chairman for a year or so', well no, that isn't good enough! You must really want to be, not in an egoistic, ambitious sort of way, but you must really see it as a dazzling opportunity for yourself and for others, and be really keen on it and sort of carried away by the possibilities, really plunge into it. That of course implies self confidence to a reasonable extent. A chairman mustn't allow himself to be turned into a harassed maid of all work, a harassed organisational maid of all work. You notice that the feminine gender is appropriate here because of the passivity, of the inertness, of a person of that kind.

Nagabodhi: At what point do you decide to just slap yourself on the bottom and just say you'll do things. A case in point was the last Chairmen's day at *Aryatara*, we were discussing the next *Padmaloka* event and frankly it looked like no one wanted to be there. We all just sat there in silence with Subhuti saying, 'Come on, someone's got to lead study, someone's got to give a talk'. A few of us categorically stated that we just didn't want to go, but in the end it was just absurd, so in the end we all, or several of us just said 'OK, I'll do it'. I don't know if ten percent of me made that decision. Instantly after I'd left I thought 'why on earth did I do it again?', but when do you just slap yourself on the bottom and say 'come on, you can do it, do it', and when do you say, 'no, I'm going to take the initiative, I'm not going to go'.

S: But you can also say, 'I'm going to take the initiative and I'm really going to go.

Nagabodhi: So you do! You've got to really want to take the initiative maybe more than....

S: I think sometimes one, just out of unmindfulness as it were, or some strange sort of reluctance, one doesn't mobilise all one's energies to say that yes, one will do something, because one sees the objective need and one responds to that, one has got the ability, one has got the capacity, one has got the time. It's almost as though one is having to resist the gravitational pull. You know that you're going to enjoy it once you get into it. You know that it's going to be well received, etc. You could in some cases be just up against the gravitational pull in a very general sort of way.

Nagabodhi: That's what I'm asking you, because I really do see a distinction between on the one hand you're saying well sometimes you do need to just categorically decide to do what you want to do, have a day off, but you could always say all I'm up against is the gravitational pull. That's been my tendency in the past of

S: Yes. If it's a question of needing a day off, you say OK I'll take a day off before the event, or before I take that study group. I'll make sure that I do contact my source of inspiration before it all begins.

Lokamitra: It seems strange you say 'I really want to do'. I think when one becomes more passive then one thinks in terms of wants, like, pleasure, and so on. If one is inspired....

S: And private life.

Lokamitra: Yes. If one's inspired or if one's taking initiative these things don't come into it. Yeah, you can put yourself into these situations. You see it as part of your overall (unclear). You may decide that it's best for you that you don't do it at that particular time, but.....

S: But normally one would.

Lokamitra: Yes, it's not so much a question of 'oh, I don't feel like it' or.....

S: Sometimes I get the impression that some people in this respect, chairmen included, really are quite pathetic, in the sense that they seem a bit precious sometimes about doing the things that they want to do, and not doing the things that they don't want to do, and I think this is a legacy from the growth movement in a very general sort of sense, and thinking too exclusively in terms of 'what is good for my development', and that becomes 'what is good for me', and then that becomes 'what I like doing', and then you start thinking well, 'do I like to do it, do I not like to do it?' and you're thinking of it too much, or considering it too much, in those sort of terms. For instance, an example I gave I think somewhere the other day about this discussion I overheard once between Order members leading a retreat, who was going to lead the puja that evening, and one would have expected that normally they'd be almost quite raring to lead the puja and the meditation, but no, it wasn't like that at all. So sometimes one wonders 'well why?'. On the odd occasion, yes somebody can be really tired, that's true, but it's as though quite often situations in which one would expect someone to jump at an opportunity, because, after all that's what they've committed themselves to doing, that sort of thing, they don't.

Sthiramati: People seem to measure themselves (unclear)

S: Ah yes.

Lokamitra: In a way it should be a choice between what is the most creative thing for you to do at the moment.

_____ : In terms of priorities?

Lokamitra: Not so much priorities but it may be more creative for you to do something else, but it should be a creative approach, a creative choice.

S: Yes otherwise thinking in terms of 'well I don't want to do that' or 'would that be too much for me?' or 'is that really my thing?', instead of 'well, that's fine but maybe there's something even more creative that I should be doing.

Lokamitra: But that way of thinking perpetuates that state of mind.

S: Oh yes.

Lokamitra: And I think that's the great danger.

S: The less you do the less you feel like doing.

Manjuvajra: Part of that though is that in the past we've got bogged down and you kind of recognise that how it happened that you took on too many things, so then you.....

S: Ah, no. I'd put that differently. Not that we took on too many things, but we allowed them to be imposed upon us, so didn't really take them on in the first place. That was the mistake. When you say 'well OK, I'll do it', well you don't really mean it in a way. The whole of you doesn't mean it. You're not fully there, so that means that you should be fully there all the time, so that when you meditate you meditate, when you say 'yes I'll do it' you fully mean that and therefore you're going to do it, but if when you agreed to do it you weren't fully there, well what sort of success are you going to make of the job, more often than not?! So it's really being fully present and wholehearted at every step. Actually I think that everything can be, to put it in these terms, a source of inspiration, and chairmen certainly have a variety of work. That maybe has its own dangers, they need to organise it and organise themselves in relation to it properly, but, as I said at the beginning, not let it get on top of them. Have the ability to sweep it all to one side and say, 'no, just wait', I'm going to do something else for a few hours'.

Kamalasila: How do you think this applies to things at *Vajraloka*, the administration there? Do you think it's just a question of....

S: Well keep it to a minimum, but when you're doing it really do it. Do it as a practice, as it were. Don't sort of grudge - while you're doing the work - the time that you have to spend on it. That would be fatal. That would dissipate your energy. Enjoy it when you do it.

Kamalasila: The problem seems to be that when you are meditating you don't want to be thinking about something that's happening.

S: Well when you're meditating you don't want to be thinking about anything. But if the situation is such that you cannot but engage in some other activity requiring thought, and that that is necessary

indirectly to sustain the whole organisation, the whole centre, where you are meditating, and therefore indirectly the meditation itself, then you must wholeheartedly accept the situation. If you grudgingly accept it well you just make things worse. Your own mental state and you don't do the work as well. So I think wholehearted acceptance of the situation in which you are and the work that you actually have to do is essential. You must never hold back.

Kamalasila: And that goes for the other people in the community as well as the chairman.

S: Yes it does. The chairman has a somewhat greater measure of responsibility, inasmuch as he's supposed to have the wider vision, but he's not there just to look after the others. They also have a very definite share in the responsibility and that goes for any centre.

Abhaya: I think this does relate to difficulties in meditation, where you can get to feel so pressured...

S: Yes, but that's fatal. If you want to set aside time for quiet thought about things well that's OK, but meditation as such is not for that purpose. So I think the same rule applies here, or the same principle applies here - when you meditate you meditate. You make a clear decision that for the next hour or two hours you're going to forget that a centre exists and you're just going to go into something completely different. But usually you make a half hearted decision to meditate and you sort of - you don't exactly encourage but you - allow thoughts to continue in your mind about the centre etc., and maybe even use that little bit of space, after a while, just to think about things and sort them out because at least no one's going to interrupt you. But you require quiet periods. You might get your quiet period by just having a little walk in the garden or by actually sitting quietly in your study or your bedroom, but I think you should with a conscious, determined sort of effort, reserve the meditation for meditation. I think here again it's not that you decide that you'll do this or do that, you just allow it to happen, which means you've lost the initiative. So if you've lost the initiative with regard to meditation, well how can you meditate? Because meditation has been defined as the continual production of skilful mental states, which is a very highly positive condition to be in. So if you've already surrendered the initiative well what hope do you have of generating skilful mental states in a constant stream?

So this is why I sometimes feel that chairmen and others are sometimes a bit pathetic, in the sense that they sort of complain about the situation sometimes but they ought to be taking up a more robust attitude towards it. We know there's a lot of work to do, but that's not really the problem. If you are not in the position to do something well just accept that you're not in the position to do anything and just forget about it for the time being.

Abhaya: It seems so obvious, doesn't it.

Manjuvajra: That sort of approach also needs a lot of confidence in the Dharma and in the Movement generally, because the general attitude is if I let something go then everything's going to go wrong.

S: Well that may sometimes be actually the case. You have to be realistic. It may be, if you are chairman of a quite weak centre with quite poor support from other Order members, it may be that you go away for a month at your risk, but having decided to go away for a month and have a solitary retreat, then forget all about it, otherwise what's the point of going away?! If you really feel that it almost certainly would collapse in your absence don't go away, remain, and accept that situation. But

if you go away go away. If you stay, stay. If you stay don't start saying oh what a pity I couldn't go away on a solitary, I'd really like to be on a solitary etc., and if you are away on solitary don't sort of waste time thinking, 'oh I hope they haven't got themselves into a mess'. You'll find out soon enough when you get back! You don't need to think about it now. People will try to make you think, and I find this a lot, that people try to make me think about things that I just am not ready to think about and I just refuse to do it, and I upset people sometimes because of this. I cannot be made to think about things that I'm not ready to think about, otherwise I could be endlessly occupied in this way.

The main thing is you retain the initiative, you call the tune. Don't allow circumstances and work to be done to call the tune. You have everything under your control. I'm not speaking of controlling people in that sort of way, but just being on top of the work, not letting it get on top of you. I don't think there'll be any difficulty about keeping in touch with the sources of inspiration if you don't allow things to get on top of you. Then you'll feel free and you won't feel pressured and therefore you won't have that nagging sense of duty.

If necessary just break the routine a bit, just to preserve your sense of your autonomy.

Manjuvajra: Sometimes I've experienced actually feeling like that, like a big lorry, you just feel that you're going solidly in one direction and nothing can (unclear).

S: And then there's this question of the private life. So what is this 'private life' that most people have in our society? We've talked about this before on a study retreat, haven't we. Anyone remember? I think one of the points that was made then was that the private life was meant to accommodate those activities that one felt society as a whole disapproved of. So that's, in a way, understandable within the old society. You can have a private life both in a skilful and in an unskilful way. In the very old days some of Buddhism some people felt that their interest in Buddhism had to be very much a part of their private life, because society would disapprove of it quite strongly, and there were various activities which used to be part of people's private life, but now they don't have to be part of people's private life because they're more publically acknowledged.

But within the context of the FWBO, do you feel that there is this tendency to try and keep a private life, as distinct from privacy, space for oneself, to breathe in? And if so, why? To some extent, of course, it goes along with this - your work becoming a duty and then the distinction arising between what you have to do and you do your best to do it, and what you would like to do and what you like to do occupies your private life.

Manjuvajra: The things I feel are private are the things that I feel are not productive in the kind of immediate sense. If you like the public things. The FWBO things are the sort of very definite practical things, whereas other things are sort of not so practical. They might be enjoyable but, because they don't actually produce a concrete result, you tend to think of them as not quite as worthy as the FWBO things.

S: Well in some ways perhaps they're not, depending on what they are, because the public things, well on the one hand you enjoy them, so the element of enjoyment is there, on the other hand they are useful, so the element of use is there, and those things which make up one's private life perhaps are merely pleasant things. So clearly if you can be involved with something which is useful as well as pleasant, well that is an additional dimension to the pleasure itself.

Vajradaka: It can even be that the things that you usually find pleasurable, when you do them for

long enough become displeasurable. They need to be done anyway.

_____ : The private things can be personally useful. I'm thinking about listening to music and reading. I do tend to feel a bit guilty about say you're reading a book, although it might actually be useful in the long term.

S: It would depend on what the book was or whether you were just indulging in a bit of escapism, or whether it was something genuinely positive that contributed something to you as an individual. After all meditation is a private activity, but no one questions the utility of that. [Pause]

_____ : (unclear) relationships would have been much relevant to private functions (unclear) but if you have a relationship that's got an element of the capital 'R', that you would tend to hide.

S: You hide it from the scrutiny of your spiritual friends, knowing that they will probably expose its weakness, expose it for what it is.

[End of side one side two]

Lokamitra: It's harder I think to have a private life outside of your cultural sort of I don't know what it's like in America, I would imagine it's a bit harder than here, but certainly you can't have it in India. Not in the Movement anyway. It's easier when you're used to the culture. That's one reason, I think, why working abroad is quite a good situation for people. You can't escape into the same little burrows.

S: Because you're conspicuous everywhere you go.

Lokamitra: And also you don't relate to that society and culture in the same way. I think that's one of the difficulties that Europeans sometimes find coming out to India. It's not the situation that's actually different, it's that they don't have these little escape routes. They're all cut off.

S: Ah! Yes.

Lokamitra: They come back (unclear).

S: You can't even pop round the corner to the pub. There's no pub in Pune.

Lokamitra: There are wine shops.

S: There are wine shops but you'd stand out in a wine shop like a sore thumb and the news would be round the whole Buddhist movement in Pune the next day.

Lokamitra: And we'd be (unclear) almost immediately.

Nagabodhi: Do you think there's value at all whatsoever in the occasional bit of escapism? Diving into an escapist.....

S: Well it would depend upon circumstances or conditions, and also, I think, escapism would have to be very carefully defined. Just to have a rest or to relax is not escapism, but I think even escapism could probably be justified as an extreme measure in an extreme situation, but if you've reached a

point where escapism, even real escapism, becomes justifiable as a means of avoiding a breakdown, then of course you've reached, you've allowed yourself to reach, a very undesirable state anyway. You see what I mean? If only a bit of escapism would save you from a complete breakdown, so to speak, well that's a pretty terrible state of affairs. Therefore I think it's important, as I said, to distinguish between actual escapism and just an entirely legitimate and positive taking of a rest. I think doing nothing is not escapism, but if you sort of relapse into watching TV or drink, then something is seriously wrong.

_____ : Is it escapism when you take on an activity because your kind of relative reality is so unbearable and you have to get out of it?

S: So in this context it would mean that you found your whole work and life as an Order member or chairman pretty unbearable, so that itself would be a very serious situation.

Lokamitra: You sort of feel sorry for yourself.

Manjuvajra: No, it's like you just can't bear what's going on around you so you'll do anything to get out of it. You'll glue yourself to TV or even to a book.

S: Or get drunk.

Manjuvajra: And as soon as that activity is taken away you're just faced with the horror of your situation, then you have to pick up something else.

Vajradaka: It's like an anaesthetic.

S: You mentioned say a book. Well you could pick up as a very busy chairman, quite creatively involved with your centre, you could pick up a book one quiet evening, not as a piece of escapism but because the content of the book represents an alternative aspect of your spiritual life and what you are on the whole involved in. If it was just an adventure story or trashy novel of some kind well probably that would be escapism, but if you picked up a classic or if you picked up a book of poetry or something of that sort, well that could be entirely positive, as providing you with a change and an additional, if you like, inspiration.

Lokamitra: You can do the same thing but from different states of mind. You can pick up a book just because you feel like relaxing or you can justify it, 'oh I feel sorry for myself, I'm going to read this book'. One of them can be creative or maybe not necessarily so creative but not harmful and the other can be....

S: Well there's a saying a change of work is as good as a rest. It's like a change of work, because reading is also work.

Vajradaka: Since I've been in the States, I've actually watched quite a bit of television, but I don't think that all of it has been escapism by any means.

_____ : Just some of it!

Vajradaka: I have to admit a bit of it has been, but I think the majority of it has been a kind of exploration. Some of it has been an exploration of American society.

S: Right, yes. Though I think it's pretty clear what is actually meant by escapism. It's related to the fact that you do find your ordinary reality quite, either unbearable or just plain boring, so you just want to escape into something else.

Manjuvajra: Going back to America it was so clear that most people's life was... (unclear) normal life - going to work, coming back from work, it was excruciatingly boring and painful, and you can see then why people go around and turn the television on and go drinking and do all the other things.

S: At least it's a change of boring activity.

Manjuvajra: If you change the activity fast enough you get the impression.....

S: Of living!

Vajradaka: You change round the 46 channels fairly quickly.

_____ : 46?

Vajradaka: Getting on for that. There's a lot. In some states you get more.

Manjuvajra: Maybe one of the other main areas of private life was sex. Maybe the two are not disconnected.

S: Sex and telly? *[Laughter]*

Manjuvajra: You can use sex as escapism as well. You get the immediate gratification enjoyment which gives you a sort of bit of....

S: And perhaps attention too. If you're feeling rather sorry for yourself and someone says, 'oh you poor little boy' and all that kind of thing! It's dreadful isn't it. Someone strokes your hair tenderly and tells you how sorry they feel for you and you start feeling a bit better then perhaps. Not really better of course, merely gratified.

_____ : I must say I do find things like that makes me puke.

S: Well it would make any healthy person puke. If it doesn't make you puke you're clearly not in a very healthy state. One should never feel sorry for oneself or to invite pity. This is what I sometimes find with not just chairmen, who come to me with all the list of things they're having to do etc., etc. I don't feel sorry for them at all, and I feel they're inviting pity and that sort of pity is really quite weakening and one shouldn't sort of help people to pity themselves or join people in pitying themselves, so I feel quite unsympathetic when confronted by people like that in that sort of state. I don't feel that sympathy is justified at all. It's the last thing that they need. That will encourage their passivity and inertness, and their feeling that things are 'happening to them', you're sympathising with them for the unpleasant things that are happening to them, whereas what they've got to do is to change their attitude and not allow things just to happen to them.

So if you feel, 'oh Bhante, I'm really overworked, I've got so much to do at my centre', you come to me for a bit of sympathy, you won't get any! I'll probably tell you how lucky you are, what a fine

situation you've got. *[Laughter]* But sympathy of that sort is really weakening. One mustn't ask for it.

_____ : (unclear) hero. *[Pause]*

S: Heroes don't need sympathy. Sometimes they need help, genuine help, that is a different thing, but not just sympathy in the sense that I've been mentioning it.

Manjuvajra: Receiving sympathy isn't at all satisfying. It leaves you with a bit of an unpleasant feeling.

S: Yes it makes you weaker than ever, and therefore less able to cope.

Lokamitra: You just want to be confirmed in your present state of inertia or your inability to do anything.

S: Yes. *[Pause]* One could introduce a little variation on one of my aphorisms. I've said somewhere that one should not help the weak, only the strong. It's the strong who need help, not the weak. Well, if you always are helping the weak how will they become strong? They will just be confirmed in their weakness. I'm using 'weak' here in a rather special sense.

What were the other topics? Maybe we ought to start coming onto them.

_____ : The qualities that a chairman has the special opportunity to develop, and what areas of development are denied the chance.

S: If any. We assume that some were. I'm going to query that. *[Laughter]* You are all chairmen or have been chairmen so did you feel that there are any special qualities or qualities that the position of chairman, the responsibility of being chairman, does help you develop or gives you an opportunity of developing, that you don't get or don't get to the same degree when you're not a chairman?

Abhaya: Well I think obviously there's taking initiative and having drive. It does force a lot (unclear) if you're not (unclear) with the situation, but at the same time I think also it does help you to develop receptivity, in the sense that you have to become more receptive to people.

S: Yes, just fellow Order members, other people on the Council. You need to be really receptive to their suggestions, their ideas, and take them up and make them your own sometimes.

Abhaya: So it's not really one-sided. It's a golden opportunity to develop those qualities.

_____ : Clarity as well. Learning to see situations and people more clearly.

S: And also not being misled by the complexity of a situation.

Vajradaka: Even seeing the complexity of the situation, in the sense that you have to have quite a wide perspective - receptivity, patience, most people wouldn't ordinarily want to have because they would just find it confusing.

_____ : (unclear) energy too. You've got an opportunity to involve yourself fully.

S: A chairman, more often than not, is supported. The chairman becomes a full timer. He should have no conflict of interests.

_____ : There's infinite potential.

S: Yes. [Pause]

Abhaya: Also this business of patience (unclear) Not expecting results immediately, not forcing.

_____ : See it as a sort of consistent responsibility. You're always on the spot. There's a lot less opportunity to sort of waiver (unclear). [Pause]

Manjuvajra: Maybe it would be better to try to think of things that were not inclusive because otherwise you could just go into superlatives about..... it is the best opportunity for just about everything really.

S: It's like being a king and - well not an unlimited monarch but... *[Laughter]* Maybe those dangers are inherent in the situation. I think actually most chairmen are probably in danger of underleading rather than overleading, if you see what I mean.

_____ : Can anyone think of anything that is not satisfied by their function as a chairman, any particular area?

Lokamitra: I am sure there are. For example if one does want to do.... well for periods of one's life one is going to want to do more meditation, more study perhaps, which you just cannot satisfy, or in most chairmen's situations. Some maybe but...

Kamalasila: The whole thing of being a bit of an all rounder as a chairman and not really specialising in one particular thing. You can't just sort of transcribe lectures or something like that.

S: But presumably when you become chairman you fully accept that, so therefore for the period that you are chairman you do not in fact experience a conflict, unless of course you go on being a chairman for a long time and you do have a very genuine need to develop one particular aspect or to concentrate on that, say to write or to meditate.

And also perhaps one should see the difference between being an all rounder and being merely a jack of all trades, or maid of all work. You must be a genuine all rounder. Your work is made up of bits but don't divide the work into bits which are too small, or don't adopt the attitude, 'well you're not going to be able to go very deeply into it, therefore it doesn't really matter how well or how ill you do it'. Put yourself thoroughly into it for the period that you are concerned with it.

_____ : Into all those things.

S: Yes, an all rounder doesn't have to be superficial.

_____ : Think in terms of (unclear) to each one.

_____ : He brings his own attitudes to each aspect.

S: Yes.

Lokamitra: I find that I'm starting off with other things, but sooner or later I'm going to just have to pass them on because I can't take each of them - for example publications - at the moment I can cope but I won't be able to take it so far.

S: A chairman has to learn to deputise. Start things - this is the initiative - and then he hands over to somebody and he just keeps an eye on that person just to make sure that they're carrying on in the proper way. [Pause]

Lokamitra: I must say one thing that does concern me personally in the community is that I don't give enough time for Mitras and Kalyana Mitrata.

S: I think that's partly due to the situation there and the lack of full time Order members, and the fact that you've got so many Mitras and good Friends coming along.

Lokamitra: I do feel that is a lack in the situation.

S: Yes.

But again this is an area into which people are only beginning to realise that they really have to put themselves. That if say you take someone on as a Kalyana Mitra, a friendly chat for half an hour a month is not enough, but it's as though people used to think it was. Or an encouraging pat on the back every now and then, that's not enough.

Lokamitra: When an Order member takes people on. I'm effectively Kalyana Mitra to all the Order members there and at least the English speaking mitras.

S: Well as I said that is due to the fact that you are just short of people to help you. Short especially of full time Order members. The number of full time Order members is totally incommensurate with the situation there. Even more so than anywhere else in the Movement. Ten or twelve full time really experienced Order members could be fully utilised right now. I know that. Maybe I shouldn't use the word impatient but I'm almost tempted to use the word impatient when I, for instance, hear Order members over here, who might have been Order members for a few years, saying things like, 'I don't know what to do with myself, I think I'll do a bit of painting this winter', something like that. It seems so, again, pathetic, when there's all that work waiting to be done and they apparently don't feel inspired to go and help.

Lokamitra: We don't want those sort of people out there.

S: No, I know you don't! If they were able to go they'd have to change very much first.

_____ : That's a bit of a bind, isn't it, because anyone who hasn't got that attitude would be doing something. And those people who haven't got that attitude will be doing something.

S: I think there will be a growing realisation of the importance of the work and the abundance of the opportunities in India. What you don't want are people just around for a bit of sightseeing and expecting Lokamitra to lay on things for them, or even just a bit of pilgrimage and expecting

facilities to be provided. [Pause]

But I think in the case of the chairmen, what being chairman represents is, in a sense, a new level of actualization of commitment. I think actually that the chairmen who on the whole do a pretty good job, are no more, in effect, committed, or practically committed, than the average, the ordinary, Order member, should be. Do you see what I mean? And the fact that they have, in some cases, more to do than they ought is just due to the fact that many Order members have not expressed their commitment in practical terms to the extent that the chairmen, on the whole, are.

_____ : Why is this?

S: Well one could speak in terms of the gravitational pull etc., etc. Really to know one would have to interrogate each individual separately.

Padmaraja: The reporting in on Order Day sometimes is really appalling. It's so subjective.

S: I've often felt that, though it's better than it was. 'I feel a little better this month' [*spoken very feebly*] 'I feel a little stronger!' [*Laughter*] Which is not what one really expects to hear. That again is pathetic.

Sthiramati: This is only the second chairmen's event I've been to. At the first one I came to that was what I'd expected at my first Order Weekend, but I found the Order Weekends real washouts. But since that first chairmen's meeting that's what I would expect on an Order Weekend.

Padmaraja: Honestly I felt I was really apprehensive when we've had ordinations at *Aryatara*, about just the Order members coming to the Order Day.

S: Yes I've had to be honest. I've gone so far as to warn new Order members about forthcoming Order meetings. I remember I did this in the case of Kovida. Him being a rather exceptionally lively person, and in the case of others, and tried to explain the background. I know at least one fairly recent Order member got quite a shock - I think it was a recent Order member from Norwich - got quite a shock at the first Order meeting he attended down in London and he came and talked to me about it afterwards.

Lokamitra: I just wonder... there are certain people who do, even though they are Order members I'm afraid. We had one case, we'd just come back from an Order retreat and we'd done the Order metta at twelve thirty that night to correspond to (unclear) So one English Order member, mentioning no names, this Order member arrived a couple of days before and I was talking with Bakul and Ratnaguna and one or two Order members and said, 'oh we did the Order metta', and he said, 'Order metta, oh was that last night?' and I thought 'right!'.

S: Right, yes.

Lokamitra: I just don't want those people. I'm not going to have them around. I feel quite OK about doing that. It's like ***** came and Bhante and I discussed this and thought she shouldn't have contact and I was quite glad because one of the things she said to Kumar, the owner of the hotel she stayed at, she said 'I want a child but I don't want a husband.' Indian people just don't understand this.

S: Well the only who have children without husbands are prostitutes and professional dancing girls,

and it's from that class that film stars are recruited, and they're not looked upon very highly in society, whether rightly or wrongly! *[Laughter]*

Lokamitra: And I don't know why people can't be a bit stronger here. I know you can't be the same as we are out there but....

Vajradaka: You mean in that sense of firmness?

Padmaraja: Yes, it ties up with what Bhante was saying about most chairmen (unclear)

Lokamitra: Subhuti was just telling me he had to do so many things, and I don't think he should. I know it's difficult and I know you could argue it's (unclear) around *Padmaloka*. He has to do everything in many ways. It's almost as if he's not able to talk to the community and explain his position.

S: I think on the other hand one has to be a little careful because I think sometime this week we'll be talking about pressuring people. You see, you don't get results out of pressuring people. That's very clear. You have to be able to enlist their enthusiasm and not try to get things done by giving them a bad conscience or making them feel guilty about not doing things. It just doesn't work. Not really.

Lokamitra: One shouldn't necessarily go to the other extreme of not facing up to situations.

S: Yes, one shouldn't sort of grin and bear it because usually one is not really grinning inside anyway. One's perhaps feeling resentful.

_____ : I think there might be an element of British conditioning here.

S: Oh yes I think so.

_____ : That people don't actually feel that they're able to go, that they feel oppressed...

S: I wasn't thinking in that way though. Anyway go on.

_____ : I do think that the country (unclear) feels oppressed. People have a weight they feel that they can't actually do anything, and so it develops a kind of attitude of just sitting around twiddling your thumbs as being the norm.

S: It's seems to be expecting everything to be done for one, and that one should be looked after. It's the sort of welfare state mentality. It's as though people tend to think well Order members, and among Order members it's the chairmen, well it's their responsibility to do it for you, rather than all of you engaging in a co-operative venture. This sometimes happens, I'm sure.

Also it's a lack of feeling and a lack of friendship. You wouldn't treat people like that if you really had genuine friendly feelings towards them.

I think one has to be actually firm and decisive without actually pressurising people.

Lokamitra: Another thing is that if people go into a situation then they must know what they're going into. This must be made clear to them. For example if you go into a certain community it

should be made clear to you what the situation in that community is and that you'll only move in if that's the way you want to live and grow.

S: Right yes, as for instance when you move into a single sex community, it should be made thoroughly clear to you beforehand that this is a single sex community and you'll be expected to behave accordingly. Not you move in and then you're told or you discover that it's a single sex community. [Long Pause]

Padmaraja: I think that's quite an important point about the Order, the state of the morale in the Order generally and just how to raise it. Do you think that would be worth going into now?

S: One could.

Padmaraja: I've been thinking about things like more Order retreats.

S: I think it must start with the chairmen, and this is why in the past I've attached some importance to my own meetings with the chairmen, but as the chairmen's meetings turned into business meetings they didn't quite fulfil that function, though now of course the type of programme has altered. More business things are being disposed of outside these sort of meetings, so there's more of a possibility now, certainly this week, for the sort of contact or discussion that I originally had in mind. I think it will probably start with the chairmen, for want of a better term. The only group of senior and more responsible Order members meeting regularly and therefore in that way in regular contact with one another. I think it will start with this particular gathering, and spread.

_____ : You mean the level of morale here?

S: Yes, yes. And of course obviously there is an even greater responsibility resting on those chairmen who are chairmen of centres which are associated with a lot of Order members. If you are just the one and only well you've only got to keep up your own morale!

[Tea Break]

_____ : Padmaraja had some thoughts on morale?

Padmaraja: Just the necessity to raise the morale.

S: How do you see the morale as falling away or in what way.

Padmaraja: I just see quite a chronic - that's a strong word to use - but there's quite a lack of confidence in the Order, the Order members. That's a generalisation, but just what we were saying earlier, I think a lot of Order members don't really realise that they do have the power to act, to create and to change, and I take your point that the initiative has to come from the chairmen as much as gradually they can look to us for leadership and example and follow it. I feel the need for much more meditation in the Movement and this is quite a current theme at the moment, and it's self-confidence that one gets and actual direct links with the Dharma in that sort of way. The power of meditation, energy, that comes from meditation. I feel really that more retreats, just Order retreats, I see the need for that, for the Order to come together and really discover their identity as an Order.

S: Do you feel that doesn't happen at the weekends?

Padmaraja: Well not really. They've been quite unsuccessful, the Order weekends, to the extent that we're thinking of changing our structure to try bring that element in.

S: I think one must beware of thinking in terms simply of changing the structure rather than people's attitude. After all there's the opportunity to meditate together but do people take it? Or do they not?

Kamalasila: The change of structure that was suggested is very slight. Just reversing the two dates and having more of a structured programme so that more people would meditate.

Subhuti: One of the things we did actually decide, which unfortunately didn't come out in the minutes, was that the chairmen will make a considerable effort to take more seriously and put more effort.

S: For instance at the Vinehall retreat at the beginning, some of you know I made a special appeal to the Order members present to be regular in their attendance at meditations, not to see meditations as optional so you can go and have a bit of a chat if you want to, and so on, and I was in fact very well supported in that. [Pause]

Lokamitra: Is the reporting-in still a good thing?

S: Judging by the write up in *Shabda*, it's better than ever. The standard of reporting-in has certainly improved. It's still my main source of information for what Order members are doing, because not all of them write to me by any means. Nor are all of them involved with centre activities, so that I would know through centre minutes. I think reporting-in is less subjective than it used to be and much more positive.

_____: Very long though.

S: They are broken up into afternoon sessions now I think.

_____: They haven't been yet.

_____: From today.

S: Ah.

Kamalasila: I think if more Order members came to Order retreats that would be good. The last Order retreat we had at Christmas really had quite an effect on some of the Order members, just because it was an Order retreat.

S: I get the impression that Order weekends being held in London means there's a bit of a gravitational pull from London itself to go out and enjoy yourself and go to the pub or go and see a film rather than participating really fully, wholeheartedly, in the Order weekend. That's the impression I've had several times. Or even not staying for the whole weekend.

Kamalasila: There's not much feeling of participating in the Order as the spiritual community. It's more one to one communication between individuals. That's much more the emphasis.

Subhuti: But also the fact that the whole weekend was bedeviled by business meetings.

S: Again one mustn't say 'bedeviled'. I think one has to be very careful here because those meetings presumably were necessary for the Movement as a whole. It might have not been the best occasion to have them.

Devamitra: That was the conclusion that we came to. I think everybody acknowledges that the meetings were necessary but it was just a real drag having them on the occasion of the Order weekend, because it took people away from the main purpose of the weekend.

S: Anyway that's dealt with, isn't it.

I think the emphasis should definitely be on Order members being together as an Order rather than taking it as an opportunity of going off and doing sort of semi-social things, maybe with some of your favourite fellow Order members. Individual contact we know is important but the Order weekend is primarily an opportunity for people to be together as an Order.

_____ : So you think there should be, for want of a better word, sort of mass things going on.

S: Oh yes.

_____ : Do all the business together, all the study together, rather than people going off in twos and threes.

S: Well they can make their own private arrangements to do that on other occasions or the evening before or the day after but an Order meeting is an Order meeting, an Order weekend is an Order weekend.

Kamalasila: Order weekends being more on a par with the Order meeting.

S: Yes. An extended Order meeting, yes. Certainly you see individuals in between but the emphasis should be on definitely participating in the, for want of a better term, the group occasions. A lot of people I think just give these quite secondary importance. I think that is a mistake. That breaks up things quite a lot.

Padmaraja: It would be ideal if we had - we were discussing this at a chairmen's meeting - a large country house somewhere where it could be residential and a sort of retreat. There wouldn't be this pull from the lights of London.

S: Well you've got that at *Vajraloka* on a small scale. There's no pull from the lights of where is it?

Padmaraja: Thinking of the actual Order Weekend itself.

S: Ah yes. That's true, yes, yes. I think London itself is quite a distraction. I think you have to make a firm resolution that when you go for Order weekends, it's Order weekend. Forget about looking at 'Time Out' and all the rest of it. An Order weekend you're just there for the Order occasions. Sometimes it's almost taken as the sort of norm that if an Order member, especially one who doesn't live in London, finds himself in London, well it's an occasion for a bit of social life and seeing films and all that, which may be all right, it's not necessarily unskilful, but then I think here the good can

be the enemy of the best.

[End of tape one tape two]

I think one has to decide quite definitely. When I was down in London and elsewhere visiting, I decided beforehand that I was going to devote myself entirely to seeing people. I wasn't going to see a film or anything of that sort, even though otherwise I might have done, but I made that decision in advance, that I was there definitely to see people. So I think one has to that sort of thing when one goes for the Order weekend. It's not an opportunity of doing a variety of other things just because you happen to be in London or just because you don't have other things to do. [Pause]

Those or you especially who go down to London from outside, do you feel a sort of gravitational pull to go and see films rather than to associate with your fellow Order members in a puja, meditation and study and so on? If so you just have to watch it.

Suvajra: If it's just films you can go at other times.

S: Looking up old girlfriends even. I've known that happen. Spending time with them. [Laughter]

But anyway how does that tie up with this question of morale? It's really strengthening, in a way, the Order identity. Not allowing occasions like Order weekends just to be dissipated on the part of a number of people.

Vajradaka: Something I noticed when I went to *Sukhavati* the other day, I noticed before I left a certain number of what I'd call young Order members that make very light of things like meditation and Order contact and Order weekends, and joke about it in a very derogatory manner. Not just amongst themselves, which would perhaps be bad enough, but in front of mitras, and as far as I can see it they don't have any kind of lead or any kind of example from the more experienced Order members, who just don't take them aside and say, 'look, I don't think you should do this. I think it's harming you and you've got the wrong attitude, got the wrong end of the stick, and not only that it is demoralising the mitras who in some senses have more integrity than you.'

S: Yes.

Vajradaka: And I feel that at the LBC they just have to take a much firmer line and lay it on them, because it's been happening so long.

S: I don't like to use the expression 'setting an example', but in a sense this is what it amounts to, that by your own sort of heartfelt involvement in something you do have an effect upon others. You don't do it just for the sake of effect, you genuinely are involved yourself. You have realised the need to be involved, or you want to be involved anyway.

Vajradaka: It seems to me that in this particular instance that I saw that there was a sort of certain smugness on his part. He was almost determined to do it, and it's quite difficult just to resist on the level of the example, especially when it's been going on for a long time.

Lokamitra: You can go into it with him. Take them out and really let them know your feelings about it.

S: One might meet one or two *micchaditthis* here about showing their individuality by not being involved on group occasions, but obviously, well I don't even need to tell you where the mistake is, it's obvious where it is, but this is something that I have heard.

Mangala: I think it's just a pity they have to be held at the LBC - Order weekends - I know it's central (unclear)

S: Well again it's not just the place. It's people knowing why they are there and taking a strong..... The place is quite all right actually. It's people's weakness that is harmful.

Subhuti: It almost ought to be run like a closed retreat. You come in at the beginning and you go out at the end. Either you participate in everything or you don't bother to turn up. It would be better if it was like that.

Abhaya: Maybe that's what it needs. A bit of weeding.

S: Well no it can't have weeding, in the sense that you can't prohibit anybody from coming, but the more responsible people should insist on a certain standard of behaviour and participation, and themselves live up to that.

Subhuti: Could not Order members decide that that's the sort of weekend they want?

S: What do you mean?

Subhuti: Well, that everybody turns up. You either come for the whole thing or just not at all, or do you think that would be...

S: No, I don't think..... encourage, insist if you like, that everybody comes and that everybody participates and they - I don't again like to use the word 'ought', that raises some people's hackles, but it's in a sense their duty as an Order member. If they don't feel that themselves well they somehow or other have got hold of the wrong end of the stick.

Nagabodhi: There does seem to be a feeling, I think amongst some of the Chairmen when we discussed this before. Several of us felt this, a resistance to yet another structured event, and to see a value in Order Days more as the opportunity to get together with one person, two people at a time. You are definitely upholding the value of relating to....

S: Oh yes, it's your only occasion apart from your Convention every two years.

Nagabodhi: Well I suppose it is also your only occasion to have individual contact.

S: But you see an individual contact is much easier to arrange, it's much easier for you to arrange to get together with one other person than to get together with fifty other people, you see. And also I'm not excluding the individual contact. Surely there will be gaps in between, but what I'm saying is that many people sort of ignore the, as it were, collective activity. They feel that those are optional and you're free to miss out on them, and it represents a backsliding, that they're missing out on the meditation or they're just going and seeing some pretty indifferent film perhaps, or just going round to the pub. It all just seems very very second rate. Rather than really having a positive inspiring weekend together, which you're quite able to have.

Subhuti: It can become a sort of downward going spiral as well because if it is disappointing then more people don't attend.

S: Yes! But I think it's up to the chairmen to be very careful of the example that they set. I won't say 'mind you set a good example' but I will say 'be very careful that you don't set a bad example'.

And arrive on time. I think this is very important. Don't turn up late and walk in half way through the proceedings or have to go early, unless there's some really cast iron reason. Really set aside that weekend. If your bus has broken down, obviously that's not your fault, but go all out and make a real effort to be there for the whole of the weekend, not, as I said, arrive half way through. I've been down there sometimes when people have come in half way through the reporting-in, and it's quite disturbing that they haven't been there from the beginning, and I remember in cases I recollect that those people just lived a few hundred yards away, not people who had to come down from Glasgow or from Manchester, no, they were people right on the doorstep, and quite a lot of them I remember. Not just one or two.

Had you any other thoughts? I think also - just a general point - if one does feel not very happy about anything in the Order, don't just grouse about it. There's a tendency sometimes just to grouse to your own friends, or even to come and grouse to me. No, yourself do something about it. Which doesn't necessarily mean just indulging in criticism, but, as it were, doing something yourself to counteract that particular tendency. Otherwise you get the case of say an Order member who sort of criticises everyone for not joining in things during the weekend and so many people missing the meditation but if you ask him what he was doing you find that he was one of those who probably missed nearly everything. It's not enough just to take a back seat and talk in terms of them and criticise them. It's also you and you've got to do something about it. I do sometimes notice Order members talking about the Order in them terms rather than us terms. I think that's quite a serious mistake.

What else have you got down?

Manjuvajra: Something that maybe relates to that is Patience and result related power.

Lokamitra: Sorry can I just go back on this point? Just one more thing that has been on my mind. You may all disagree with me. I wonder whether people don't need to move up and out a bit, to leave more room for younger Order members to feel more responsibility. Most of us have been effectively running things for quite a few years now, and I wonder whether that wouldn't stimulate things a little bit.

Abhaya: Isn't this on the agenda?

Lokamitra: Is it? It was just as it was concerned with morale in the Order.

Manjuvajra: I think that's right as well, because.....

S: It applies more in some areas than others.

Manjuvajra: One of the things I think that limits people morale is they don't feel that they've got their space, and one of the things that seems to be limiting the chairmen is the feeling that they feel they've got too much on, and I'm sure these two are actually related. It's like in one way the chairmen

are frightened to let go of their jobs. They feel, to use your terminology, they feel they have the duty to keep all that going, but on the other hand if they did that then other people would be forced to take more responsibility or they can see the movement falling about their feet.

Lokamitra: There must be perfectly capable people. Also the fact that some chairmen are in a confused state and are lacking initiative at present. It's not going to help.

Sthiramati: I think differently because there's a lot more contact between chairmen than amongst Order members. I feel even at Order weekends when people are there things are sort of stratified out and the chairmen get together and younger Order members just hang around, (unclear), and it's very kind of stagnant. There could be lot more cross fertilisation as it were. I think the chairmen have got a lot to offer, but they don't actually offer it to younger Order members. Contact stays amongst the chairmen.

Lokamitra: If we're not careful we get a situation where everything becomes very comfortably established. The younger ones should be challenging the older ones anyway. Almost forcing them to keep on their toes and so on, but I don't feel any of that happening (unclear).

Prakasha: I think it's true around the LBC that people do find there's not enough space for them to get involved. There's plenty of things need doing, there's no shortage of that, but people actually experience the fact that they haven't got enough territory, haven't got enough space, they're not able to get in.

S: Is it territory rather than work that they need?

Subhuti: There's plenty of work so it must be territory.

Lokamitra: I'm not even thinking in those terms. I'm thinking that there are people who could perhaps contribute more if they had more responsibility, and that would give more life to the Order.

Subhuti: You mentioned yesterday that when you were in India for a year and a half you had no choice, and you're still not making clear our position, and I think it actually does bring an enormous amount out of you. You're in a position where you started something and you've got to see it through.

Lokamitra: But you did that with *Sukhavati*, but again I don't think a lot of chairmen here have that situation because they've got other chairmen and I think this is one of the reasons why they have got problems they do have, because it's almost as if they don't have to force through.... well maybe force is the wrong word, but get (unclear) to solve their difficulty.

S: Do you really think they're not delegating enough and do you think that that there are the people there to whom they could delegate more?

Lokamitra: Bhante, I don't know the situation here quite frankly, but I have seen those people mostly around year after year, except for a few, and I do know that many other people, bright people, have been ordained in that time. I don't know really whether they're capable or not but I should imagine...

Padmaraja: You're asking why aren't they coming through?

Lokamitra: In a way yes.

S: Well perhaps chairmen could just speak individually for their centres about this, and their experience in that respect. I think it's very difficult to generalise because conditions do vary very much from centre to centre.

Padmaraja: I'll talk for my centre. My boys are coming through. They're the stars of tomorrow. They do run the show actually. I'm there as a chairman and I kind of give the wheel an occasional turn when I see things are getting a bit off course but it's very much on them to run the show, and they are growing and the future is very much with them.

Lokamitra: Do you see them as taking over in the foreseeable future?

Padmaraja: Absolutely. We're working towards that. Again it's a very demanding situation, it's quite big, quite dynamic and there are very few of them. Each one of them has to absolutely just so, otherwise we're not going to survive, and they know that. There's no opportunity to be anything other than there. If they can't handle it then they go.

S: How many Order members are there?

Padmaraja: There's me and Padmavajra at *Aryatara*, and at *Kalpadruma* there's Lalitaratna, Tejananda and Ratnapani, and at the new CBC project, just working on site, is Viramati and Devaraja.

Lokamitra: The LBC is the largest complex.

S: What's the position there?

Prakasha: I think there's only about say seven Order members within the co-operative. There are certainly not all that many. There's probably about a dozen who effectively take responsibility for both the Centre and the co-operative. There's a wide range of activities going on with regard to Order members' involvement. Aid for India, there's publications and Windhorse Associates. There's just a lot of different things happening in the area. We've certainly got a big shortage of Order members who are taking responsibility in co-operatives but there's a lot of Order members in the area, there's no doubt about it.

S: Order members in the area perhaps, not actually living in *Sukhavati*, who are not taking, in a sense, their fair share of the responsibility.

Prakasha: They're certainly all doing things, but not so directly involved with the centre.

Subhuti: To take a case in point there's Kuladeva and Kulamitra who are both capable and have got plenty of energy etc., but it's taken both quite a long time to actually find something that they can put themselves into.

S: They certainly have been encouraged.

Subhuti: Yes.

S: This is sort of wider issue. It only arises in connection with the LBC at the moment, but it could arise in the case of other centres in the future. Because there's a strong centre there and many activities, you get a lot of hangers on, even some, unfortunately, Order members. By hangers on I mean those who sort of go along and they join in activities and benefit from them presumably but who don't really take on much, if anything, in the way of responsibility.

Vajradaka: In a sense it's easier with a smaller centre because the sense of responsibility is so much more immediate.

S: Yes.

Vajradaka: So maybe that atmosphere has to be almost artificially created with a big centre in some way. I don't know how that would be done.

Manjuvajra: There was something that came from a meeting recently at the LBC and people were talking about the pioneer spirit, and maybe just something has to happen to the LBC to reintroduce that pioneering spirit, which effectively means some sort of expansion.

S: I don't think it's the people who are there actually working. I think the majority of them are really working hard and well, but it's what I've called the 'hangers on' who are in the area, and especially in the case of Order members, not fully involved, who dilute things, in a sense almost by their mere presence in the area.

Vajradaka: I think it's both actually. I think that there are people working there, Order members who are working in the co-operative and even involved in running things at the centre, who aren't pulling their weight, and who are afraid to in some way, as well as the people who are not.....

S: I noticed this move to sort of move out of say communities and into one's own flat and be a bit peripheral. Well under certain circumstances that can be justified. For instance in the case of Chintamani I think it's fully justified because of what he's doing and how he's spending his time, but in the case of others one feels it isn't always as positive as that. You just remain safely near the centre but you're not really accepting any responsibility.

I have talked about this on other occasions before, that those who are involved have to make more of an effort actually to contact these peripheral people, these relative hangers on, and talk to them and just try to enlist more support from them.

Subhuti: It is very difficult because a lot of them are hangers on for a particular reason, and there's an automatic sort of.....

S: There are many rationalisations, I know.

Subhuti: Also may feel that you're out to pressure them even just if you're making friendly contact.

_____: You're talking in very general terms, which can be a bit dangerous. Are there specific people that you're talking about? Do you know who they are? I think one has to be careful. I'm just building up an image of what might be there and is it actually there. Are there specific people who fall into the category of hangers on in the Order around the LBC?

Mangala: This discussion's getting very very centred on the LBC now.

S: Well it is our biggest centre.

Nagabodhi: Now we've started I think it could be quite interesting.

Padmaraja: If you want to talk about Brighton matey, be careful! I think communication is a very very major factor. I think it's important that people know exactly what's happening, and I think the size of the LBC works against that, and the complexity. It's very difficult to be in touch with what's happening. I think people tend to feel a little bit out of contact, a bit impotent maybe, as if what they're doing doesn't really count.

Subhuti: I think that's a separate point actually. I think that is a difficulty for the people who are centrally involved. What we are saying is that there are a fringe, a penumbra of Order members who aren't even in contact enough, and don't even want to be in contact enough to feel that they don't know what's going on. That is a problem.

_____ : Can I just ask who are these people?

Prakasha: I don't think there is in a real bad sense (unclear) Most of them do come to Order meetings. The more peripheral Order members that aren't living in communities are actually doing things. I just experience it perhaps as more a lack of real inspiration, really sort of putting themselves in the situation. Not that they're not doing anything at all. It's just that perhaps they could be doing so much more. They are all perhaps working full time at something or other. They are all going to one or two classes. They will perhaps come to the Sunday meeting every so often, but perhaps they feel they could be doing twice as much if they were really inspired and geared up.

S: Anyone seen anything of Luvah while we're on the subject?

_____ : No.

Nagabodhi: I bumped into him a couple of weeks ago but it was very very brief.

Subhuti: Does Siddhiratna keep up contact?

Nagabodhi: Very occasionally.

Lokamitra: What I was getting at earlier and here's the point was, not that I'd like to see anyone go from here but I'd like to see new people, younger people in the chairmen's meeting. I think it needs it, I think (unclear). Maybe this is a longer term thing but other chairmen - Vajradaka mentioned it, myself, moving out of England even, and leaving much more space in England for.... I do think it needs something like that.

S: This is one of the reasons, of course, that I'm having this Florence course, to give a push to at least part of the younger generation of new Order members, because hopefully - no promises are being made and one doesn't know what will happen in the course of three months, but I'm hoping - that all twenty will be ordained, but I'm hoping that they, in most cases, will be able to play a quite active part in centre activities as soon as they either go back to where they came from or go to new centres or even go and start new centres somewhere.

Lokamitra: You see if the chairmen's meeting still consists of us then it could hold back the burst of energy which comes about from that. You see what I mean? Because there have been first class people ordained in the last several years, but in a way their energy - I don't experience it but maybe I would if I was living here - I don't experience it as I expected to in the Movement.

S: I must say one thing that I've noticed though, that though some people are good and committed and so on, not many seem to have much in the way of ability or talent. I've been feeling this quite a lot lately, because quite often one can't find people to do certain things. No one seems to have the necessary ability or skill. Skills and talents seem to be in quite short supply.

Lokamitra: I don't have basic skills, I don't have any talents.

S: Well you see I say the same thing about myself but people say that it's not argument. I didn't have an education, anything to speak of, less than anybody, but people won't accept that.

Lokamitra: I don't really see (unclear)

S: I think that doesn't necessarily follow because some people have been failures as chairmen. They have not risen to the occasion. We've had several examples of that. For instance ***** started up something on his own in Edinburgh. He wasn't exactly chairman but he was responsible for that, despite many warnings and so on, but then again ***** was certainly not a success in Manchester.

Lokamitra: It think it's the way they went about things. Personally I was against both of those things, even so long ago, and I think obviously you can't just throw responsibility in people's laps, you have to do it skilfully.

S: On the other hand when ***** left, others rose to the occasion.

Lokamitra: Exactly! That's the sort of thing I'm getting at.

S: And also ***** wasn't nearly as successful as had been hoped.

Lokamitra: But it's not that we should throw people into the deep end. I don't believe in that, but try and encourage the creation of situations which we know will develop the best in them. If it doesn't then it's not too late for them to stand down or not to go on.

Kamalasila: I think it does come down to morale. I think it does come down to sort of making it obvious that that's what people should be doing. Other Order members should be thinking in those sort of terms. I don't know if they are.

S: They've got to be educated by the older people.

Lokamitra: We have to create conditions whereby that will happen.

Kamalasila: But I think the conditions exist to a great extent. I'm sure we could be more open to it but I've.....

Lokamitra: I see there is nothing being done. I see Padmaraja perhaps doing it at *Aryatara*. I don't see it happening in other places, except perhaps at the LBC. I don't see any systematic working in that way.

Devamitra: But there are no other Order members in all the other centres apart from the chairman virtually.

Lokamitra: Yes but why not. I mean Brighton's been going on for years, Manchester, Glasgow. West London is now building up. Publications has been going on for a few years.

Mangala: (unclear) A few years back, perhaps not even that far back, when people got ordained I think most people saw it very much in terms of working around or in a centre. I think now a lot more people are doing other things. They're not immediately thinking oh yes I'll work in a co-operative (unclear). They're thinking of going back to college and doing outside jobs and activities and there's a just much wider spectrum of (unclear), and they're not all very happy living in communities either. It seems to be that things are moving out in a sense from what used to be a relatively small kind of concept of what being an Order member meant, I think it's now widening out a lot.

Kamalasila: It's partly widening out because there's a lack of general realisation of what it means to be an Order member.

S: If people make a conscious decision that in the interests of their personal development and ultimately in that of the Movement, they're going to give a smaller place to centre activities or even go back to college, well that's fine. I don't think that is what is happening. I think more often than not they're just following subjective interests in a quite self indulgent sort of way, to the comparative neglect of their commitment as an Order member.

Lokamitra: I think it comes down to more Kalyana Mitrata. For example Padmaraja and I were discussing ***** yesterday. I mean you can see that eventually if he gets over certain aspects of himself he will be able to contribute a great deal to the Movement, but it's almost as if you have to help people, encourage people in certain directions so that they develop what is best in them. There are a number of others in the Movement. Maybe it's been done, I know Subhuti.....

Kamalasila: But no one's holding ***** back are they. I mean *****'s getting all that isn't he.

Lokamitra: Yes *****'s getting that but he's an example of what could happen with others. Do you see....

S: But he's not ready to take over as a chairman anywhere at the moment, even though he's been around so many years. I've known him quite a lot.

Kamalasila: (unclear) I don't really see anybody else being held back.

Subhuti: You're making two different points I think. You were making one point which was that you thought people weren't being given the space to move forwards, and you are now saying it's not just a question of that, it's also a question of them being given encouragement to.....

Lokamitra: We can't charge round irresponsibly. We have to create the situation where we can

leave. Where we see people with potential in that field we have to help it to grow, we have to encourage it.

S: You're saying not enough attention is being given to this aspect.

Lokamitra: For example Padmaraja and I see that ***** should not work with any stronger person soon at some point. He's always got Buddhadasa, Subhuti, Padmaraja. He should work with peer Order members and that's, in a way his next step.

S: It needs more serious systematic consideration, not be left so much to chance as it appears to be.

Lokamitra: We should be creating situations where Buddhadasa and (unclear) are making ourselves redundant and....

S: Well you'll be redundant whether you like it or not! *[Laughter]* Yes.

Lokamitra: I don't know what is going on so forgive me if I'm wrong but I do feel more could be done in that way.

S: In the case of the LBC, as I've said before, they've sort of missed a whole generation of Order members just because so much energy was being put into the creation of the building that the other side of things just had to be neglected, so there's a whole generation of Order members missing there.

Devamitra: In a way they've come in from other areas of the movement.

Devamitra: Right yes. Kuladeva, Kulamitra, Kulananda, Mahamati. In a way they are they are the people, one could say they were the missing generation, and I think those people are there actually.

S: But that of course means that they're missing elsewhere.

Devamitra: Yes, it's just that you've mentioned it as specific to the LBC.

Nagabodhi: Those people are in fact.

Devamitra: They are taking responsibility. Mahamati runs a business and he runs a community.

S: And Tejamati who is a product of London and he's doing quite well and he's very responsible.

Devamitra: I actually think that there are a lot of Order members down at the LBC taking responsibility and coming on but the difficulty at the LBC seems more a question of cohesion of the whole thing, and that's what I personally find difficult, and I think a lot of other people find difficult down there too.

Padmaraja: It comes back to that question of communication and an overall cohesive vision for the whole complex.

S: To me it doesn't seem all that big. It's quite small in a way. It seems ridiculous if there's apparently this small number of people, not really fifty, living a lot of them in one building and the rest very near just can't keep in communication with one another. Especially as they, that is the Order

members, have a monthly Order weekend anyway sort of laid on.

Manjuvajra: I think maybe now is the time for the LBC to expand and for something else to happen. I feel that in a way the people are too closely packed together to be able to really express themselves.

S: Well this comes back to territory in a way.

Nagabodhi: What you're thinking of is more communities, more businesses?

_____ : Classes in new places.

S: Yes, starting up new centres.

_____ : An idea I thought was quite good was the idea of the what we call the satellite centres, just small basements in Ilford and Wapping, where people can go and actually really.....

S: Quite unpromising places. One of the things I've been thinking lately is people are too precious about starting up in nice places. You see what I mean, where, 'oh the surroundings are beautiful' and all that kind of thing. I think we should also in some ways make a point of starting up in the worst areas where something is really needed. Say somewhere like Brixton, why not try there? It's going to be difficult and tough but people seem quite self indulgent in this way generally. People sheer away from the towns of the industrial north where we've got a very promising field.

Nagabodhi: It is just a running joke. Somewhere says I'm thinking of starting a centre somewhere. You just say 'Oh Sheffield is it' and everyone bursts out laughing.

S: Well it's an excellent place.

Devamitra: But in a way Bethnal Green is an unpromising place.

S: Yes.

Devamitra: I don't think we're going to very easily involve the local population, and I think that is an unpromising place to have a centre.

Prakasha: A couple of people have expressed interest in starting something in Camden in North London.

S: Yes, right.

Padmaraja: It would do an awful lot to the (unclear) if you got that going. Energy pouring in.

Subhuti: I've seen this question that's been raised is that often people are not ready to be chairmen or to take on completely independently, but they can take on something small within the bigger situation, and I think ... I know Aid for India is separate but it seems to have been the making of Kulamitra, and I think there needs to be much more of that opportunity given to people. Like Mahamati in Friends Foods, it's his thing. The big thing can be seen as an assemblage of a number of smaller territories.

S: More like a republic than a kingdom.

Subhuti: Yes, a federation.

Manjuvajra: Also it's much easier to be receptive to other people and to engage with other people if you feel you've got something of your own that is properly satisfying.

Prakasha: There's a lot of talk about smaller situations and needing smaller situations, smaller communities, smaller classes around the LBC. Maybe if we can start another centre up, say in North London, and I think a lot of people would actually go for it because it would be quite a small situation which they can relate to. There won't be a problem with getting Order members to go to it.

Subhuti: I must say I think this question of size is a bit of a red herring, and I think there's a bit of danger in that. I don't think it's so much a question of the size but of the cohesiveness of the particular situation. It could be quite a big situation but with a number of people working closely together.

Manjuvajra: I think where the size plays a part is for the people coming along, but I think if you have something fairly small it's much easier for people coming along to immediately feel part of what's going on, whereas if you've got something large they can't but help seeing it as an institution.

Lokamitra: But it's partly the people, isn't it. People taking the classes. If you can relate to the same person every week then obviously someone who you can have some confidence in will make a lot of difference. But if so many people are not attending classes and you go to one class and it's one person, one obviously quite junior person, another class it's someone else, that's not going to lead to confidence.

Devamitra: I'm not quite sure what you're getting at.

Lokamitra: Well I don't know what happens at classes but I should imagine that.... well something struck me about Prakasha when - I don't know whether you said you don't go to any classes or don't take...

Prakasha: I don't take any classes, I only go to them.

Lokamitra: I think it's quite important that this.....

S: Yes, it may be good to let a very young junior Order member take a class from his point of view, but what about a member of the public coming directly for the first time and just finding - maybe he or she's an older person - and you just find this very obviously young, relatively inexperienced, person. That isn't going to inspire much confidence.

Prakasha: That doesn't happen at the LBC. It's mainly very experienced people who are taking the classes.

S: No, if one is thinking of the situation of say satellite centres and small classes and then perhaps quite inexperienced people taking them, that could be the way it looks from the point of view of the public.

Lokamitra: I think people do have to have strong figures to relate to in any sort of centre, whether or not they're taking classes, but I feel that was important at *Pundarika*. Even though I wasn't taking classes I would attend as often as possible, and I know that....

S: Well they must feel something spiritually strong and authentic, not just someone who's struggling with his problems in the same way that they are but he just happens to be an Order member - whatever that is, from their point of view - and he's sort of supposed to be leading. They don't feel that they can really have confidence in him as a leader say of a meditation group or whatever. They should be able to feel real confidence in him, whether he is young or old. So I think one must beware of not placing too much emphasis on very young Order members having a class that they can call their own, sort of thing. That is one factor to be considered but one must also consider the impression created on the new person coming straight in.

Abhaya: I think if I had a place like the LBC and facilities being created for class training. Like a few people take classes and then hopefully someone else who is capable of taking classes will eventually emerge, and that seems to be quite a problem. Devamitra, you said that there's just no one who can take classes, only about a handful of people, so there's this pressing problem, so why don't we do something towards actually training people?

S: Well again this is partly what the Florence course is for, because people are going to be preparing talks, there are going to be speakers classes.

Abhaya: But I mean within centres there's an ongoing thing which is part of say the LBC programme, will be actually training people to become, because actually taking classes, it takes quite a lot of experience.

S: Right yes.

[End of side one side two]

Abhaya: And to just sort of be suddenly put up there obviously people, the public, aren't going to have confidence in, but actually giving people experience, I know from speakers classes they can be very valuable, but we don't seem to do anything in terms of training people in taking classes.

S: Are there speakers classes anywhere in the movement, in the centres?

Devamitra: Not at the LBC at the moment. We've been talking about it but haven't actually done anything.

Suvajra: We hold a sort of one. On mitra nights we have a mitra who gives a talk on a specific subject, to do a critical appraisal of it and then (unclear).

Abhaya: Otherwise it's a sort of back room with a few leading people taking classes and the hope that a few talented people will emerge.

Padmaraja: This goes back to Lokamitra's point, this bringing people up.

S: So it does seem that when people do have this general awareness that well in some cases the more

capable people do objectively have too much to do; two, that there's a need for them to be replaced, but very few actual concrete systematic steps seem to be taken. People just complain or they ventilate the need and just hope that something will happen. They don't take any, as I said, concrete systematic steps to ensure that it does happen, by way of particular training, encouragement, Kalyana Mitrata, and so on.

Vajradaka: I think a valid approach for actually getting people into the water, to use that metaphor, rather than just throwing them in the deep end, is to have the classes at the centre which are led by the most experienced people as they are now, to have the speakers classes, but also to have a completely new programme, and that programme, to use an American word, would be the 'outreach' programme, and the 'outreach' programme is giving talks and short meditation classes at various institutions, classes, movements, who are interested, and they would actually be well organised in the sense that there would be one or two senior Order members who would actually co-ordinate the whole thing and initially go around with people, and the younger Order members would actually perhaps give the talks right from the beginning. It wouldn't be a very intense situation, they are usually quite small, and at the same time they would have the feedback of the senior Order member who went with them. Because I think that the main quality of getting experience in giving classes is just getting the confidence in dealing with people. I don't think there's a hell of a lot that you can learn as such. It's more experience in a way. So having a rather kind of low key way of having that experience is very valuable, and I've suggested it to ***** for example, because for example at the moment I don't think he should lead classes at the centre, but I think it would be valid for him to go out.

S: I noticed in your minutes he's coming for three weeks in June.

Vajradaka: He's probably going to come on a retreat.

Subhuti: You have to be a bit careful because if you don't consider somebody adequate for a centre why should they be any more adequate meeting people and giving talks outside the centre. They're equally going to be seen as the representative view of the FWBO, but I take your point to some extent.

Vajradaka: I don't think it's quite so important outside actually.

S: What about answering questions, because new people, complete strangers outside on their own territory especially can ask some quite awkward questions, so is an inexperienced person the best person to handle that sort of situation? Supposing there is a senior Order member with him and he tells him afterwards, 'well you should have said this or answered in that way', well damage has already been done, and it doesn't look good for him to take over, as it were, on that particular occasion and answer instead.

Devamitra: Also I did go to a school recently where another Order member had given a talk about six to eight months previously and the schoolteacher just said she couldn't actually make head or tail of what he was actually getting at when talking about Buddhism. She much preferred my approach. So you've got to be careful because you do have quite a strong impression.

Vajradaka: But you have to start somewhere don't you.

Devamitra: All right, but maybe that's not.....

S: Yes, but there is the point to be made that very junior people or inexperienced people, people who are not very good at meeting the public should be introduced to the public with great caution. Like when we had the television people coming to Padmaloka, I told Subhuti to make sure that he was the main person interviewed, and I spoke myself to other members of the community, I got Subhuti to speak to them, and primed them about being on their toes and being careful what they said, even though they would be just asked one or two questions perhaps. It's so easy to create a wrong impression.

Vajradaka: But some of the new people that we're talking about, new Order members, have been Order members for five years.

S: Oh, I didn't think you were talking about them.

Vajradaka: I mean when you look around there are quite a lot of Order members who are still considered young Order members, who haven't really done very much....

S: When I say young Order members I definitely mean those who've been ordained a year or so.

Nagabodhi: I would have thought the best facility for people getting used to teaching is to support Order members in courses. Classes where they actually can make a contribution or they can be asked not to make one, but on a six week course you can get a tremendously good feel for someone, how they can handle the public, and I think we've got the facilities.

Subhuti: It just needs to be more consciously undertaken.

Nagabodhi: Yes.

Subhuti: Certainly something that I've noticed is that very few Order members are studying, that is (unclear) a study group, so if you need to have a new study group the next lot of Order members probably haven't studied for two years or on an occasional retreat or something like that.

S: Is this so? This surprises me a bit. Is there a lack of study?

Nagabodhi: There are Order members who are leading mitra study and there are some Order members leading study for Friends but people who aren't actually leading study there's no set up facilities for that to happen. Sometimes at odd Order meetings on Sundays there are study groups but that's quite exceptional. There aren't actually facilities.

Subhuti: Unless you're supporting study you don't have a study group.

S: Also I think not very many people study much by themselves. For instance I've had the experience of Order members telling me with a sort of little chuckle, Order members having been ordained three or four years, will say 'I'm going on a solitary retreat, I've made up my mind I'm going to try and get through your 'Survey', I've never read it yet'. This happens every now and then.

Nagabodhi: It's a lovely book to read on a solitary. *[Laughter]* [Pause] That does raise a general point in my view which is maybe connected which is not just the lack of study, study in the Order, and yet there are study groups, so there is study to that extent, but for example your tapes are very

rarely played these days at centres. I don't know how much reading Friends and mitras do. Some I know do do a lot, but I think it is quite possible for people to get quite involved and quite deeply involved in maybe very good ways, to get ordained, but without really knowing very much Dharma at all.

S: But that may be sufficient for their personal practice, but it will not be sufficient if they have to deal with other new people or to go out into external situations. For the sake of your personal practice you don't need to know about the *Madhyamika* or *Yogachara* perhaps, but supposing you're invited out to a philosophy department of a university to give a lecture on Buddhism, well you might have to face questions of that sort.

Sthiramati: I connect with what you're saying about younger Order members being encouraged to support courses. I mean I've never actually supported a Buddhism course but I was always encouraged to attend centre activities (unclear) and I think that was a really excellent kind of training for me, just seeing other people leading a class. Just being encouraged to have that contact and to attend classes all the time. So I learned a lot just through watching.

Nagabodhi: Sometimes I've had the impression that people come and complain that they're not being given a chance to lead classes when actually you've not even seen them at the centre for a long time and they only want to come on those terms.

S: Yes I think that one has to be very careful of.

Devamitra: There's one other difficulty at the LBC - people complain or I've been complaining recently about going to classes and certainly a lot of Order members and Mitras I think don't want to go to classes.

S: Why is that?

Devamitra: We had a big discussion about it the day before you came here and there were a number of factors that emerged. Maybe you or Manjuvajra or Prakasha can....

S: But was this a community discussion or centre....

Devamitra: It was a meeting for all Order members involved in classes at the LBC on Thursday morning, and the only complaint, so far as I can recall was that people complained that classes were very formal at the LBC. It was specifically in reference to the Tuesday class, which is the Friends night, the regulars night.

S: What did they mean by that?

Devamitra: I think it was the general atmosphere which pervades the centre. Presumably to some extent that reflects on the way that I conduct the class, as I've been taking that, but I think it wasn't just my leadership that was being criticised, it was more a sort of ambience that we seemed to generate amongst ourselves in the centre.

Manjuvajra: People were expressing that they felt a lack of spontaneity and naturalness from themselves in the class.

S: I think one has to be very careful about mixing up your own behaviour with format, because when people speak in this way - it's too formal - that you start at the same time and it's as though well you should be able to start any old time and do anything you wanted or have a bit of karate in the shrine room if you felt like it, otherwise sing a song in the corner, well no, one doesn't mean that surely. *[Laughter]* But it's that they themselves are not being sufficiently spontaneous in that particular situation. It really does come down to them, not the arrangements or the place or the other people or anything. Who's stopping you being spontaneous? But spontaneous doesn't mean just doing something foolish or indulging in freakish behaviour, it means really giving yourself to what you're supposed to be doing and taking.

Prakasha: Well that really was the sort of real conclusion to the discussion. We had about fifteen Order members at the meeting, all putting their feelings about the centre and actually nothing in a sense concretely emerged and we weren't able to (unclear) came down to what we've really got to do is just put more enthusiasm and imagination in it ourselves.

S: I felt this a bit at Vinehall when we had the Order meetings and I think, I don't if it was the first or the second day, but people started complaining, one or two, about how dull the Order meetings were and it was even suggested that we had them only every other day or curtailed them. I was really quite horrified by that and I think that was obvious, because it's a question of people putting themselves into the situation. I certainly had no difficulty in saying what I thought and what I felt at those meetings and I was quite glad to have that opportunity, so what's stopping anybody else in any such situation? Nothing at all, except something in themselves.

Devamitra: The point is that people don't actually want to go to the classes.

_____ : Order members and mitras.

Devamitra: Yes.

S: Well in the case of the mitras they will take their cue from the Order members. If the Order members don't feel inspired or are not spontaneous well of course why should the others want to come? But it's not the structure. This is what I'm trying to say, or not necessarily the structure or the kind of place you meet in, it's just you as an individual and your approach.

Sthiramati: If you're uninspired you...

S: Yes!

Sthiramati: possibility of (unclear) then it's going to be a washout from the start. The attraction of things like that should be that they can be inspiring and you can get a hell of a lot out of doing the same old puja, if you want.

S: Right, yes.

Sthiramati: There's nothing you can vary in the puja that will make it more attractive.

S: No, right.

_____ : Nonetheless though if you do have a situation where there's a number of people unable

to feel spontaneous, even if it's their own fault, you've still got to look around for ways to....

S: Oh yes but they've got to do that as individuals, that is outside that class, they've got to tackle themselves, or have more meditation or more discussion or more study themselves, certainly.

Sthiramati: Also it's a matter of direct contact with those people. You've got mitras or Order members who are inspired if you communicate with them directly you can transmit some of your own inspiration. I don't think there's any kind of formal thing that you can do. It's a matter of the communication, the communication of inspiration. Tackle each one separately.

S: But what seems to be lacking in the Order members themselves, do you think, with regard to classes? It seems in a way ridiculous that here you are as an Order member and you've got the chance of communicating the Dharma in a situation like that and you're not enjoying it. It seems astonishing. Why not? What's wrong with you? Or them I should say, use the right word. What sort of emerged, what transpired from the discussion?

Devamitra: It wasn't conclusive at all. It was just an exploration of what do they think is wrong with the LBC because it seems a bit flat and we're not getting people involved and all the rest of it, and then the whole question of especially the Tuesday Class was thrown up.

S: That being the Regulars' Class.

Devamitra: Yes, and people threw out different possible ideas that we could do on Tuesday and all the rest of it, but it wasn't conclusive. It was just an exploration really. I'm afraid that I didn't experience it as a very positive meeting.

S: Well I hope it just wasn't a grouse session. I think one has to be very careful that one doesn't get into a grouse session with everyone saying, 'oh how bad things are'. I felt that could have happened at the Order meetings at Vinehall. That everyone sort of grouses how bad things are and just indulges in a bit of negativity.

Manjuvajra: I don't think it was. I thought that meeting was actually quite positive. The thing that I was positive about was about ten or fifteen people actively really interested in finding the solution. We didn't come up with a concrete solution yet but I felt the atmosphere, generally speaking, at the end was one of at least we're all looking for the same solution.

S: But the solution is within themselves individually, not necessarily a change of format.

_____ : Right. I think that came through.

S: Or meeting on a different evening of the week or whatever.

Lokamitra: How many Order members go to that Friends' Class?

Devamitra: Well it varies. It's been ridiculous. Sometimes I've had four Order members with them.

Lokamitra: Four is quite good.

Devamitra: Even if you've got fifty people there! *[Laughter]*

S: Well I'd say five of you, if you're really on the ball, all five, you should be able to cope. Lokamitra is looking as though it's a luxury to have four!

Padmaraja: fifty or sixty (unclear) Order member. You've just got to have a really good team of mitras to go to beginners classes.

Sthiramati: This seems to be a matter of inspiration. If the person leading the class is inspired then that communicates and people are inspired.

S: You don't necessarily have to have a personal chat with everybody. Anyway maybe we've got a bit too specific.

What else was there on the list? I have a feeling there was something else quite important.

Manjuvajra: There was working with people, the teams, the people you work with. There was chairman's withdrawal symptoms.

S: Ah, yes.

_____ : And there was patience and the work related kind of drive.

[Discussion as to whether to stop for a break for lunch or carry on. Decision made to stop and continue after lunch]

Subhuti: In fact we're covering bits and pieces that we've put later on in the agenda sort of in advance. I wonder whether we shouldn't just decide that we're going to meet every morning and discuss and no doubt we'll get through everything.

S: Have individuals not prepared short talks?

Subhuti: They have, yes.

S: Well I think they ought to be allowed to give their talks.

Subhuti: It's not so much short talks as leading points for discussion.

S: Well let them lead off since they've presumably thought about those particular topics.

Mangala: (unclear)

S: I think I'd like to hear what each of the individuals whose names are down, with regard say to those that I attend anyway, I'm not going to attend all of them, just hear what they have to say rather than just have a sort of free for all.

Subhuti: That's not what I'm suggesting. What's happening is we're talking and then deciding what we're going to do in the afternoon. I wonder whether we wouldn't be better to decide to discuss in the mornings, study in the evenings, have the afternoons free for personal communication. I think we'll get through all of this in that way. For instance those points can come up again tomorrow and then

we can go onto the expansion of the Movement.

S: That sounds quite reasonable. I think you probably do need a break in the afternoon.

Manjuvajra: It's very enjoyable doing this discussion at the moment but maybe if we did do it all day we just sort of flag.

S: That seems more sensible actually.

Mangala: Just leave it for now and resume tomorrow morning.

S: Yes, starting off with this. Finish that and then lead into your say introduction to, or talk on, that particular topic and then discuss that more specifically.

Subhuti: So we'll treat it more as a sort of agenda and once we've actually dealt with a certain point then we just go onto the next topic.

Mangala: What is next?

Subhuti: The unity of the movement which is Devamitra, and then you ought to be standing ready with yours on the expression of the movement which will come sometime tomorrow or the next day.

[Break - Next Session]

Manjuvajra: We've still got three topics left over from yesterday. Shall we do those first?

Well there was chairman's withdrawal symptoms, patience and result related drives, and working with people, particularly working with people that you don't get on with.

S: I take it everyone knows what's meant by 'chairman's withdrawal symptoms'?

_____ : No.

S: Well you know what withdrawal symptoms are? It's pretty obvious then what chairman's withdrawal symptoms are, isn't it. You get so used to being chairman that you can't, at least for the time being, function in any other way. You find it difficult, if not impossible, not to be chairman, even in those situations where it isn't appropriate that you should be chairman. You identify with that position in an unskilful way, instead of you using the position, the position uses you and you feel uneasy if you're not in that particular role and relating to people on the basis of that particular role or that particular position.

So you're likely to experience this most of all when you actually give up being chairman for one reason or another and feel quite lost and unable to function. You may for instance find it difficult not to be chairman in a situation where your being chairman is quite irrelevant. You may find it very difficult to be in a position where you're not leading, where you're just one of the boys, where you're just the same as everybody else.

Anyone had any experience of this themselves?

Devamitra: Mmm.

S: Can you say more?

Devamitra: I just found it very difficult.

S: In what was the difficulty? Was it actually this?

Devamitra: Well to some extent it was, yes. I don't think it's something that bothers me now but it did for quite a while.

S: It's not just a question of not having particular facilities but actually a mental identification with that particular role, seeing yourself as essentially chairman, as it were, and relating to others as such. It really means that you're seeing chairman as a sort of status or position of authority which you're unwilling or unable to relinquish, either eventually when you do give that up or even in between on those occasions when you don't have to be chairman.

Subhuti: I experience what I thought of as withdrawal symptoms but I didn't see it quite like that. A loss of purpose in a way. When you're a chairman you know very definitely what you've got to do and when you stop being chairman you've suddenly got no specific responsibility and I fell into a bardo where I just didn't quite know what to do almost.

S: One has got into the habit presumably of thinking in terms of having something to do, and that is perhaps the basic mistake. You don't necessarily have to have something to do.

Manjuvajra: That sort of thing happens even if you're not chairman. If you leave the situation.

Subhuti: The chairman's a big responsibility. There are many different sort of layers, layers of different kinds of responsibilities towards different people and different things.

S: But it also suggests being psychologically dependent upon your role and your sense of identity being bound up with that.

Mangala: Perhaps you've got that from yourself rather than being chairman. You haven't got any props.

S: It goes deeper even than that I think, or can do in some instances.

_____ : In what way?

S: Well you become emotionally dependent, psychologically dependent, on that particular role in a quite deep seated sort of way, especially if you've been chairman for a long time. You've become accustomed to having the last word, being treated with a certain amount of deference etc., etc., and you find that you feel very uncomfortable if you don't get that. You find this with bhikkhus coming from the East. I noticed this when I was in the East. If you don't treat bhikkhus in a certain way they get quite uncomfortable. If you don't pay them a certain deference they don't know how to behave, don't know how to respond. They're so identified with their particular place in society. So I think chairmen have to be careful that they don't allow themselves to suffer from the same kind of thing. From what I've noticed observing bhikkhus in the East, some bhikkhus on some occasions and, here

in our Movement, some chairmen on some occasions, the symptoms are very similar. But in the case of the bhikkhus certainly they're to a much greater extent. In the case of a chairman it's something much smaller and subtler.

Devamitra: What sort of things do you notice?

S: Mainly in relating to people. You get accustomed to being listened to and people taking your opinion so seriously just because you are chairman, not because you are you. Or you expect people to give way to you, or to speak to you in a certain way, or to make special allowances for you. So I think it's something that all chairmen have to be aware of and guard against. It's quite good if sometimes they're just mixed up in the rough and tumble of things, in situations where their being chairman just doesn't count for the time being. I think one has to be quite careful that one doesn't unconsciously tend to avoid such situations.

Subhuti: Chairmen's meetings are very important from this point of view.

S: Yes indeed. Chairmen's meetings are very important from this point of view, because in a chairman's meeting a chairman is nothing special. It reminds me in a way - this is another context altogether - of when I was reading about the proceedings of the Bishops' Conference in Rome, when there were two thousand Bishops in Rome so Bishops were two a penny then, so the Bishop, who is treated with utmost deference in his own diocese where he is the boss, there experienced quite a different sort of situation where Bishops by the dozen and the score were being unceremoniously bundled into buses and told to queue up for their coffee and all sorts of things, and I thought it must have been extremely good for them, even if not intended. A mere Bishop is a nobody almost when they are Cardinals and Archbishops and Metropolitans and Primate floating around, well what's a Bishop? But in his own diocese he's everything. So you get a little taste of that when chairmen come together.

Prakasha: In the first year that I was chairman there seemed to be quite a gap between what I thought being chairman was and what I am, and other people's expectations of what a chairman is. It's only in the last six months or something I feel that being chairman and me have actually sort of come together more in that I feel that I can quite freely be myself in the situation without trying to be chairman. (unclear)

S: Because on the other hand the chairman is chairman and you can't get away from that and that responsibility he must fully accept in the situation where it is appropriate. I think chairmen have to keep a close eye on themselves here in this respect. Perhaps the point doesn't need further pressing.

_____ : (unclear) inflated. That was quite a difficult state to get out of. If it hadn't been for the people around me, the people who are here.

S: Were you a chairman then?

_____ : No this was the early seventies. I thought I was enlightened and if not enlightened at least very near to it, and so I expected that kind of deference that has been talked about from people generally, and when I didn't get it I used to get very upset and thought they were scheming against me, so that anyone who was behaving to me just on the ordinary human level I didn't trust them, and so it was a self-perpetuating pit that I was getting into.

S: I think one has to beware, as a chairman especially, of seeming to claim, or almost assuming, that just because you are chairman you possess a sort of special insight into things and that therefore your word is to be accepted automatically, either about things or people or situations, plans, programmes and so on. As though being chairman gives you a sort of mystic quality that others don't have and, as I said, a sort of special insight. That your world is more authoritative, that you don't have to justify yourself to others in rational terms.

Perhaps we'd better go into this more when we deal with office bearers and their functions, because there's still one more chairman to come and it would be good if we went into that when he's present. What were the others?

_____ : Well maybe slightly connected with that is working with people, working with teams.

S: Well in the case of the chairman again there's a rather fine balance to strike. On the one hand the chairman must lead, but he mustn't boss. He's working with people, he's not just telling them what to do. They are not working for him. I think this is quite an important point. I found this myself in the past that people working in the FWBO, maybe Order members or others, they sometimes are under the impression that they're doing it all for me and that therefore I ought to be personally grateful to them for their efforts, but I have said on occasions I'm not personally grateful to you, no. There's no more reason why I should be grateful to you than you should be grateful to anybody else. You've done this particular job and it's good that you've done it, we rejoice in your merits, but you've done it because you believe in the FWBO, you've not done it as a personal favour to me, just to please me. So in the same way people shouldn't, an Order member say working in a team with the chairman, he shouldn't just do things as a favour for the chairman and he shouldn't allow them to operate in that sort of way. They're working with him because they all believe in what they're working for. He happens to be the one whom they have confidence in as the most experienced and far sighted, and therefore maybe a certain extra weight does attach to his view for that reason, because of his superior knowledge and experience, not any sort of mystic quality attaching to the office of the chairman, but nonetheless they are all working together under his leadership.

So I think on the one hand the chairman shouldn't regard other Order members around his centre as more or less his lackies, but on the other hand he mustn't be a weak chairman who is unable to give a definite lead when one is required, and this requires quite a fine judgement, to strike this sort of balance. I'm sure you all know what I am getting at. You must have all encountered it. And also the bigger your centre, because you've more people to convince and to lead and to work with.

_____ : It comes back to this actually involving people in the project. If you personally are emotionally involved (unclear)

S: Yes, right, just communicate your enthusiasm for something rather than sort of just tell them, short and sharp, what you expect them to do. Anyone any comments on that? Again it's pretty obvious isn't it. Anyone have any special difficulty in this area?

Vajradaka: Not a difficulty exactly but an aspect of what you were talking about was that I felt, like when we went to America, that there were certain talents that I had which weren't being able to be expressed.

S: Here or in America?

Vajradaka: In America. In terms of co-ordination of groups, a general kind of expressing

perspective and things like that, and I was getting quite frustrated, but then when I got this job in a co-operative cafe I just felt all of a sudden quite fulfilled, and then I found myself more in danger of just throwing myself more and more into that situation and functioning more I suppose in terms of a chairman there than I did at our centre. It was as if those qualities were just looking for some expression and eventually I didn't exactly withdraw myself from the cafe, I just tried to kind of equalise my involvement with both the cafe and the centre activities.

S: Because that's not the sort of situation in which a chairman is ordinarily likely to be. Usually a chairman is full time and whatever talents he has in that direction are fully deployed within the FWBO situation.

Subhuti: What was the point you were making actually?

Vajradaka: It was quite vague really. I suppose the point was that sometimes it can be, if you want to have the image of a chairman, and you want to have that separate, sort of thing. At other times it might just be that it's just spontaneous and natural to operate in that way.

S: In what way?

Vajradaka: Just working with people and taking some kind of a lead without being.....

S: Well presumably if you are a chairman that's why your fellow Order members elected you chairman. But nonetheless one should be careful that if one has a talent to co-ordinate and all that sort of thing - you used the word co-ordinate - you have to be very careful you are not just using all your fellow Order members working with you as so many pawns. Pushing this one here and that one there. You see what I mean?

Vajradaka: The word co-ordinate does express co-operation. Co-operation among the people who are actually working in the.....

S: Well if one sees in that way that's fine, but I think one must be careful that one doesn't see oneself as the arch-manipulator with all your fellow Order members working with you not as autonomous individuals who are freely giving you their co-operation and willingly giving you their co-operation but they're just people that you must push around with more or less tact. Though you may have a talent for pushing people around, or a talent for co-ordinating in that sort of way, but it's not a sort of talent that you should use as chairman.

Lokamitra: If you do that it will sooner or later break down.

S: Yes, people will start reacting.

Lokamitra: It will just turn against you. [Pause]

Manjuvajra: How this point originally came up was Nagabodhi brought it up. Saying that there were certain people whom he felt had a chronic difficulty with working. Do you think you get situations where there are certain things that just won't work together? Or do you think there's always a middle way that you can.....

S: Yes, because after all what is the best basis of your working together? That you're all Order

members, that you're all committed to the Three Jewels and presumably more or less equally committed, so sooner or later you should be able to break through to that level of common commitment. It's almost that you affirm a faith in your basic humanity.

[End of tape two tape three]

I think I know from my own experience that it is surprising the sort of people you can get on with, and even become friends with. Sometimes of course you have to, as when you're thrown together. You can't get away, as in the army, when you're in the same barrack room together and you can't get away, and you find actually that you do become friends sometimes with the strangest of people that you never would have thought of becoming friends with. So how much more so when there is a basis of common commitment? If the differences are merely personal, one should certainly be able to break through those in the long run. If it's a question of difficulties created because certain people with whom you are working don't have the necessary talents that's another matter, but personal difficulties, one should in the long run be able to break through. One must be very careful with how seriously one takes one's likings and dislikings for people within the Order. They can be given a very very relative place indeed only.

Manjuvajra: So when you're actually setting up a team you shouldn't worry too much about choosing people whom you like.

S: Yes, at the same time I think you'd be wise to avoid choosing someone whom, unfortunately, you actually dislike, because that wouldn't help you get things off the ground. But you don't have necessarily to set up a team along with your best friends, not necessarily. It's hoped that you become best friends by the process of working together. After all the common basis is there, the basis of common commitment.

Nagabodhi: I find it a problem not knowing how much energy to apportion in the direction of working on my communication with people and the job at hand. My experience with *****. There are just days when because of the work I've got to do and the mood I'm in, coming from the subjective point of view, I just don't want to know about breaking through the undercurrents and things.

S: Well fair enough. One can't give all one's time to that, that's obvious. But I think from time to time one does need to devote attention to it, and of course one does often work with people and the working with them is in a way to some extent the mode of sorting out the problem, whatever it is. And also perhaps one should distinguish between merely personal quirks in a person that one doesn't happen to like, and those quirks, if they are such, which affect the way in which they work with you, or affect the job in hand. The second perhaps are more urgent than the first. The first perhaps can be left to some future occasion when you get an opportunity.

Do you think there's too great an emphasis placed on merely personal factors - that you personally like somebody? What does one mean by that exactly? - that you like them. It's a very vague term anyway. Do you mean they don't rub you up the wrong way or you've got a common background or you share certain interests or they've got the same sense of humour as you?

Manjuvajra: I think what I mean by it is someone that has a certain ease in the relationship. There's no glaring difficulty in communication or no jarring of personalities. It does make it easier to be with them.

S: Less challenging also.

_____ : Less challenging. That's true, yes. (unclear)

Devamitra: Also people who you find stimulating.

S: Yes.

Padmaraja: I think we can't really afford to be that fussy. I'm most grateful for somebody with a common commitment. I'm grateful for that.

S: Stimulating people are not necessarily the best people to work with. Maybe that's another area in which the plodders come into their own. You come to respect the plodders. They may not be very brilliant and they may not have exactly sparkling conversation, but you can rely on them and you can give them a job and go away know that they're getting on with it. So maybe one quality has to be weighed against another. I mean you can sometimes end up with a lot of respect for someone that you don't particularly like, or you didn't initially like very much. Sometimes at least one finds these dull, unstimulating, uncharismatic people might be keeping the whole show going!

I'm inclined to think that too much importance shouldn't be attached to likes and dislikes in this area. I think if you're setting up a team with regard to any project or trying to create a new centre, certainly don't try and set it up with someone whom you actually dislike, unfortunately, or with someone with whom you have serious personal difficulties or problems, but I think if at least they're neutral and you've got that basis of a common commitment, that should be enough. You should be able to develop a friendship with them, through working with them.

Did you have more in mind than that, Nagabodhi, when you originally made that point?

Nagabodhi: I specifically had a couple of people in mind (unclear). I just do find it quite hard to sort of

S: That I realise, but what I was asking was any sort of more general point. I imagined it was your own team that you had at the back of your mind.

Nagabodhi: When I was actually talking I was just expressing something quite subjective, but I do feel like that. I have to find the right way of apportioning my energy so as to not let myself get down. I do find that I seem to be quite susceptible to other people's states of mind, quite sensitive and quite easily brought down. If I'm dealing with somebody who seems quite shaken or quite blocked it seems to have quite a strange effect on me.

S: I think for the time being perhaps, so long as they're doing the work one shouldn't bother too much.

Subhuti: I get the impression that they're quite awkward people and actually that comes into the work, from what I've seen. (unclear) through the work.

Nagabodhi: I wouldn't criticise them that savagely because they are both quite conscientious. (unclear) (unclear).

S: I think one should separate the objective from the subjective and deal with the objective. If someone hasn't done something properly well just say well look this isn't done the way I wanted or the way it needs to be done, but don't, on that occasion, go into the subjective side of things. That can be taken up at leisure later on. I think that's probably a better way to operate. Otherwise the whole morning could be spent just delving into someone's psychology, meanwhile the work is not getting done. So therefore one has to say, 'well look, it really ought to be done this way, please do it', and even indicate at the time, 'well we could have a talk about other aspects of the matter later on, but just for now the work has to be done.'

S: What are the other points?

Manjuvajra: Just one more and that is working on the motivation that is result related and developing patience. I think this came up in connection with working with people.

S: Well of course one must make a distinction here. In a sense one does work for results. I think what I feel that people should guard against is being yourself psychologically dependent on getting the results and getting worried and uneasy, as distinct from objectively concerned, if the results are not forthcoming or if you start doubting your own abilities. For instance you might be the chairman of a centre and maybe for three years no one's been ordained, but you've been slogging away with your Mitras, so you might be tempted to put pressure on them or even to put pressure on me to ordain them, so that you can have the purely subjective satisfaction of feeling that you are succeeding. Rather than have the faith that well yes things are happening. Those people are gradually becoming more and more ready and are maturing, and just waiting. You see what I mean?

The original situation which caused me to make these sort of remarks, or to think about this sort of thing, is the communication exercises, because I came to know that some people taking communication exercises were deliberately lengthening the period that people did them to produce results, or deliberately trying to get people shouting and howling, so that they could feel that something was happening, and in that way get the reassurance that they were conducting the exercises in the right way, because they had a very tangible assurance of that. That's the sort of thing more that I'm getting at.

Manjuvajra: I can see that in terms of leading retreats. I always used to feel that you had to do something in order to make the retreat grow, and the person leading it, in a way, was responsible for what the people there experienced, and so I'd always be quite anxious about that and ensure it happened. But then I suddenly realised that in fact you don't do anything, all you do is keep an eye on things and get on with your own practice.

S: Make sure that the meals are on time. Things like that, they're the most important things actually. Make sure the bell is rung at the right time. Everything else looks after itself.

_____ : But I was incredibly (unclear)

S: The Dharma does the work! If you give it the chance it really does. Of course I'm exaggerating a bit, you realise that, just to make the point.

Before we go onto the other topics for the day the point I've really been trying to make through this whole discussion this last couple of days and this morning, is that being a chairman is really a quite

unique opportunity, but it also has its dangers, and that one should be therefore constantly on the alert and constantly check that one is using that position in the best possible way to help the centre of which you are chairman, and also to make being a chairman a means of growth and development for yourself personally. I think that is very very important. If being chairman isn't helping you to grow, you probably are not being a very good chairman. It isn't just a position, it isn't just an administrative position. It's definitely an opportunity for further growth on the part of the person who is chairman. You have a further opportunity. But that's the way in which you must look at it. Not just by making a genuflection in that direction. That's also easy to do, but take it very very seriously that you do have an opportunity to grow yourself, which means you need to be very open to criticism by fellow chairmen and Order members with whom you are working. Being chairman doesn't justify you in disregarding criticism. You shouldn't think or say that if people criticise you they're being disloyal or they're undermining your position. You should listen to them very carefully, especially when things are going well, you can become overconfident as chairman and get a little bit inflated. At present I don't think at any centre things are going so well that the chairman is likely to get inflated. It's a possibility if ever things do go really well and your plans and schemes are succeeding, and everyone is pleased with you and patting you on the back and telling you what a good chairman you are, you start thinking maybe you can do anything, and then you start becoming a bit rash. [Pause]

I also think chairmen shouldn't try to be charismatic. I don't think they should try to dazzle. You know what I mean by that, I think. It's not easy to be charismatic if you're not naturally that but if you do discover you've got a bit of charisma be very careful how you use it or how you exploit it. Don't depend too much on it. If necessary subdue it a bit, tone it down. If you don't have even a touch of it well you've just jolly well got to make up for it with sheer hard work! [Laughter] [Pause]

Also of course later on, and this hasn't happened yet but maybe we'll talk about this more when we discuss the duties of chairmen etc., a chairman shouldn't try to be a sort of guru like figure. That is a possible danger, more for the future perhaps than now. You shouldn't encourage people to relate to you in that particular way. [Pause]

Shall we go on to the topics for the day?

Subhuti: The one thing we didn't discuss was chairmen attracting certain sorts of people.

S: Ah! That's true, yes. Has anyone noticed this?

_____ : Yes.

S: Ah. Personal confessions please!

Manjuvajra: On one particular occasion in one week I gave a talk at *Aryatara* on the Tuesday and a talk in Norwich on the Thursday and it was amazing, the difference. I think there were other factors but at *Aryatara* it seemed that there wasn't anyone over nineteen. The whole flavour was of that. They were all young men. When I got to Norwich it seemed that there wasn't anyone under twenty five, and they were nearly all women.

S: Ah. [Laughter] You are saying that you can't believe it's entirely coincidence! [Laughter]

Manjuvajra: Right. I've been thinking a bit about it and I wondered why particular people were attracted to particular centres or to particular chairmen, and I was (unclear) and I said I wondered

why the young men were attracted to Padmaraja and *Aryatara* and the women were attracted here. And she said well it's because Padmaraja likes young men. He finds them attractive, and then suddenly the whole thing became clear. It's not that people are attracted to the centres, particular types are attracted to particular centres, it's the people who are working in those centres who are attracted to particular types of people, and therefore encourage those types of people. So it's.....

S: (chuckling) So who likes elderly women then in Norwich? [*Laughter*]

Manjuvajra: I should say this was before Abhaya became chairman! [*Laughter*]

S: Oh yes, I was quite aware of that. I must confess that in the case of Norwich the picture's been slightly distorted by me, inasmuch as I [*Laughter*] was for some time encouraging couples and married people and women with children to come to Norwich as a more suitable situation for them, so that must be borne in mind here. So I have, I must confess, slightly distorted the picture as far as Norwich is concerned.

Devamitra: Only slightly?

S: Yes, because I don't think I encouraged more than four or five or perhaps six in that sort of way. For instance I encouraged Dave Luce and his wife to come to Norwich, didn't I. I encouraged Andree to come up, and there were several others that you can probably think of. But still I think, nonetheless, your remarks do hold good, because why did I encourage them, because already there were quite a few of those sort of people around the centre, and therefore I thought that married people and people with children would therefore feel more at home around Norwich than, say, around *Aryatara*. So I think you've got a point that it's not so much that people are attracted to a particular centre but a chairman, perhaps if he isn't careful, definitely encourages a certain type of person more than another, yes. So I think chairmen must be a bit careful about this.

_____ : The ideal I suppose would be a chairman who can cover a wide range of people, but in that (unclear) it's got to be a real team of people who are naturally attracted to particular groups of people and can get on with particular groups of people.

Nagabodhi: At this point in the development of the Movement isn't there something to be said for attracting the people who are going to be free to move, to grow, to leave home?

S: Oh yes certainly.

Nagabodhi: Then perhaps concentrate your attention at a class on the people who have got a chance of actually getting really stuck in, because I remember this from *Aryatara*, in the early days I sort of prided myself in the fact that we had quite a wide cross section or we prided ourselves, but actually we were just clogging up the works. There were a lot of people who were just coming, they were very good support, they'd come to jumble sales and all the rest and I do actually think there's something to be said for building up that kind of Sangha, but on the other hand we were clogging up our time and energy and resources in giving a lot to people like that when younger people who quite possibly could go much further much more quickly were not getting so much from us and I think we quite sort of consciously started aiming ourselves towards younger people who came along, and I think really that was quite legitimate. Maybe in twenty years time or so when the Movement's more established perhaps.

S: I agree with that. In fact I've said words to that effect, but on the other hand I think one has to be careful that one doesn't create the impression that people of some other kind or category are not welcome, or that there is in fact no place for them. I think one has to be very careful not to create that sort of impression. And also to keep up some contact with these apparently less involved people or people of other types, because there's sometimes quite a lot of things that they can do which would not be exactly a waste for a more committed person to do but the more committed person could certainly do more important things which only he or she could do.

I was trying to think back to my own experience and impressions at the very beginning when I was taking classes and so on, whether I was conscious of attracting some kinds of people more than another, and I can remember that the people who, throughout my career, have tended to sort of come up to me spontaneously and who have seemed to have been more attracted maybe personally, have tended to be women rather than men, and older ones rather than younger ones. *[Laughter]* This was true in India as well as in this country. I think when I was down in London and taking classes, I think as far as I remember I did just encourage, or try to see, more of those people who just seemed to be more interested and more involved. I don't think I consciously concentrated on a particular category.

Nagabodhi: I was wondering about this last night or the night before. I don't know why this came into my mind, but you look at photographs of you in India and you're shaven and with short hair. Now you have short hair, but there was a period of your life when you were by no means an adolescent or a teenager but you had very long hair, and so did we. I just wonder whether that was in some way a deliberate move on your part to kind of show a sympathy with a particular stratum of society or whether

S: I'm not altogether sure, maybe I'll think about it seriously when I come to that chapter of my memoirs. I think it wasn't so much that I wanted to show my sympathy for a certain age group or strata of society, but to show my lack of sympathy for a certain other group. *[Laughter]* You see. I was rebelling against something else I think, not quite what the teenage rebels were rebelling against. I think my rebellion was a more serious matter.

Manjuvajra: Actually when you take a broad look at those people that you did attract they were all a bit weird actually.

Nagabodhi: We were all a bit weird! *[Laughter]*

Manjuvajra: They weren't even people that fitted in with people that were already involved in the Friends. I'm thinking of my own generation. The people that were involved in the Friends originally seemed to be sort of rather Buddhist Society types.

S: Yes.

Manjuvajra: But then the second wave to come along, those people didn't get on with the first lot. They were different.

S: It was definitely a cause of complaint among the older generation of Order members then, very few of whom have survived, well there's only Ananda left now, and these remarks certainly don't apply to him, but there was a bit of a complaint that Bhante seemed to be more interested in these up and coming rather unconventional people who didn't sort of fit in very well in some cases. At a much later stage I did hear people saying that Bhante seems to favour the 'bad boys'. But I think if I was

personally attracted or personally preferred, let us say, any particular kind of people it was those who were more independent and who thought more for themselves and who didn't want to just meekly follow whatever I laid down. That sort of person didn't especially attract me at all, though they came along. I think if I was attracted to any kind of person it was the person who tended to be more independent, so I think I tended to encourage those sort of people. But anyway those few thoughts were just passing through my mind.

Manjuvajra: What struck me as important after this realisation about how the chairman, or at least Order members in a centre, attract different people was how important it is to continually try and broaden the range of interests, because the range of people that I am sort of spontaneously attracted to is actually quite narrow. There's lots of types of people that I tend to steer clear of, and I think it's important to actually try and work more and more.....

S: I think one can also be mised by appearances. For instance you can find some very young people who are very conservative and rigid, and you can find some old people who are really quite revolutionary in spirit. One mustn't automatically think that the young are going to be revolutionary and the old are going to be reactionary. That isn't true. So I think, even yes that certainly one does and one should work more on and with those people who look more promising, and probably on balance they are more likely to be young than old, but on the other hand I think every public centre should be very careful to make it clear that everybody is welcome and that you're not given a bit of a brush off if you don't fall into a particular category.

Subhuti: There's a bit of a danger that if you attract people on the basis of those you like, that it becomes too personal, the following's too personal.

S: Yes. [Pause] But perhaps maybe as a sort of penance one should sometimes deliberately try to work on or with one or two people you don't particularly like, or who belong to a type you don't particularly like. [Pause]

Nagabodhi: Does the simple fact that people are attracted to you bring out the best in you?

S: Not necessarily. They sometimes bring out the worst. Sometimes they bring out the best and the worst. Then things can get really complicated! We have yet to see a centre chairman who attracts predominantly young women. That will be really interesting if it happens one day.

Who's looking at who?! [Laughter]

Suvajra: (unclear) attracted to young women and you probably would attract them.

S: Well that was a few years ago! [Laughter]

_____ : I think that is proven in Cornwall.

S: But then who is your most successful recruit? Probably Malcolm, a youngish man. I don't know how much attention you lavished on him in those days!

Manjuvajra: Quite a lot. Actually (unclear) [Pause] I notice with me though that there's a certain sort of young male that's not attracted to me, the young hero type, I don't think really (unclear) I don't have those qualities that respond to the young hero or that the young hero responds to. I worry about

that at times.

S: They should have just seen you in your younger days.

Devamitra: Do you feel attracted to them?

Manjuvajra: Not particularly, no, not strongly. I can appreciate them but I don't feel very strongly towards them.

Devamitra: I suppose actually it's just easier there are people that you feel attracted to and who feel attracted to you. On one level at least it makes your work easier. If you don't have that going for you it means you've got.....

S: But there's always the danger though that that personal element becomes predominant and the Dharma recedes into the background. That is the danger.

Devamitra: Yeah but if they're coming on for ordination presumably it's going to get dealt with isn't it.

S: Well one would hope so, yes.

What about the LBC? Is there any sort of pattern emerging there or is it quite a wide spectrum of people who are coming along?

Prakasha: Not many young people. (unclear)

Devamitra: But there aren't many old people either. It tends to be, I would say mid twenties to early forties.

S: You mean coming along?

Devamitra: Yes.

S: So do you think that's fairly satisfactory or a reasonably wide spectrum or what?

Devamitra: It would be nice to have some younger people. Actually there have been younger people along but they just haven't stuck. They've come along for a few weeks maybe, but they disappear and don't come back.

_____ : It might be a bit staid for young people.

S: I think perhaps when you're in your twenties you don't always realise how staid you can appear in the eyes of teenagers. You may think of yourself as being risky but they don't quite always see you in that way.

_____ : What about India?

Lokamitra: We have a children's class. Two children's classes! It depends where you go. In Bombay you find lots of elderly people. In Pune you don't find so many young people. Although now

we are. In Aurangabad a lot of young people, especially students.

S: I think that the main point that emerges is even though you do find that you're tending to attract, or are deliberately trying to attract, people of one or another social group, that the principle must always be that you don't want to do that to such an extent that other people don't feel welcome. The centre must be open to everybody. Everybody must find a place and be welcome. I think that is quite important.

Siddhiratna?: Haven't you got some contradictions here though. I've heard this discussed now for maybe two or three months now, perhaps even longer. For example Vajrabodhi in Helsinki. The way it sounds, the way it's going you can have either/or. Either you have older people there and they put their head in and go out, or you have a lot of younger people and older people feel excluded, so there's something in what Suvajra is saying, that you have different classes for different age groups almost.

S: Possibly. I feel a bit hesitant about that. I don't feel all that happy about this segregation of the generations which is a comparatively recent development in the West. You don't find it so much in the East. I think if young people find it difficult to get on with old people or vice versa well they've each got a problem, something that needs to be sorted out in the interests of their individual development. The situation in Helsinki, for instance, to me seems quite pathological. Young people seem to have a sort of pathological loathing of old people. No, it's a loathing of old people. They find old people disgusting and horrible, as though they had no right to exist. Yes, their reaction was as strong as that according to Vajrabodhi and, well, other sources too.

Lokamitra: Maybe they ought to have younger and older Order members.

S: I think it's very good if you team is balanced. Yes, I think that is probably necessary.

Lokamitra: We always have that in Pune, so we have no problem with that. I don't know whether we would otherwise.

S: If all your Order members are say old, that will definitely discourage young people from coming. If all your Order members are very young, that will definitely discourage older people from coming. So I think one should try, obviously personnel is limited, but one must try to keep a balance within the centre team. If one say has five or six Order members make sure that at least one of them is a bit on the older side and, if possible, if it's a centre team have at least one woman Order member. Women can sometimes find it quite discouraging if all the Order members are men. Some women find it discouraging, not all necessarily. It's been a problem in Brighton from time to time hasn't it? That there's been no woman Order member there.

Mangala: A lot of women in Brighton seem to come along. More than half.

S: Well. *[Laughter]* Do you think that they're just being attracted to you or you're deliberately attracting them? Or selecting them *[Laughter]*. Be honest! Or is it just Surata?

Subhuti: It predates Surata.

S: Well even in Asvajit's day, Buddhadasa's day.

Lokamitra: You used to get cakes and things brought to you at *Aryatara* didn't you? *[Laughter]*
Every week! *[Laughter]*

S: Anyway shall we pass on. I think we've probably made that point sufficiently.

Subhuti: I think that's all the topics.

[End of recording]

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