

Dhaniya seminar - 1980 convention, Padmaloka

Tape one, side one

S: All right! We're going to be spending the next three mornings on the Dhaniya Sutta, and, as you no doubt can see, this 'Dhaniya' Sutta comes from the Sutta Nipata, which is a quite early collection of discourses and teachings, mainly in verse. So, as usual, we are going to go through the text verse by verse, and discuss each verse quite exhaustively, and even allow ourselves to digress a little into areas which are connected with, or, as it were, grow out of, what we are studying in the verse itself. So maybe Suvajri can start reading the first verse.

Suvajri: (clears throat) How do you pronounce his name?

S: Dhaniya. Dhaniya.

Suvajri: 'I've boiled my broth, I've drawn the milk',
Thus spake the herdsman Dhaniya,
I dwell with mates beside Mahi,
Roofed is my hut, the fire burns bright
So if thou wish, rain, deva, rain!'

Shall I stop there?

S: Mm. So Dhaniya is speaking. Dhaniya is described as a herdsman. (pause) He's described as 'gopa' in the text, which means 'one who possesses' or 'one who owns cows'. And it is quite important to understand this, because in the Buddha's day, and for quite a few centuries earlier, wealth was reckoned in terms of the number of cows that you owned. And this is all a semi-pastoral economy, you could say. For instance, if you read the Upanishads, the Hindu scriptures which pre-date the Buddha - many of them pre-date - in some of these Upanishads you find the Brahmins demanding as a reward, a thousand cows for answering a certain question or performing a certain sacrifice - so they wouldn't say 'a thousand guineas; or 'a thousand dollars', they would say 'a thousand cows', because wealth was reckoned in terms of cows. So a wealthy [2]

person was one who possessed lots of cows; so if you had lots of cows you were wealthy. So Dhaniya represents this sort of person. He's quite well off, and living with his companions beside the river Mahi; the day's work is done; the rice has been boiled. [For the sake of the rhyme, as you will see later on, the translation that we are using reads - 'I've boiled my broth', but actually it is ' ' which is, 'I've boiled my rice'.] So 'I've boiled my rice, I've drawn the milk' - that is to say, the meal for the evening is ready; the day's work is done; because what is the main work of the cowherd? It's to milk the cows. They're usually milked twice a day, in the morning and in the evening. So the food has been cooked; the food is ready; the day's work is done, 'thus spake the herdsman, Dhaniya; I dwell with my mates - with my companions - beside the river Mahi. Roofed is my hut - there's a good, strong, a secure, tight roof, the fire is burning brightly, even if it rains, I don't care! - 'So if thou wish, rain, deva, rain!' The deva is the rain, because in the Indian idiom, just as we say, 'It rains', in Pali they say, 'The deva rains', 'the god rains'. It's not to be taken too literally. So what is the sort of picture here? The picture that is drawn, is one of, so to speak, worldly complacency. He's all right! Everything is going well for him. He's got food; he's got wealth in fact; he's got his companions; he's living securely, snugly, on the banks of the river Mahi; his roof is well thatched; his fire is

burning bright; he doesn't care if it rains! What does that suggest? He's not caring if it rains? What does it suggest about him? What does he think? What does he think his position is?

Udaya: He feels secure.

S: He feels secure. His position, he thinks, is one of complete security. He's got nothing to worry about. You could say he's the sort of Indian 'Everyman'. He thinks he's got [3] everything. He's got nothing to worry about. He can keep out the rain, so to speak. He is secure from disturbances. He secures himself from everything unpleasant and difficult - 'the rain' can't come in it's much more than the rain, it's any outside interference; he's quite secure; he's quite safe, against all those things, and obviously, this is the state of mind of the average, ordinary, successful person. He's in a sort of shell, as it were, and he thinks that within that shell he's quite safe, quite secure. So, in this opening verse you get this sort of vivid picture of this sort of person. In a way, there is nothing wrong with it; he's not a bad man; he's certainly not an evil man; you could probably say he is a good man, but he is limited, he doesn't see very far. He doesn't know what his situation really is. So this is Dhaniya, and it's interesting also, perhaps, that the picture is drawn by Dhaniya in his own words, which makes it more vivid. As we go through this little sutta, which is, of course, in poetic form, we'll see it is more and more like a ballad, say, like one of the old Scottish ballads, where you get different people speaking, first one and then the other. So he says 'I've boiled my broth, I've drawn the milk' / Thus spake the herdsman Dhaniya, / I dwell with mates beside Mahi, / Roofed is my hut, the fire burns bright:/ So if thou wish, rain, deva, rain)' - 'What have I got to worry about; I'm all right; I'm quite safe and secure and snug; I've got it all worked out! 'So, to Dhaniya, comes the Buddha! Here is this unsuspecting Dhaniya, this complacent, rather nice person, living in this sort of way, unsuspectingly thinking he's got it all sorted out, but along comes the Buddha! The Buddha is sort of wandering from place to place, and presumably he [4] overhears this rather boastful utterance of Dhaniya. Maybe he's standing outside the door, just waiting to knock or to enter. He can't be begging for food, not according to the orthodox Theravada idea, because, presumably, it's the evening time - though it could be; the morning time, I suppose, but it seems more likely that it's the evening time - one can boil rice and milk cows in the morning, but the feeling of the whole thing seems to be more that it's the evening - so, perhaps the Buddha has been walking all day, and perhaps, towards the end of the day it's just getting dark, he sees the homestead on the banks of the river Mahi, so he decides to seek shelter there for the night, so just as he is standing outside the door, he hears Dhaniya speaking in this sort of way. Then what does the Buddha say? Let's hear his verse.

Purna: The Master

'I've foiled my wrath, I've fertile mind',

Thus spake the master in reply,

I dwell one night beside Mahi,

Open my hut, cooled down my fire:

So if thou wish, rain, deva, rain!'

S: The first thing to notice is the sort of parallelism. The translator has very cleverly reproduced the words in the original, Dhaniya says, 'I've boiled my, broth', the Master says 'I've foiled my wrath' (laughter). You see? In Pali it's (looking up Pali text) 'for I've boiled my rice', and (Pause) - for the Buddha's utterance it's, 'my mood is blessed', which means, I've stilled', or if you like, 'foiled my anger, my resentment.' So, 'I've fertile mind'. (Pause) The Buddha says - 'Thus spake the Master in reply,/ I dwell one night beside Mahi,/ Open my hut,

cooled down my fire:/ [5] So if thou wish, rain, deva, rain!' - so a completely different attitude! It's as though the Buddha almost opposes what Dhaniya says, or what Dhaniya thinks, not agrees with it. So Dhaniya's emphasis is, as it were, material; material well-being, material security - 'I've boiled my broth, I've drawn the milk.' The Buddha says, 'I've foiled my wrath, I've fertile mind'. It's as though the Buddha is not running down Dhaniya's broth, well, in the morning probably he'll get a share of it, (chuckles) by way of alms; he's got nothing against Dhaniya milking his cows, but there's something further than that, there is a stage further which is the psychological and spiritual beyond the material, beyond the economic. Not that the material and economic is decried, they have their place, they're the basis of existence but everyone, so to speak, must go further than that, there is such a thing as cultivation of the; mind. So the Buddha is indicating that. 'I've. Foiled my wrath' Why do you think the Buddha especially mentions wrath here? Do you think there is any reason for that? (Pause) He's speaking to Dhaniya. Now why should he not say, 'I've foiled my greed'? (Let's take it that the compiler is not just looking for a rhyme.) Or why not, 'I've overcome my fear' - why 'wrath'?

Megha: Is it because Dhaniya is saying 'Roofed is my hut', so he is keeping out the weather, which could be the wrathful weather?

S: Yes, but why that?

Anjali: Is it that he is so secure (Pause) potentially wrathful to other people who are going to want to ...

S: Ah! Yes. The potentiality for wrath is there. You often find this. People seem very friendly, very kindly, very obliging, but that is very often because things are going all right (6) all the material desires and physical needs are satisfied. They are not really in a positive mental state, they are in a state of gratification, and if you take away those gratifications from them there can be a great change of mood. So this is why the Buddha says, 'I've foiled my wrath.' The Buddha is saying, 'You may seem to be a very agreeable, pleasant sort of person. You may not be very angry; you may be very affable but that is not a freedom from anger. You haven't really overcome wrath, you are merely in the state of being satisfied. Things are going your way, that's why you are good humoured and good-tempered; anyone can be good-humoured under those circumstances, but that doesn't mean anything at all. The really good-humoured and good-tempered person is the one who can maintain his good humour and his good temper even under very adverse circumstances. So this is quite important. This is one of the reasons why it's very difficult to know people. You know people when you go through difficulties with them; when you have a hard time together. When things are going all right, you've got everything you want, and everything in the garden is lovely, it's very difficult to know what people really are like. It's only when you have to encounter difficulties with them, and hardships with them, and you see their reactions, then you get to know what they really are like, and whether they are truly positive. Some people, the more difficult things get, the more cheerful they become (Chuckles) (soft laughter in response) but not everybody! Some people are not like that at all! (chuckling) as' you probably know. So it's as though the Buddha is saying, 'I've foiled my wrath, you haven't foiled your wrath'; the potentiality of wrath is there. You're not showing it at present, because you're having a good time, but if things were to change [7] if all your cows were to be stolen, all your mates were to die, your house to be ruined, well you would be in a very different state of mind. So the Buddha, right from the beginning is pointing out, as it were, the limitations of Dhaniya's attitude and whole way of

life. So it's very important to distinguish the pseudo-positivity that comes from the gratification of desires and the true positivity that comes from within, I mean important to distinguish within oneself.

There's that very cynical remark which I sometimes quote, by Somerset Maugham, 'A man is in never so spiritual a mood as after a good meal'. (Laughter) So, do you think that is a truly spiritual state? No! It's a state of complete sense gratification. You've had a good meal; your stomach is full; you've had a glass of wine; it's warm; you're in a nice comfortable chair, so, of course you are in a good mood. But is that real, genuine, psychological, spiritual positivity? Of course it isn't. You're just like a cat after having its milk. (Laughter) But sometimes we think that is positivity. Well, it's certainly not negative; you can't say it's negative, but it's quite low grade and quite precarious positivity, and it's immediately dependent upon your sense needs being fulfilled. (Pause) So, it's not a bad state; it's not an evil state, certainly, but it's very limited, and the Buddha is pointing this out. Then he says, 'I've foiled my wrath, I've fertile mind' I'm not quite sure, here, how exact the translation is - (looking up the Pali text) ' ' - I'm loDhaniya seminar - 1980 convention, Padmaloka

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S: All right! We're going to be spending the next three mornings on the Dhaniya Sutta, and, as you no doubt can see, this 'Dhaniya' Sutta comes from the Sutta Nipata, which is a quite eaound, so, therefore, something resistant; something stiff; something which is an obstacle; so, ' ' is the bringing to an end of that sort or state. You could say, since the context is agriculture, that it refers to the breaking up of the mind, just as when you plough the soil, there are great big stiff lumps or clay which have to be broken-up; the stiffness brought to an end, before, the ground can be tilled, before it can become fertile. So this is the sort of imagery that you get here - of the bringing to an end of stiffness, and resistance; of breaking it up, and therefore, by implication, making it fertile. So therefore, the Buddha says, 'I've foiled my wrath, I've fertile mind'. - it's not quite 'fertile' mind, but it is a mind which is not stiff; a mind which is like soil which has been broken up; made ready for sowing, and therefore, eventually of course, made ready for reaping. There's another sort of suggestion here - that when the Buddha says that his mind is like this, that is, it's stiffness has been broken up, he's suggesting, actually, that Dhaniya's mind is quite, as it were, stiff. You see what I mean? That he's set; he's fixed; he's rigid in a certain attitude, a certain way of life. He's fixed and rigid in his self-satisfaction and complacency, and pseudo-contentment and pseudo-positivity. So the Buddha says, 'I've foiled my wrath, I've fertile mind'. So he not only says something about himself, but indirectly, he says something about Dhaniya too. 'Thus spake the Master in reply, / 'I dwell night beside Mahi'. What is this Mahi? 'Mahi', of course, [9] is the name of a river; but also in Pali and Sanskrit 'Mahi' means 'the earth itself. So Dhaniya dwells beside the river; he is settled there; he thinks he's settled there for good; the Buddha comes as a wanderer; he's there for only one night perhaps, because the next morning he'll go on. But 'Mahi' isn't just the river, 'mahi' is the earth itself. The Buddha realizes he's there only for one night; that every man, even, is there only for one night. There is no such thing as permanence.

You can't rely on being there tomorrow. If you think you are settled, that's your mistake! You don't know! So the Buddha realize this; Dhaniya doesn't realize that. You might remember on this subject, the Sutra of the Forty-two Sections, about this - how long is human life? Do you remember that?

Voices: Yes.

S: Yes. So it's a bit like that. Here it isn't quite so rigorous. All right! You're here for one night, well, of course it's not even one night - you can't even be sure of that! You can't even be sure of an hour, or even a minute! But the Buddha is conscious of the fluidity of it all; is conscious that things don't last, and it is easy to get sort of settled. You get sort of settled somewhere for a few months and you think you are there for good, and you find it very difficult to imagine not being there. You think that's your little home; that's your little nook; that's your cosy corner: just as with Dhaniya! So the Buddha is saying, 'I dwell one night beside Mahi'. So, on one level, that means I'm only staying one night with you at your home on the bank of the Mahi, but it also means, 'I stay only one night in this world; it's all one can be sure of - you stay only one night in this world. Don't think that you are here for good! Once again, the Buddha is not only telling Dhaniya some [10] thing about himself (about the Buddha), but the Buddha is also telling Dhaniya something that applies to him as well. It's not just the Buddha who is there for one night; Dhaniya is also there; for one night at a time, did he but know it. (Pause) 'Open my hut, cooled down my fire' - Why does the Buddha say his hut is open? What does he mean by this? How literally is that to be taken? Dhaniya has boasted of his hut being roofed, but the Buddha is not exactly boasting, but he is saying that his hut is open. So what does that signify?

Purna: The Dhammapada.

S: Yes. Indeed.

Purna: 'Broken is the ridge-pole etc... (coughing over-rides the words.)

S: Maybe another verse even more so is the ...

Voices interrupting: - the Udana.

: The Udana with the thatch.

S: Yes. (Pause) Yes. - if it is open the rain cannot come in. (chuckles) What does that mean? There is a sort of reminiscence here.

Udaya: The hut is the dwelling-place and the Buddha's dwelling-place is his mind, and it's open, and ...

S: Yes. It's as though the Buddha doesn't erect any defences. He's not trying to keep out what, in the long run, at least, can not be kept out. Of course you can keep out the rain - Dhaniya is quite correct in saying that his roof can keep out the rain - but that reflects a whole attitude on Dhaniya's part of keeping things out. You can keep out the rain, but you can't keep old-old age, disease and death. But it is as though because Dhaniya can keep out the rain, he tends to think he can keep everything out. So his sort of self-satisfaction in keeping [11] out the rain

with his nicely thatched roof just reflects his self-satisfaction in keeping everything out of his life, so he thinks, that could disturb it. But the Buddha says 'You can't do that!' You can't keep these other things out of your life, so it is best to be open - so, 'Open my hut' 'I've a hut without a roof - I don't try to keep anything out. It's not that the Buddha, literally, lives in a hut without a roof; of course the Buddha's vihara had a roof, but that was that, it didn't mean anything; it just kept out the rain, and no one thought it could keep out anything else. The Buddha didn't have a mental attitude of keeping things out; of sheltering himself from such things as old age, disease and death. 'cooled down my fire'. What do you think that means?

Purna: Nirvana?

S: You could say that, yes, ultimately it means that.

: The passions.

S: The passions - the fire of the passion that ties you down; your conditioned existence; that fire has cooled down. Nirvana itself sometimes is explained as 'a cooling down of the passions or greed, hate and delusion'. There is a famous 'Fire' sermon, at 'Fire' discourse, where the Buddha says everything is on fire, on fire with greed, hatred and delusion. So all those fires are cooled down in the Buddha. Dhaniya is boasting that his fire burns bright. Perhaps he does mean just his ordinary fire, but the Buddha turns it, and gives it all another meaning; reverses it a little bit.

Vijaya: Would you say the Buddha is actually speaking back to Dhaniya, or just reflecting an answer within his mind? Because it seems a big jump for Dhaniya to understand what the Buddha would mean by 'I've cooled down my fire', for instance.

[12]

S: Well he doesn't understand; not much! The next verse shows that, but it seems he understands in the end. It may be the poem gives us this highly dramatic: form; maybe there was a quite lengthy discussion,(chuckles) which the verses simply summarize. But on the other hand, sometimes, people do wake up to the truth really suddenly. This is certainly the Zen tradition for instance; and that does seem to happen in the early days of Buddhism - people woke up to the truth really quickly when it was put to them really forcefully and effectively. So, certainly, yes, there does seem to be even from this Sutta, some incomprehension on Dhaniya's part; he goes on boasting. It's as though, as we shall see, the Buddha's words make some impact on him; he realizes that there is some dimension that he hasn't been aware of represented by the Buddha, but he doesn't know what to do about it. He doesn't really want to change; so he persists in his boasting, as it were. But in the end, of course, he has to recognize what the position really is. So the Buddha says, 'I've foiled my wrath, I've fertile mind/ Thus spake the Master in reply/ 'I dwell one night beside Mahi. / Open my hut, cooled down my fire:' So what you get in these opening verses is, one might say, two pictures. You get a picture of Dhaniya and you get a picture of the Buddha; and you don't simply get the two pictures side by side, you get the one, as it were, confronting the other. That's why it's dramatic. It's a sort of dramatic contrast. They're not laid side by side; the one affects the other; you could say that the second verse challenges the first. You could say that the Buddha's attitude challenges Dhaniya's attitude; it's supposed to make Dhaniya think, to consider his position, which eventually he does, though not all at once. So it is, in fact, very powerfully dramatic. You could say it represents, as I said earlier, Everyman

confronted by - what shall we say - by [13] something quite existential: confronted by higher and further possibilities of human existence. So the Buddha meets, or confronts, or challenges Dhaniya as the complacent person, the self-satisfied person, the successful person, not the failure, the successful person confronted by a higher spiritual challenge; confronted by what it is possible in fact, for him to be or to do.

Aniketa: Mm. It's so much more difficult to be touched by the Dharma when you're satisfied with your life.

S: Yes. Though, of course this raises the quite important question that there is something (breaking line of thought) - it is as you say, not easy to be touched by the Dharma when you're satisfied in life, or self-satisfied, but it isn't necessarily, therefore, easier to be touched by it when you are unsatisfied. In other words, you've got to be really disillusioned and not just disgruntled.

Aniketa: Yes!

S: A lot of people turn to the Dharma, or what they think is the Dharma, only when they have become disgruntled, rather than disillusioned. Probably you need, in the long run, a measure of human satisfaction and health and success - a measure of it - and then start seeing through it, rather than being a total failure in the world and try to make up for your lack of success in the world, as it were, by getting into the Dharma. Do you see what I mean?

Aniketa: Yes, I do.

S: Of course there are people, especially if you come in contact with the Dharma when you are young, and because you are young and healthy and unspoiled by the world, you just see the truth of it straight away; you're just not interested in the world. That is another possibility. You don't have to go through the mill, (Chuckles) and suffer, before you can get to the Dharma; because [14] you could say that even when you are young, to be young and healthy and positive is itself an achievement. It is a form of human success. Success doesn't necessarily mean having a big new house, a big new car, and a big, bright, new job, or a big bright bank balance etc. You are your own best asset, in a way. But a person who's got nothing of a worldly kind, no worldly success, either objectively or subjectively, is not necessarily the most open to the Dharma, because they may be trying to obtain from the Dharma compensation for their lack in other respects.

Udaya: They're disgruntled with not getting something which they really still want.

S: Yes. (pause) See, Dhaniya represents the state of ordinary human success and complacency, and self-complacency in a very simple and easily identifiable form, but it isn't just one form or one stage, as it were; you can take all sorts of forms, because there's this tendency to settle down in self-complacency at every level. You can meet, even religious people, sort of professionally religious people, who are really complacent in their religious life. They might have had, yes, a measure of success, if they're Buddhist they might be good meditators, might be leading quite good lives, might be observing the precepts and working for Buddhism, but they've settled down in a complacent sort of way, they've limited themselves, they've closed their eyes to the possibility of any further development for them, in any way, so they are ignoring the Buddha standing there; that is to say, ignoring the higher

possibilities, or further possibilities. So, it's something that one must be on one's guard against all the time - this just settling down in what one is or has now, and just being satisfied with that. This is something we've been talking about within the FWBO context quite a bit over the last six or eight months, especially as it effects communities. [15] Because it is quite easy within the context of 'The Friends' in England to find a place in a community and a co-op, and it becomes just a niche, especially if you're not a particularly active person, or a very responsible person by nature, therefore you can get into the habit of allowing yourself to be looked after virtually, by the more active and responsible members of the community or the co-op. You let them carry more of the weight of responsibility, instead of accepting an equal share with everybody else. So one has to guard against this all the time, and especially if one's community is in the country, and everything is nice and easy and pleasant. It's very easy to settle down in that, and not make a further effort. You've found your niche, your place in life, and you don't think of changing that, either externally or internally. That's not to say you've got to be moving constantly from place to place, no. It means that the inner change is important. (Pause) - So it is as though the Buddha is confronting Dhaniya with a demand for growth and development. Dhaniya wants to stay put; he's comfortable as he is. He sort of thinks, in a way, that that, can last forever, but the Buddha reminds him, one, that he can't, and two, if he could it's not good for a human to remain in that sort of state; a human being needs to grow. So these two antithetical attitudes are very nicely contrasted. (Pause) All right, those are the two sorts of attitude - any further questions that arise out of these verses?

Priyananda: It does seem that Dhaniya in fact, is not dissatisfied; in fact, he is satisfied; whereas I've found people, men and women I know, who are wealthy, who do have a lot, usually are dissatisfied, at least in a modern context, in modern days, even though they may have two cars and a big house, they are in fact [16] dissatisfied; but it seems an unreal picture of a wealthy man. He has everything and is satisfied.

S: Mm, mm.

Ratnaketu: He's not particularly wealthy, it seems to me, he's sort of ... he's working as a herdsman and he's living in a hut beside the river. He's much more sort of a farmer - a satisfied sort of farmer.

Priyananda: ... well-off.

Ratnaketu: ... well-off; mm.

Priyananda: At the same time, even well-off people in modern day society - they are still dissatisfied. There is still this sort of greed that is created, where they are always looking for something more; they are never content with exactly that - the state they are in, or what they have, their houses or cars.

Anjali: That's not that they're looking outside them; they are not actually dissatisfied with what they've got, they just want more.

S: They are dissatisfied with their way of life, well, they may grumble a bit, how busy they are signing all these cheques, things like that, but they don't really want to change being that, at least, not in any radical way, which is the criterion one could say. But there is none-the-less something in what you say, in a sense because the big difference between life now and life as

it was in India in Dhaniya's day is that we are confronted by the possibility of so much more enjoyment in possession. You see, Dhaniya's horizon was very limited, well, what more could he imagine on the worldly plane? A few more cows perhaps - not really much more than that - or a somewhat better meal; but in modern times all sorts of things are dangled in front of our eyes - even if we are, as it were, well-to-do. So, supposing say, we've got a cow, sorry, a car (laughter) there's the latest model - a bigger car, a faster car, a more expensive car, whereas, in the case of Dhaniya, it was just the same [17] old cow - a slightly better cow you might be able to get, a slightly bigger one a slightly fatter one which would give a bit more 'milk, but there wasn't all that difference. But you see, it isn't just a case of cows now, it's a case of cars, it's the motorbikes, it's the holidays abroad. Dhaniya would think he was doing well if he went to a bit of a festival in the next village, if there was a village, once in a way; but through modern means of communication through radio, and especially through television, all sort's of possibilities of enjoyment are dangled in front of people's eyes, in front of their noses, in fact, all the time, so this increases the sense of dissatisfaction; so people are dissatisfied, not in the sense that they are really dissatisfied, but they just sort of think, well, there are so many more things we could have, and why shouldn't we have them - so in that way they get dissatisfied in the sense of being disgruntled with what they've got. So, I think this plays quite an important part. I was listening the other day, on the radio, to ...

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side 2, tape 1

S: ...(it must have been yesterday) - to a report about those riots in Bristol. Did you hear about those?

Voices: Yes - mm.

S: Leave aside the details, because this just illustrated something - the situation seems to be that in every modern society now you've got people who, either through lack of education or lack of opportunity, or simple lack of ability, are not able to earn for themselves, or to get or take for themselves, the sort of things they see other people enjoying, at least on television. You see what [18] I mean? So, if they weren't seeing those things, they probably wouldn't bother about them so much; but they see them, and they can't help contrasting them with their own lives. They've probably got a squalid hoDhaniya seminar - 1980 convention, Padmaloka

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those people also - you say - Well, let them work and earn for themselves just as we do. So you've got a quite dangerous and difficult sort of situation.

Vijaya: Yes, in some ways, people seem worse off working. I've been noticing even the wealthy people, besides being desperate to get more and more better things, are desperate to hang on and protect what they've got because there's the fear of (??) and losing what they've got - say from crime, from loss or from damage or ...

S: It was interesting - the other day, in Bristol, there was looting - the shops were looted, and which shops were looted? Two shops as far as I heard, TV shops, (shops with TV sets) and shops selling motorbikes; so this suggests that these were the things that the young looters wanted most. I think they were young men, I didn't hear that there were any women involved. Well, that's the sort [19] of things a young man now-a-days will go after presumably - a TV set and a motorbike. Those were the things that were looted - thousands of pounds' worth.

Vipula: I find there's lots of advertising of TVs and motorbikes about. (laughter)

S: So, it's as though there's a social problem here. It's as though, under our capitalist system, there is really no way of solving that, because you've always got people who are not able to earn enough money to buy the sort of things they see other people enjoying.

Udaya: Anyway, theoretically, the opportunity is there. In the old days, if someone was a king, or a higher caste, or a lord of some sort, then you could say, 'That's for them but not for us.'

S: Yes. Right. They are told 'You have a right; everybody's got the same right; everybody's got the same opportunity' - well, then they say - 'Well, I haven't had the same opportunity.'

Udaya: Theoretically, then.

S: Yes. But it may be in some cases (this is the most difficult case) - where they actually have the opportunity, not just in theory but in practice, but are not themselves, as individuals, able to take advantage of it because they are not up to scratch, so to speak. So, then what do you do? Do you just give it to them as a free-hand-out? Then, what is the limit; and who's going to pay off the free hand-out? Are the other members of the community willing to do that, especially when there seems to be no limit? (Pause.)

Aniketa: There is this sort of attitude that everything must be equal - that everyone must get the same portion or same share of everything, which goes right up - stretches right through material things, right up to all the other psychological ...

[20]

S: You see, in the past, people used to say - 'You're born poor because that's the way God made it, and you should accept that you are born poor.' In India they say, 'Well, this is the result of your past karma - that you're born poor, so you've just got to accept it, and if you accept and are pious and resigned, you'll be born into a rich family next time'. Now-a-days all those sort of restraining factors are being relaxed 'Well, you've got as much right as everybody else, why shouldn't you have what other people have? Why shouldn't you have a good house? Why shouldn't you have a new car? Why shouldn't your children go to good

schools?' This is what we say, this is the point of view we're putting out all the time, at least, in the democratic countries. But there are these practical difficulties.

Aniketa: It makes it more and more difficult to really deal with individual people - to their individual needs - their real individual needs.

S: Real individual needs, yes. Real needs are covered up by the artificial needs. (Pause) So it seems to me that within the context of a capitalist set-up - of course it, doesn't seem to be solved in terms of the Communist set-up either because you notice there, that the people behind the 'iron curtain', so to speak, are just as interested in consumer goods as the other people the other side of the 'iron curtain'; though their government doesn't allow them to have them. The government decides what should be produced, and how it should be distributed; but it can only sort of check people's greed in a way we would regard as a rather ruthless, repressive totalitarian system. That doesn't work from a purely human point of view. So it would seem to me, that the only possibility of solving this is to have some idea, clearer idea, of what human life is all about; what human life is really for; what your ideal [21] or goal as a human being should be - that it isn't limited by material things; that you can't think entirely in terms of material things. Yes, you need certain things to provide the material base for your life in your development as a human being, but that isn't everything. But the majority of people now-a-days no longer really, believe; that, even in its sort of original Christian form, so there, needs a much more vigorous attempt to make people think of what human life is really for; what are the true possibilities of human life; what is true human fulfilment? I think the solution will only be brought about by bringing that factor into consideration. (Pause) Because there is no limit to its artificial needs. Well, supposing you did give everybody two cars, some people will start wanting three, then others will think, 'Why shouldn't we have three? We're just as good as they are, why shouldn't we have three?' (Pause) It does seem as though a capitalist society can't succeed unless people accept a sort of economic hierarchy - that some people are entitled to more, and others deserve only less, but people are not prepared to accept that, because the propaganda that goes out is entirely egalitarian.

Vipula: It's also based on consumerism ...

Priyananda: It's almost as though there's a blending of the consumer ideal - the capitalist ideals, and the socialist ideals, and blending them has created this incredible conflict.

S: Right. (Pause)

Priyananda: The two can't really go together - the two ideals.

S: Probably in the world, in the more developed societies, three kinds of set-up - the more or less purely capitalist like America or Hong Kong, Singapore - the more or less purely socialist like Russia, Poland, Czechoslovakia - and the mixture, that's Britain at the moment - and none of them are working properly. I don't [22] know where New Zealand comes in here.

Udaya and others: I think it's the mixed.

S: So in the case of England, the one seems to sort of cancel out the other two to some extent, so you need something completely different, because in the Communist countries you don't have communism, it's a sort of State Socialism; but that doesn't seem to work, because there's

no incentive - here there is the conflict between individual greeds and there the conflict is between the greed of all the individuals and what the State says should be their fulfilment or should not be, their fulfilment. (Pause) It's as though no one seriously thinks in terms of - 'What is human life really for? What is the place of the material (material good) in human life?' What should we really be looking for? So it's as though this is what the Buddha is, in effect saying to Dhaniya. 'What do you really do? Do you think this is really the end of life?' Do you think this is why you were born? - To live in this way? Just to 'boil your broth' and 'milk your kine?' Is that the end of human existence? That's only a means to an end, and you ought to 'foil your wrath and have a fertile mind', as it were. (Pause) Any further points? (Pause)

This business of 'One night beside Mahi' - In India, I think, even now, one can be made more vividly aware of the transitoriness of human existence. Here - I mean in England - and I suspect, in most Western countries, and in New Zealand, we are cushioned from these things more than people in India human life is longer for one thing in these countries than it is in India - fewer people die earlier in life. I noticed when I arrived in India, in just a matter of days a Mitra had died. Well, it's a very interesting reflection - the Western Buddhist Order has now been in existence [23] how many years?

Voices: Twelve is it?

S: We've not had death in the Order. The nearest we've got is an ex-Order Member having died. That's quite interesting - there hasn't been a death in the Order. I think one Mitra has died in England, but a Mitra had died just a couple of days before I got there, and I was present for the memorial service, and I think, very few people have had relations die - very few order members and Mitras have had relations die within the last so many years, but in India this is happening all the time. People are being born - lots and lots of birth - I'm always hearing, 'Oh, my wife has had a baby', or, 'My son's wife has had a baby', or, 'My sister has had a baby'. You hear this all the time. Here it is quite exceptional (laughter) and there you also hear - 'My aunt has died', or, 'My father's eldest sister has died', or, 'My youngest brother has died', or a new-born baby died. You hear it all the time. In the same way, you go out, you go to the bazaar, it's quite likely that you will see a corpse being humped along on people's shoulders to the burning ground; it's quite common. You might occasionally see the odd funeral in this country, but even that is becoming more and more rare; and even if you see the funeral, what do you see? You see a big black car and through the window you see a long wooden box, and that's about all. But, of course, in India you see the corpse itself being borne through the streets, usually with the face uncovered, and you can actually go and see it burned if you're sufficiently interested, or if you're related. So, in India still, one is kept much more aware of the shortness of life; not only the transitoriness of life - the precariousness of life. It's not unusual in India to see somebody one day and the next [24] they seem perfectly happy - the next day you hear that they have died during the night and have already been cremated. You see what I mean? Because they can be taken suddenly ill - fever or whatever - they die in the night and they're cremated straight away. It's as dramatically short as that

Udaya: It would seem to be that life in more developed countries - New Zealand and the States and so on - life is less precarious, still precarious, but less precarious.

S: I think it is objectively less precarious, but we even heighten that impression by concealing ourselves from ourselves as much as we can, that it is, in fact, precarious at all.

Ratnaketu: We put old age pensioners away.

S: That's right! As we came down yesterday, we passed some new bungalows or houses and there were these notices on some of them - To Let - Separate 'Granny' Apartments. You see what I mean? Now-a-days it's a separate apartment for the granny, as it were; she's not even included with the rest of the family she is kept away in the attic. (Laughter) like a skeleton in the cupboard, as it were (Laughter) - That you've got a granny on the premises. She is old - you don't want to be reminded of that sort of thing. But this is unthinkable in India - to exclude your granny in this way. Quite apart from the fact that she is quite useful for baby-sitting and cooking and all that sort of thing - but they don't think of excluding older people. There's also another thing that I saw in the paper - that someone had appealed against allowing mentally disturbed people who were not harmful in any way, or violent, to be allowed to circulate in society, instead of being shut up in institutions - which is what happens in India, the mentally disturbed person who is harmless is just [25] just allowed to - well - stay at home, if he wants to stay at home, or just to roam about. They, don't try to shut them up in institutions. They haven't got the institutions anyway - they haven't got the money for them. Anyway, that is the traditional Indian practice. We don't like to think that, well, even reason itself may be precarious; even our mental balance may be precarious - we don't like to recognize that - so these people are all shut away. We like to cushion ourselves against that sort of realization. (Pause) So we do this on a grand scale now-a-days - we find Dhaniya doing it; he is boasting that his roof is secure, but we try to get roofs still more secure and keep out all these things that we don't like to think about - that we grow old, or that we might fall ill, or that we might even lose our mental balance.

Aniketa: I saw in the paper that there were people making complaints about an Old People's Home that other's were proposing to build in the area. They were putting forward all sorts of rationalizations for why it shouldn't be there, but they didn't want it there.

S: Yes. They didn't want the Old People's Home.

Vijaya: There's a very tight exclusion process, I noticed, in parts of Los Angeles where, once people get too old, they can't earn a good enough income to support themselves in these very flash, smart areas, and also landlords exclude them - they just say 'No children'. They've got a very young, sort of jet-setting age group that can survive there, and create a whole tone of wealth and success in this area, and once they get old they can't earn the income they used to, and also, if you have children you've got to get out, so it's a tight process going on, that creates the illusion of successful [26] atmosphere.

S: There was something else I was reading about. In America, they've started developing large estates (housing estates) only for old people, retired people. This is partly because the retired people themselves want this. That is to say, this is mainly retired people with money, plenty of money. They are just scared of the younger people, and the violence. They don't feel it's safe any longer to live in a place like New York or Los Angeles, so there are some developers who set up these enormous estates which are only for elderly, retired people. [??] Almost entirely of couples - yes, all entirely of couples actually - and even surrounded by a wall and special patrols. So within these areas old people can feel safe, and that they're with their own kind so they just lead easy, comfortable lives. They have a certain sort of social activity - golf courses for the men and bridge clubs for the women, and, of course, they invite each other, but the difficulty usually occurs when one of the couple dies - it's usually the man who dies

first, he having been over-worked more than the woman perhaps; so she survives and that creates a problem, because all the couples they knew as a couple before, drop her when she becomes a widow because the women in the remaining couples are afraid of competition, so - 'All right, so long as you're a couple', - but when the husband dies, the wife is left on her own; all her social life comes to an end, and in these estates no children are allowed, even younger people aren't allowed. They are allowed to visit, but not to stay overnight. So grandchildren can come and visit their grandparents, but they can't stay. But this, again, is the same sort of thing, in a way, they are trying to keep out or the way, both ends of the scale: not just death, but also ...

[27]

Voices in unison: Life ...

S: Life. Yes. The youthful energy - they are keeping all that at bay, too; they can't cope with it any longer; maybe they don't want to; or perhaps it's taken actually dangerous forms. So that must be a very strange sort of position to be in: you've got this wonderful affluence; you've got this beautiful house; there's only these two old people living in it; maybe it's really large with a huge veranda, and a huge lounge and a luxury kitchen with four or five [??] and refrigerators and deep-freeze, and there's a car outside in the garage; lovely lawns. It's all kept up by the developers - lawns and flowering trees and lovely sunshine; and the golf-course in the distance; lovely shopping precinct; and there you are stranded in between life and death, as it were. You've finished with your life, but afraid to die - don't want to die. 'You don't want, as it were, to be reminded of life, but you can't really live any more, not how the young people can. But you don't want to die, you're not ready for that either, so you don't want to be reminded of death, so you just lead your life on the golf-course, pretending - cheerily pretending - to all your friends and everyone, that this is going to go on and on and on. If someone dies, it's not that they all don't go to the funeral. Oh no, they pretend it all hasn't happened. Maybe that's also why they all just drop the widow. They don't want to be reminded that someone's died. So she, thereafter, lives a quite solitary existence - but perhaps, they've got their separate widow's clubs; and you can imagine what they'd be like in those circumstances! Perhaps the widow adopts a dog or something - if dogs are allowed; perhaps they're not; dogs can be pretty. untidy creatures. [28] They also said that some were visited by their grand-children on Sunday afternoon and were quite glad to see them, but they actually did heave a sigh of relief when they left, because children, after all, are so noisy and untidy. So again, it's a sort of Dhaniya-like attitude, in a rather distorted form, isn't it? Shutting things out, or thinking you can shut out.

Ratnaketu: Pretty odd - that attitude - of someone having a really beautiful house, they keep it really spic-and-span, and you're not allowed to sit on their chairs, and things like this.

S: Oh, yes! I actually heard within my own social circle - I forget exactly where - there was a housewife who wouldn't allow her husband to use the front room because he used to sit on the settee and disarranged the cushions, so he wasn't allowed to use it (that room). So this is how one can get, if one is not careful. One forgets that a house, for instance, is, in this case, supposed to be, what Corbusier has called, 'a machine for living'. You forget its purpose. You forget a house is what is meant to be lived in. There are some housewives who preserve their houses as though they were museums - just to be walked round and looked at, but not used - and you can do this with your whole life, if you're not careful - something to be walked round and looked at, so to speak - preserved intact, just dusted every day.

Ratnaketu: You don't use it for anything ...

S: You don't use it for anything, yes! (Laughter)

And there you are, you're just like a sort of caretaker of the museum, or you're just a wax-work image. (Laughter)

Vijaya: It reminds me of the two poems in the Platform Sutra, in the sort of dramatic effect between these two poems ... ah ... the one saying ...

S: ... Just keep it the way it is basically; the other saying [29] 'just open up'.

Shall we 'open up' to our morning tea and coffee break?

TEA BREAK CONVERSATION

S: (Actual words indistinct to begin with - the drift of meaning is as follows - 'Proportionately, considering per head of population, there are more' Transcript continues) Order Members in New Zealand than any other part of the world. You may say that many of those Order Members are not very active, but then, that applies to England also. There are also Order Members here who are not very active. So, on the one hand, you've got a higher proportion of Order Members in New Zealand, proportionate to the rest of the population, and you have a social and economic, and even a political structure, I think, which is more permeable by a spiritual movement like the FWBO; and you've no competition in terms of Buddhist groups, or Oriental groups to speak of.

Udaya: So the thing is then, because there are more Order Members per head of population in New Zealand, you could interpret that as being easier to 'make' Order Members; so in a sense ...

S: Well, that depends on other factors, which are not quite so ponderable - in order to attract the 'good' people, you need quite strong situations; it's not enough to have one Order Member here, one Order Member there - however many you've got spread out - you need a concentration that creates quite a powerful sort of atmosphere, and you need to have a sort of - what shall I say - a sort of small scale model of what you have to offer. You need to have really good communities; you need to have a 'right livelihood' situation, so you can say - 'This is what we're talking about; this is what we're offering.' It's no good having, say - well, I won't say no good, but less good - a hundred Order [30] Members distributed, each of them separately, all over New Zealand, but all of them saying 'What wonderful communities they've got in England', and 'What wonderful co-ops they've got in England', etc. You've got to be able to point to it right there, and show them right there, in New Zealand itself. I think this is important. So. I think this is what you need to do first of all - well, it's done a bit already, but it needs to be built up again. You need communities and you need 'right livelihood' situations at least. You've got the Centre, and that's fully developed, you could say, pretty nearly; but you need these other things as well, so you can show people exactly what you have to offer.

Udaya: Then we won't have to be sweeping people off to England all the time to be trained up.

S: No, there won't be such a great need for that, not from that point of view.

Udaya: Like - any Mitra who shows signs or promise and is able to - and any Order Member, for that matter, who hasn't been already - I put as much energy as possible into getting them over here, because it's the best situation for them, to experience the FWBO and to be of any use really to New Zealand, if they want to be. That seems to be the case as the community-co-op side or life develops. So it will mean, people will be getting trained up, and at the same time, still putting their energy into the Movement in New Zealand.

S: And also, the need for a greater spirit of enterprise, just because the whole system - the social and economic system - is much more penetrable, so you need to penetrate it more. You can 'capture' it there, to a much greater extent than it's possible [31] to capture anything here - in Britain; here, I think, it's virtually impossible to capture anything, you have to set up something quite separate and alternative; there, I think, you can capture existing things to a much greater degree.

Udaya: What do you mean 'capture'?

S: Umm? Well, take them over, you can run them in your way, sort of thing.

Udaya: But I sort of wonder how with a factory, for example, where you may be doing repetitious work and all the rest of it ... that you can take over something like that without it being out of accordance with 'right livelihood'

S: Well, you take over, but you modify at the same time. No, what I was thinking of when I mentioned the Prime Minister giving a lot of land - well, can you imagine Mrs Thatcher (Laughter) having a scheme of giving land to organizations like the FWBO? It's unthinkable here; but it's actually happened there, without the FWBO doing a thing about it! If we'd been more sort of 'present' in New Zealand at that time, we could have taken advantage of that, but it happened quite independently of the FWBO, as though the 'powers-that-be' are 'asking - well, 'Please take us over', to some extent - almost like that!

Purna: I think there were other motives behind it that weren't quite as altruistic.

S: Well, one takes that for granted where politicians are concerned (Laughter). Nonetheless, the land was there; land is land, even politicians can't contaminate the land.

Ratnaketu: And it just seems access to running the country is so much easier.

S: But even things like time on the radio - when you (i.e. Purna transcriber's note) and Dharmadhara; were interviewed - how much [32] time you got - you'd never get that time here in London, not even on a local station, you wouldn't get as much time as that. They were sort of laying themselves wide open - What! An hour and a half of Buddhism - and not that you were anyone very well-known or very famous - No. You were two Buddhists off the street almost; but they gave you all that time. You'd never get anything like that in Britain. They wouldn't give me that much time, they wouldn't give Christmas Humphreys that much time. If we did get on, it would be fifteen, twenty minutes at the most, not as much time as that!

Udaya: Yeah! Local government is also much more penetrable.

S: You can set up your own township in New Zealand; did you know that? If there's only a dozen houses, in New Zealand, they can apply to be recognized as a - is it called a township? There's a particular term - but anyway, they are an actual entity, administratively and so on. Did you know that?

Aniketa: I didn't!

S: Well, yes, it is so - there can be just a dozen or so houses in some out-of-the-way spot, like a village, and you can be an absolute ... you can have your own district council or whatever it is. That's possible! You can't have that here; that's what I mean. The system works more for you there, or you can take more advantage of the existing system than is possible here. You'd have to get an act of parliament in this country, and you'd never get it.

Udaya: The whole of Waiheke Island Council has virtually been taken over by 'old' hippies.

Vijaya: It's still like a pioneering society, in a way.

S: Right! Yes! It's still in transition.

[33]

Voices: (words indistinct)

S: There's an element of this in the States, on a much bigger scale, but also with quite massive vested interests, while you don't have any in New Zealand. (Murmurs) Well, there's an element of that in the United States, and certainly in Canada, I think. But in New Zealand it is quite manageable by a few people - there's still a human scale to things, as it were, there are not too many people; cities are not too big; townships are not too big - it's all much more manageable. But then, of course, it's so nice and easy you tend to have ... to give yourself a nice easy time there; your militant spirit tends to get a bit dissolved. So I think that's one of the things you have to watch in New Zealand - that you don't sort of ... a nice happy FWBO Movement just gently jogging along, and nice, not-too-hard retreats with plenty of surfing and sun-bathing. (Pause)

Aniketa: ... haven't really looked - I, for one - it's come as quite a revelation that there are opportunities that I haven't even thought were possible.

S: Yes. Also, one of the things that I think is being stressed - which I am stressing currently in England, or starting to stress - is that we need, as a Movement, to gather much more information about the very conditions under which we are living; for instance, we've recently, been going into - Kovida has been going into - this whole question of - 'What is a Charity in Britain?' And he's unearthed all sorts of information as to what is the best way of doing things to take advantage of the existing system - what are the openings. So he's got a lot of information mainly from Her Majesty's Stationery Office: Acts of Parliament and little handbooks on how this works, and how that works; and I think we need to do much more of that, and to know where we stand.

[34]

Aniketa: Know what your rights are.

S: Your rights are just one way, and also what your opportunities are; also what advisory bodies there are that can help you, in connection, say, with the co-ops, which we were speaking about a little while ago. In Norfolk, for instance, 'Padmaloka Candles' have struck up quite friendly relations with a local official, whose job it is simply to advise small businesses in rural areas, and they have found him most friendly and helpful, and he is really glad to help. He's a retired businessman who's got this job, and he's quite keen on helping these rural industries, as 'Padmaloka Candles' is categorized as. So, they find their contact with him quite useful, but they didn't know about it when they started, they just happened to find out about it. I think, Kovida found out because he's a bit inquisitive about things of this sort. So, often, I think, we tend to think we can't do things, and there's no help, when in actual fact there is. It may be under some obscure bye-law, but it's up to you to find out about it and then make use of it. So I'm sure if we can do this in England where things are much more difficult in this respect, then surely you can do it in New Zealand.

Voices: (words blurred) ... about a Buddhist township etc.

S: It would be a separate administrative unit - you could have your own little council, which would, have certain administrative responsibilities.

Ratnaketu: We could get loans, build communities ...

S: Yea. Right. Probably that would need to be gone into; there might be a limitation or ceiling, I don't know.

Voices: (Words indistinct)

S: Therefore you have to build up - not just a folder - you need to collect as much information as possible, of this sort, as [35] of your stock in trade - as it were. So in England, we've only just started doing this sort of thing. We should have done it before, but there was no one to take the interest in it. But Kovida and Kulananda are very much into this sort of thing, and I think it's going to be very useful. (Pause) Let's get back to Dhaniya - but there is a connection, as you've probably seen - Dhaniya represents the complacency in society. You've quite a bit of complacency, I think, among ordinary people in New Zealand, just because life is so nice; this was brought out in Purna's write-up about my talks, when you said you felt people ought to feel a bombshell had been exploded, and they just sat there as if nothing very much had happened. It is rather like that, because, in your life itself, there's nothing like an existential situation as there is in India very often.

Ratnaketu: There is also one advantage we would have - something like - Sukhavati in the middle of Auckland - it would be such a big thing in such a small place, people would have to find out about it; they'd have to be worrying about it - what's going on there.

S: Sukhavati doesn't stick out in London; it just about manages to stick out a bit in Bethnal Green. It doesn't stick out in London, probably if it were ten times as big, it wouldn't; but if it was just as big as it is it probably would stick out in Auckland, and it isn't all that ... well, I don't know if there are buildings of that size in Auckland (Laughter) I mean, built for that sort of purpose. But if you did get hold of something like that, it certainly would stick out, just as

in Glasgow, their new centre will probably stick out in that sort of way in Glasgow, because it is so centrally located in such an important, busy shopping street, which they call the 'Oxford [36] Street' of Glasgow; but it's certainly at least as busy as Queen Street; so, if you had a good-sized building in that sort of location, well, it would be - it would almost be - a New Zealand institution, wouldn't it? It's possible to have it, even with the number of people you've got at present, it's not impossible. But, meanwhile, no doubt, the best Buddhist Centre in New Zealand - I don't think the other Buddhist groups count in this connection. Anyway, back to 'Dhaniya! Let's go on to the next two verses - someone read 'Dhaniya's' verse first.

End of discussion of New Zealand situation (Tea-break)

End of side two, tape one

side one, tape two

Udaya: TEXT

Dhaniya: 'No gnats, no gadflies here are round,
Thus spake the herdsman Dhaniya,
'In rich grass meads my cattle roam,
Well can they brave what storm may come:
So if thou wish, rain, deva, rain!'

S: So, in a way, Dhaniya hasn't got the point. Perhaps he sort of vaguely feels something, but he hasn't really got the point. He's sort of repeating what he said before. He is reasserting his position that he's all right. He says, 'No gadflies here are found'. Gnats and gadflies are just little annoying things - you get lots of those in New Zealand, don't you? The one drawback in New Zealand, I found. But Dhaniya is saying, 'There's nothing like that here; nothing to make you feel a bit uncomfortable - and, 'In rich grass meads my cattle roam' - 'There's plenty of good, lush, rich, green grass for my cattle' - 'Well can they brave what storm may come' - it's as though they're [37] in no danger, just as he boasted before, that the house or hut, was well-roofed, now he says that the herds, the cattle, have got nothing to fear from the storm. So, again, he is reasserting that he is all right; that he's not under any threat; nothing can interfere with his way of life; he's quite impregnable, as it were.

Ratnaketu: The things in which his security lie, are all there; they're all safe.

S: Yes. (Voices breaking in - words indistinct)

His possessions really are possessions, nothing can happen to them; nothing can touch them; just like people in the 'West', under a much more elaborate system. People in the 'West', say, before the 'Wall Street Crash' of 19... when was it? 30?

Ratnaketu: 29.

S: 1929 - Those who were living off investments, they really believed that the system was rock solid, but overnight, they were pauperized. Everything lost its value; or even people in various European countries, for instance, in Germany, just before - was it just before? - just after the first World War, people had cash, and the value of the cash went down and down

and down, until you needed a suitcase full of banknotes to go and buy a cup of tea! So, what you pin your faith on ... there's a saying in England, 'as solid as the Bank of England' (Laughter) So, the bank, yes, it's solid now, but it's only as solid as the economic system that it is part of. It could collapse, and the whole system starts shaking a bit when inflation goes too high. You can sort of ignore 20% inflation, but suppose it goes up to 400%, as it has been recently, in some countries? You start feeling uneasy about the whole system then, don't [38] you? So Dhaniya feels secure - that the grass will always be there for his cattle; he doesn't think it might dry up, or there might be a drought; he thinks the grass will always be rich and green; and he thinks they will always be strong enough to brave the storm, but there is no sense of fear - of anything to fear - so, in the same way, we think our system, our source of income is secure, is safe; our investments are safe, the Government is safe, the Bank of England is safe and solid; we've nothing to worry about; our currency is OK; inflation is not going to go too high; we just rely on these things, but these could change. We tend to close our eyes to that fact, especially if the system has gone on working quite smoothly for a long time; especially if it's gone on working all our lives. If we, start thinking that the Bank of England, for instance, is just a part of nature, it's part of the natural order of things, we can't think of it like the monarchy.

Vijaya: ... people ... in America on the dollar banknote it has 'In God we Trust', actually round the figure and picture of a bank. (laughter)

Priyananda: God is Money!

Vijaya: Money speaks in America!

S: So Dhaniya's attitude still persists - this false sense of security. (Pause) So, all right, what does the Buddha say; let's go on to that.

Vijaya: TEXT

The Master: 'Well fashioned was the bonded raft'
Thus spake the Master in reply,
'But none's the need of raft for him,
Crossed and yon-fared, the flood-tide ridden:
So if thou wish etc. '

[39]

S: Why do you think the Buddha introduces the idea of the raft? What is its significance?
(Pause)

Achala: That all the worldly things are just a means to an end.

S: Yes.

Priyananda: Dhaniya's also speaking about braving the storm.

S: Yes. It often happens in India, in rural India even now, of course, that if there's very heavy rainfall, the rivers overflow, and there's a flood, and cattle and everything - whole villages - can be swept away. So the Buddha, on the one hand, is speaking of the raft of the Dharma,

which suggests that the Dharma is a means to an end, and he's also reminding Dhaniya that there is danger. Dhaniya mentions storm; storm means rain; rain means possibility of flood, so Dhaniya does need a raft, but what raft does he really need? He needs the raft of the Dharma; a raft which will carry him beyond mundane things altogether, but which will be, at the same time, a means to an end and not an end in itself, because if it is treated as an end in itself it becomes a source of security in much the same way that Dhaniya's cows and house are a source of security to him - you mustn't try to get out of the Dharma, that sort of false security that you try to get out of material things - when you believe in God, 'Oh, I have nothing to worry about, God is looking after me.' That again, is false security; then when something dreadful does happen to you, then - 'Why did God do this to me?'

Voices: (murmurs of agreement)

S: I was reading recently about a woman who lost her faith in this way. I think a son died, and she said, 'I worshipped God all my life, and to think He could do a thing like that to me!' (Laughter)

Anjali: But Bhante, how could you get security in that way from [40] the Dharma?

S: Um?

Anjali: How could you get security in that way from the Dharma?

S: Well, the Dharma teaches you that there is no security, that's your security, paradoxically. The Perfection of Wisdom says 'That which is supported, has no support'; so, if you realize that there is no support, that is the best support. You just face up to the fact, that, well, yes, you may die any minute, that is your security against death; that you realize and accept that you may die any minute.

Anjali: But you were saying that people could get a sense of security and fall away from the Dharma.

S: Yes. Not from the real Dharma, they have to misunderstand the Dharma first. But, certainly, we can see that in the Buddhist countries, that the Dharma does, sometimes, become an end in itself, rather than a means to an end. You get people saying they are born Buddhists; well, they are born into a Buddhist family, and a Buddhist culture and that's enough, that's all they have to do; they don't have to practise the Dharma; they are born Buddhists, it's there automatically. Some of them say, 'The Dharma is in my blood'. Well, how can the Dharma be in your blood?

Udaya: Perhaps I've got this impression from Western bhikkhus that I've met, once you're a monk, well, that's it. It's all downhill from here on; it's automatic.

S: Downhill to Nirvana!

Purna: Or once you're an Order Member.

S: Order members are not quite so likely to commit that mistake, because, after all, there are further heights to rise to, like being chairman, (chuckling) (Laughter)(Pause)

[41]

So, 'Well fashioned was the bonded raft'/ Thus spake the Master in reply/ 'But none's the need of raft for him,/ Crossed and yon-fared the flood-tides ridden!'

So the Buddha make's it very clear that the raft that he's talking about - the raft of the Dharma - is very definitely and very clearly, a means to an end. This is something that needs constantly bearing in mind.

Ratnaketu: This bit - the last line that's in each one - 'Rain, deva, rain!' - is that sort of - 'Come what may'? or ...

S: Yes. 'It doesn't matter'; 'it's irrelevant'.

Ratnaketu: The herdsman's saying, 'Come what may', because he thinks he's got his security in worldly things, and he's all right.

S: Yes.

Ratnaketu: And the Buddha's saying, 'Come what may', because ...

S: ... he doesn't think in terms of security or insecurity.

Purna: In New Zealand terms it would be, 'She'll be right'. (Laughter)

S: Shall be right?

Voices in unison: 'She'll be right.' (Pause)

S: So, sometimes, someone's Dhaniya-like attitude is, 'Well, I don't mind if it does rain.' It could be quite difficult to distinguish from the genuinely spiritual attitude of, 'I don't mind if it rains', you see what I mean?

Aniketa: It's only when you're in the actual living ... in the actual situation, as you were saying before, when things are really hard, like changing a tyre in a blizzard wind, with the rain beating down on you, and you manage to maintain your positivity ...

S: Yes. There is the Indian story I sometimes mention in this [42] connection, that a parrot was caught, and he was taught to say, 'Hare Ram, Hare Ram', the name of God, Hare Ram - they often do this in India - they teach parrots and mynahs in this sort of way; so it used to recite, 'Hare Ram', and was greatly admired as a pious bird and all that sort of thing, but one day the cat got hold of it, and instead of saying 'Hare Ram' it just let out a horrible natural squawk. (Laughter) So, people are just like that: as long as everything is going all right - 'hare ram', or 'om mani padme hum', or whatever the case may, be; but if anything really happens to you, you just forget that, and just let out your natural squawk - (Laughter) - Sometimes you hear people, more especially Christians - 'I trust in God', and, 'I believe in God', and, 'My mind is at rest'; but it is not that - they are actually trusting in their riches, that's why their mind is, so to speak, 'at rest'. The only test is the practical test of experience. To come back to the situation in New Zealand: one of the things I felt when I was there, was, it wasn't easy to create in people, a sense of urgency. You see what I mean? - that things are very easy going

there; just because things are comfortable and convenient, and pleasant; it's a lovely country, with a fine climate, beautiful scenery, and plenty of elbow-room.

Udaya: It may well be we might find it more successful by working from a different point of view.

S: Yes. I think you have to find a different point of view.

Udaya: I think that 'ambition', 'ingenuity', and 'achieving something' might be a better way of drawing people, rather than, 'Time is running out'. That might be more appropriate in London.

Priyananda: But at the same time it's good to impress people with [43] that - that, in fact ...

Udaya: Oh yes. It wouldn't be to the exclusion of that, but more in terms of main emphasis. You do that anyway, quite naturally with meeting a new person at the Centre - you sort of suss them out a little bit, and if they're into painting or art or something, you talk about the whole thing of Evolution and refinements of states or consciousness - you talk the same language to some extent.

S: But what about the economic approach, especially through the co-ops? When I was in New Zealand I was hearing, and reading in the newspapers, that so many young people had to go to Australia to get jobs.

Voices: (words indistinct)

S: I mean, one could make an approach - creating employment, creating work in a very special way - you might even, who knows, get Government help for that, just as in London we get help from the Land Power Scheme.

Ratnaketu: The Government would give help like that, because it depends on agriculture and sales of meat.

S: We'd have to steer pretty clear of that; but what I was thinking, was, if you could set up some sort of structure on our own 'right livelihood' terms, but which would be seen from outside the Movement as a sort of job creation scheme that the Government would be interested in helping.

Achala: Actually other groups have taken it on.

Priyananda: The Yoga group in Wellington.

S: Ah! Yes. Well, the possibilities really are there.

Ratnaketu: There was one festival in Auckland, where people got paid money for running the festival, just because they were keeping kids off the street for one weekend.

[44]

S: So it does seem as though there are quite a few possibilities open in New Zealand, but we need to be a bit more on the ball, and better organized, so as to take advantage of them, and

that means knowing about them to begin with; otherwise you might be slaving your guts out to raise some money for a certain purpose, not knowing that the Government is just waiting to give you money to do that very thing.

Udaya: And we might very well be doing the same thing, just calling it something different.

(Pause)

S: And there's also, in connection with this whole question of the Dharma as a raft, the contrast with Christianity, because if any religion is at all prevalent in New Zealand, at least conventionally, it's Christianity; so, obviously one comes up against that; or at least one comes in contact with that, and one might be asked what one feels about that, or has to say about that. I think the basic criticism is, that it's an end in itself, so much so, that all human values can get crushed. I mean, how could a religion ever, for instance, burn people at the stake, or persecute people, without regarding itself as an end in itself, completely blind to actual human values? How could you do such things as that? It's only because the religion becomes an end in itself, to which everything has to be subordinated. But that implies a point of view - implies the corresponding point of view - with regards Buddhism; that Buddhism and the Dharma is not an end in itself. It's a means to an end. That at once raises the question - well, what end? Again - this is human development; the attainment of a higher level of consciousness, a higher mode of being, a higher, better, truly better, kind of life, by individual human beings, and Buddhism, or what we [45] call the Dharma, is the means to that end.

Aniketa: And it's that potential within yourself and not given to you by some being external to yourself.

S: Yes. That potentiality is inherent in every human being.

Aniketa: There's such a strong impression in talking with people who have this strong belief in an exterior being, that - well, it's just blasphemous to think you can develop that potential within yourself, and they shy off meditation ...

S: Well, one of the things that I've been feeling recently, more with regards to England - the number of people who are just lacking in initiatives; the majority of people seem lacking in initiative, and that means lacking in a sense of responsibility; that 'We'll, I can do it; I've got the capacity to do it!' They sort of sit back and wait for it to be done for them, either by the State, which is more usual now-a-days, or the Church, or whatever, or just other people, or even the other people in your community if your not careful, or your co-op. This is connected with what I said earlier about allowing other people to take a larger share of the responsibility. I think this is very important - stressing that in a community or a co-op where it is all order members, let us say, that everybody accepts an equal share of the responsibility; that there aren't some that sit back and let others get on with it.

Vijaya: I think that could even have become traditional in England - sort of lack of ambition - you can look around and see that generation after generation have grown up not to expect any opportunities - you can almost see that on people's faces - in areas, big areas - a sort of stultification has sort of set in, and become a condition - well, these people are not going to have these opportunities; to take any opportunities ...

[46]

S: Well, people have opportunities; they have more opportunities than they actually make use of in quite a few cases; but it is as though so many people are just expecting to have it put right in their mouths. We've had this in connection with some of the recent strikes.

Productivity agreements are regarded as a sort of imposition - that you should actually work more to produce more, even though you're behind the rest of the world, in order to get more money - that the money should just be given to you regardless.

Aniketa: There's a bit of this in New Zealand, with social welfare development, that it has ... you can see on the one hand where it can and does help people, genuinely help people, but, at the same time, it can undermine that sort of self-responsible attitude, and you get this sort of 'waiting for someone to give you something' attitude. That seems to be very much tied up with the Christian attitude too, that of being a creature, number one, so you're in a weak and helpless state to begin with, and therefore you have to be told more or less what to do.

S: Yes. Well, I came across a poem written by a very fine poet, (but he happened to be a Catholic), in which he ... God was represented; God was speaking in the (?) and God was addressing the Soul as 'My dear nonentity'. (Laughter) Well, just think! You're sort of brought up to think of yourself as a nonentity, that God happens to love this little nonentity - it's awful isn't it? So what's ... if you're a nonentity what sort of strength, what sort of power can you have? Well, obviously, none at all!

Aniketa: It's a subtle ...

S: And people, in way, speak about the 'compassionate society'! It's right, yes, that society should be compassionate, but it [47] must be real compassion, and not a weakening pity.

Voices: Yes. Right.

S: Because, if you sometimes just indulge in a weakening pity, you are just giving yourself the satisfaction of - 'I'm the person who's looking after this other person' - but compassion should be something much more vigorous and invigorating; encouraging someone to stand on his own two feet, if he has feet, well, if he hasn't got feet, well, of course, look after him, but if he has got feet, encourage him to stand on them and learn to walk; that's compassion, even if it means giving him a kick to get him on his feet. But the so-called 'caring' society, or 'compassionate society' seems to have become, in practice, the 'indulgent society', the society that is like a weak, indulgent mother - 'Don't do it dear, Mummy will do it for you' (Laughter) It's that sort of - 'Don't soil your hands dear, Mummy will do it all'. It's just like that. And we were up against this in the very early days of 'the Friends', I can tell you! I used to walk into the Centre at Archway, and find people just sprawled all over the floor; strewn across the room; you had to step over them as you entered, and people really sort of resented the bare suggestion that they ought to do anything for the Centre, or put anything in the Dana bowl. They believed, many of them, we found out - and I think they believed because they wanted to believe - that behind the FWBO there was some very wealthy trust that was paying for everything, because, if you believe that, well, it absolves you of any responsibility. We've had quite a lot of difficulty convincing people there was no wealthy trust that was behind the FWBO, that it was paying for everything, and footing all the bills - that we were doing that, just a few, people who were donating, (in those days there were no co-ops). So a few [48] of our Friends were just giving money which they had earned, and in this way we were carrying

on; but the majority of people who came along in those days just didn't want to know. They really thought everything should be provided, and if it was done in the name of religion, then that gave them an extra sort of reason - 'Well, it's supposed to be a religious organization isn't it? You can't sort of charge!' (Laughter) - 'Everything should be free; you should be giving things away to people, that's the real spirit of religion.' Well, maybe it is, but it's got to be taken in a sensible way. So, it's a sort of infantile attitude - wanting everything to be done for you; and unfortunately, the principle of the 'compassionate society' is fine, but in practice, only too often, the 'compassionate society' becomes the 'indulgent society', that just weakens people, and pampers them, instead of encouraging them to become individuals.

Udaya: I have found it quite difficult in Auckland, often, when there were objectively lots of things, little things that needed doing around the Centre, that people could help with at the Centre - getting people to do them, and yet they kept saying, 'How can we help?' You wonder how far you ought to go, telling people that this is what they could do. Sometimes it's easier and a lot quicker to get it done yourself, or with a few people who, are the same people who are doing everything anyway.

S: Usually you have to convey the message through everything that you do. Your actual teaching, for instance, you stress the paramita of 'virya', for instance, no one who comes along and hears your talks, can have any doubt of where Buddhism stands; and obviously set the example yourself. If they come along and find order members sort of strewn all over the place, well, what sort ... [49] ... they'll get that message, (laughter) if you see what I mean. You don't want to be just buzzing around like a restless little bee, but on the other hand, convey an impression of energy, and things being done; and people 'on the ball'. And so you will attract people who will want to be like that, who can be like that. (Pause) You'll basically attract the sort of people who want to be the way that they see you being.

Udaya: Oh dear!

S: Yes! Yes!

Purna: It's the power of imitation.

S: Yes. Like attracts like ... at least complementary. But you don't want to ... (what occurs to me) - unless you convey the right impression, some people will think, well, it's nice having all these active energetic people because they'll do it for us. (Voices murmuring agreement) You don't want to give that impression; so you need to make that clear also, that this is the way things are in Buddhism for everybody, in the measure that they can. (Pause) In the old days, people used to think of meditation as just relaxing and taking things easy, just letting your mind drift, that was meditation. (Pause) And they just wanted to learn how to drift into very blissful states, carried out of themselves. Maybe the drug culture influenced this - you just had to pop something into your mouth, and away! And so they thought you'd just come round to the Centre and pop something into your mouth with a cup or tea, and, Oh! you were away! (Pause) But New Zealanders on the whole, ordinary New Zealanders, do work. They are, as far as I could tell, a reasonably active people. So that shouldn't be too much of a problem in New Zealand. The only difficulty may be if people in New Zealand associate something like Buddhism with leisure-time activities [50] rather than with work. You see what I mean? They tend to associate Buddhism, maybe, with relaxing on the beach, rather than doing a day's work. (Pause) Some may think of it as something you do in your spare time rather than as

something that doesn't leave you with any spare time. (Laughter) It's not something you do in your spare time when ordinary work is finished, it's a radical transformation of your ordinary life, and ordinary work, so you don't have to make any distinctions between your work and play any more. Your work is your, play and your play is your work.

Ratnaketu: I was trying to explain that to somebody and they just said, 'If your work is your play and your play is your work' ... their idea was - you were just working all the time. (laughter) Hard work!

S: We'll, yes, you work all the time, and it is hard work, but it's fun too.

Ratnaketu: They couldn't see it as not being hard work and a drag.

S: Mm. (Pause)

Udaya: When you were talking before about order members taking an equal share of responsibility, what's the implication of that? Do you mean at the Centre or ...? ... I was thinking of ...

S: I was thinking more of the co-op situation, because that's the situation in connection with which these thoughts have been developing recently, that is to say, within a co-op. I suppose you've got about ten or twelve people as members of that co-op, it's not just a question of doing your job, say, maybe packaging dried fruit or whatever, it's a question of the success of the whole enterprise, which may require thought and planning and awareness of the situation outside, especially if you're producing[51] things for sale on the market; so, when I say that all order members in that situation should take equal responsibility, what I mean is, that some people shouldn't simply do their own limited job, say, packaging fruit, and forget about the project as a whole, and say, 'Leave that to just one or two people, (it may be the manager or the secretary) that's their job, as it were, to think about the thing as a whole, and my job is to pack fruit'. You see what I mean? But everybody has an equal responsibility, that's what a co-op means: you all put your heads together; you all feel responsible, even though certain people may have secretarial or managerial functions, but they are only, as it were, instruments of the co-op as a whole, so you don't get, therefore, within the co-op strictly speaking, a division between workers and managers, in the sense that workers don't have responsibility for the whole thing, the managers do. You may have workers doing worker's work and managers doing managers' work, in the sense that managers may be dealing with outside bodies and writing letters, but everybody shares responsibility for the whole functioning of the co-op.

Aniketa: You have to be aware of what is happening on the whole ...

S: Yes. Right ... of all levels. Otherwise you get a situation where the few active, more capable people get overburdened and the others get looked after, which is good for neither, and you can have this happening in a community too. A few more responsible, active people taking responsibility for the whole show, and others, maybe the majority, just getting by, living their own little lives. Say, for instance, something needs painting or redecorating, the majority don't bother; it's the minority of people who say, 'Well, this should be done, and that should be done'; but it should be everybody's responsibility.

[52]

Aniketa: At least, then, they're aware of what needs to be done and even if they can't do it, at least it can be shared out ...

S: Yes - not using the structure to live their own little lives within it, without caring about the good and well-being of the structure as a whole. And in the same way, think about the whole Movement if you possibly can; not just your little corner of it: that's what I meant by, 'order members taking equal responsibility.' You can't have a really healthy community or co-op without that. If, for instance, say, in the case of mitras, you've got a community which consists of both mitras and order members, you accept the fact that then mitras, on the whole, will have less responsibility because they are less committed, but people who are equally committed should have equal responsibility, even though they may not have equal talents - they may be able to do less - but they, none-the-less, accept equal responsibility.

Udaya: Mmm. That is what I found in Auckland, in the community and co-op, there was such a sharp division between the order members and the mitras, and it really sort of came down to commitment and vision.

S: So, if you accept mitras into the community or co-op, you have to accept that they are not as committed as you, and not expect them to be. I think this has been a mistake that's been made, certainly in London, in one or two cases, that order members have expected mitras, even very new mitras at that, to be as committed as they were, which is unreasonable because they are not, otherwise they'd be order members. So order members have to accept that they have a bigger responsibility and should accept that quite cheerfully, while at the same time, encouraging the mitras to come up to that level, just as they encourage them in every other way; but not expect a young, new mitra to be as [53] committed and responsible as an older order member, that is quite unreasonable. And in the same way, there might even be an order member who is, let us say, 'weaker' than the others, or less responsible. Well, if he is accepted into the community, well, you have to have an understanding that this is what he is like - we can't expect as much from him as we expect of ourselves, but, all right, we'll accept him into the community and encourage him to come up to the level which he ought to be at anyway; at least, we'll give him a trial period, say, but do it knowingly; knowing the person, not taking something for granted and then being disappointed and resentful that things don't work out that way. In the same way, when you accept a difficult mitra into a community, well, know what you are doing. If you accept him, well, accept him knowing he is a difficult mitra, and you're going to have to make a special effort with him. Don't just accept him and then feel resentful that you're having to make a special effort.

Udaya: Sliding around from there a little bit - with regards classes - a lot of order members like the idea of classes, and being involved in the Centre in that way, but it seems that some order members just aren't as good at it.

S: Yes.

Udaya: That could be, sometimes, a bit of a difficult situation - that everyone wants to be involved but, sometimes, it might be a bit difficult for some people to recognize that they are not in as good a position as others.

S: Yes. This can happen. There are two dangers to avoid - opposite dangers - one, that oneself

should not have a very fixed idea of how classes are to be run and what makes a good class, that's one extreme; and the other is, that one shouldn't sort of [54] insist on taking a class even when, in fact, one is not really qualified to do so, either because you just don't know the Dharma well enough, or because your approach and your manner is just not appropriate etc. And that may vary from place to place; somebody that's very good, say, in one country may not go down so well in another. I can imagine, for instance, the way Lokamitra handles our Indian friends, wouldn't go down very well in some parts of New Zealand, would it? (Laughter) (Pause). Or a way that's appropriate in Scotland, wouldn't be appropriate in England, and 'vice versa'. So one has to see all these factors; and sometimes one has to accept one's limitations, that one isn't the best person for the situation, it's best to let someone else get on with it. (Pause)

Udaya: By the same token, you get people who think they're not very good at it, but you can see that, with a bit of work, they would be very good.

S: Well, they should be encouraged, obviously. They may just be lacking in a bit of self-confidence. There are some people with qualifications, so to speak, but just lacking in self-confidence. Others have lots of self-confidence, but don't have too many qualifications and they just go blundering in and they think they are making a good job of it, but they may just be committing awful mistakes. They've just got too much self-confidence, (PAUSE) But, within every community, within every council, within every co-op, there should be an acceptance in principle, of equal responsibility, though everybody may not be able to do the same thing. Not everybody may be able to be out-front, as it were. Some people may not be suited for that, they just give their quiet support from behind, as it were. (Pause) And some people are more able to be 'out-front, than others, even the more [54] qualified. (Pause)

Anjali: There's been recent discussion in England about the value of ...

S: Um?

Anjali: ... having a positive value, that ...

S: That's true. Yes. Sometimes it has been thought in the past that if you're supporting, somehow you're playing a secondary role: you're playing second fiddle; and some people, obviously for the wrong reasons, don't like the idea of playing a secondary role, or playing second fiddle. But one shouldn't think of 'supporting' in that sort of way: as if someone is leading a class and your supporting that person ... it doesn't mean you are just sitting there twiddling your thumbs, while he's 'out front', and the centre of attention - it doesn't mean that. But it does mean, in subtle ways, you're reinforcing the effect of what he says, or what he does.

Aniketa: You're aware of the whole situation?

S: I mean, for instance, while the leader of the class is talking about something, there may be some little thing happening 'off-stage', as it were, so you just quietly go and deal with that, so no one's attention is drawn away from the class; and then you come back; or if you see that the leader of the class missed the point someone is trying to make, you just quietly put in a few words just to clarify that without ... you don't say, 'Oh, you've missed the point, what she was saying is so-and-so'; you don't do it like that; you just say a few tactful words, because

sometimes, the spectator sees more of the game than the person who is actually 'playing'. Or, if you just keep an eye on things: whether the tea is ready, and things [56] like that, and in that way, though you are not 'out front' like the person everyone is listening to yet your contribution is essential to; make a success of the whole evening; the whole class. You see what I mean? This is what 'support' means. Not just playing second fiddle; you don't have such a prominent role, that's all, it maybe just as essential. So this is something that is being stressed more recently. (Pause)

In some ways, it's more difficult to be supportive than be supported.

End of side one, tape two

side two, tape two

Tea-break conversation about 'mead' (an old Anglo-Saxon drink made from honey).

S: So what are the main points that have emerged so far, this morning?

Achala: There's one thing about complacency ...

S: Yea

Achala: Getting at attitudes to material possessions.

Purna: The fact that there are higher and better possibilities than just the material.

S: Yes. Right. (Pause) Also - we haven't sort of stressed this, but it does come up - the extent to which, what we may call a spiritual ideal, confronts the total lack of any ideal. It's as though the spiritual ideal isn't just an alternative peacefully lying alongside people's ordinary way of life, it confronts and challenges it the whole time, and this is, perhaps, why it sometimes makes people uncomfortable, and they're not quite happy about it. You're not merely doing something different, I think one should resist any such suggestion, you know, you shouldn't [57] say, 'You're interested in rugby and horseracing (or whatever)- dope or alcohol, and, no, I'm just into Buddhism', you know, 'We've all got the right to follow the thing we're interested in, this happens to be my interest.' No! You shouldn't accept that, or seem to accept that sort of attitude, you must challenge in a friendly way, in a peaceful way, even pleasantly, but you must certainly challenge.

Aniketa: Yes, you can see this happening, when people's life-styles, the way they are living - when it begins to penetrate, it's asking - the Dharma is asking them to change, and you do begin ...

S: Well, it's not just your hobby; you have to make that clear. It's not just an amiable weakness on your part.

Udaya: Someone once said to me on finding out that I was a Buddhist, they believed, you know, that everyone had a right to believe and follow what they liked.

S: Yes.

Udaya: I replied that I felt that quite weak and even patronizing in a way.

S: Yes, right. Indeed it is.

Udaya: You know, that they didn't even enquire to see what it was, before mentally sort of stuffing it away. It's almost for similar reasons saying that I'd be quite concerned the FWBO doesn't get involved with any kind of alternative festivals and things as just another alternative, you know, on their ground. I'm quite 'anti' that sort of thing in New Zealand.

S: I've said recently, on the whole, I thought it would be ... it's best for us to be 'unfriendly' - on unfriendly terms - with [58] these certain other religious groups - I say 'other', you know what I mean? - even other Buddhist group - the situation is clearer and truer. If one is actually on 'unfriendly' terms with them. I don't mean that we are personally unfriendly to individuals, I don't mean that; I don't mean, if they call round that you be unfriendly, no, welcome them and be friendly on a personal level, but not be organizationally friendly. I think that is to our advantage. It makes clear what the situation is - that you're not all happy occupying different corners of the same platform.

Purna: This really applies in India.

Udaya: We got accused quite a few times by different groups for being quite 'elitist', so do you think we were being quite 'successful'? (Laughter)

S: Well, that's another one of these clap-trap expressions that people use without knowing what it means!

Udaya: But I think really, all that's happened is, that we've been quite careful that anything we do is on our own terms, on our own ground.

S: Yes.

Priyananda: But people do want ... they want the security of being all one group.

S: Yes.

Priyananda: ... all one organization, and sort of, everything in agreement.

S: Yes, and they don't have to choose, that means they don't have to think. To say we're all the same: 'Oh, we're doing this, what the Tibetan people are doing is the same; oh, of course, anthroposophy, well that's just the same too, and yoga, yes, that's very much the same thing - and, in this [59] way, it's all one great, big, comfortable lump. You don't have to think about it too much, you just stagger along from one group to another, feeling you are in pretty much the same sort or atmosphere: it's pretty much the same sort of thing.

Voice: No real commitment.

S: No real commitment. No. There can't be under those circumstances.

Purna: This business of confrontation you were talking about?

S: Yes?

Purna: ... that, in fact, you are part of what people are already doing.

S: Yes. Right. (Pause) But it is not easy, always, to take up this attitude, because in oneself, too often, there is the feeling of wanting to be all nice and cosy and all together with all these different groups and it's really nice to be with them, especially if your group is really small, but one must resist that sort of temptation. Certainly, be friendly and emotionally positive when you meet any person, whatever group they may come from, or from no group at all, but never compromise on principles, and never be officially, so to speak, co-operative with bodies you have nothing in common with at all, really. (Pause) So, if the public thinks 'Oh, the FWBO is different, they never mix with other groups', that's good; it's just what you want! And then you'll gradually develop your own sort of reputation for being like this, or like that, so whatever people might think about Buddhism in the abstract, they've got a clear idea about the FWBO. They might think that Buddhism is very ascetic and narrow-minded, but the FWBO is not like that. (Long pause) Sometimes these people land themselves in very contradictory positions: many Christians want to maintain their own difference [60] from Buddhism, they want you to be Christian rather than Buddhist, but if you think Buddhism is different from Christianity they think you are narrow-minded. (Laughter) Yes, that is the position, it seems. (Pause) IF you refuse to be included in them, you're narrow-minded, but if they refuse to be included in you, well, they're just standing up for the truth! (Pause) So, Buddhists have had enough of this sort of thing! I certainly had quite enough of it in India in connection with Hinduism.

Purna: The question gets mixed in a murky way with the whole idea of tolerance as well.

S: Yes.

Aniketa: It's very (?) the word is just abused. It's not (?) ... it's completely misunderstood.

S: Yes. Well, 'tolerance' has to be 'tolerance of difference' - that you treat people as human beings even though they believe differently from you. Well, Christians have their (?) on that principle! (Pause) I really think it is outrageous that Christians dare ever to lecture us on tolerance. I think it is utter effrontery on their part! They should hide their heads in shame! (Laughter) To speak to us about tolerance! (Pause) And I think they should be told so if necessary. And then they say, 'Oh, that's ancient history'. It's not so ancient; it goes on in some areas right up to the present day. And even if it was ancient, well, it occupies such a large slice of the total Christian history; well, you say, 'Well, before you ... before we can be expected to believe that you really have changed, a few more hundred years have got to go by. I mean, if you've been intolerant - well, let us say, if you reckon it in actual practice, from the actual establishment of Christianity on the 'Constantine' system of religion, [61] about 300 AD, all right, that's at least 1,500 to 1,600 years of intolerance we've seen, well, we need to see at least 500 or 600 ... no, 1,500 or 1,600 of intolerance) ... we need to see at least 500 or 600 years of tolerance before we will believe there's been a real change. Otherwise we may well believe that they have just lost, to a great extent, the ability to be intolerant. They haven't really changed their principles. (Pause) But, if you really think about it, it's outrageous, you know, the cheek that they have to lecture us about tolerance! (Pause) And we've only got to ...

a little sort of murmur of difference, 'We don't quite believe the same as you', and 'Oh, you're being very intolerant'. You see? From Christians, when, with a little shade of difference of belief for hundreds and hundreds of years you'd be burnt at the stake! (Pause)... because 'they loved you'. (Laughter) Yes! I mean, even at the last moment you could be scared into the 'right path', and that would be better than going to hell! They were helping you in that way! They'd burn you at the stake, because you might, at the last minute, realize 'the error of your ways', and save yourself from hell. It was their duty to burn you! They burned you out of love! Because they preach a God of Love!

Purna: That's one thing about aspects of Islam too.

S: Yes, indeed! And the Bible says, 'Him who God loveth, he chastiseth. (Pause) I think we've got so used to their effrontery and outrageousness, that we just sort of let it go by. I think we should challenge the pseudo-Buddhist, and the pseudo-mystical and pseudo-meditation groups that are so woolly in their thinking, and so pathetic in so many ways. I'm not saying that there aren't 'good' individuals, yes, there are, in some cases, [62] because if you don't get in touch with anything better and you're looking for something, well, what else can you do? You will join almost anything that will provide you with something. So don't sort of devalue the individuals who are involved, in all cases, some may be very 'good' people, but they deserve something better than what they've got, and even if they are 'good' people, they're very often influenced by the flabby thinking of the movement that they belong to. (Pause) Perhaps we'd better leave it there as it's

End of side two, tape two

side one, tape three

S: All right, let us continue to go round the circle, reading.

Aniketa: TEXT.

Dhaniya 'Obedient is my wife, no trull,'
Thus spake the herdsman Dhaniya,
'Long hath she been a loving mate,
No rumoured wrong I hear of her:
So if thou wish etc.'

S: Mm. We'll find in the next verse that there is a parallelism with this verse. There's the verse ... the two previous pairs of verses - but first of all, let us try to understand what this verse is actually saying. There are one or two words that need a bit of comment. I've just looked them up in the dictionary just to make quite sure about them. This word 'obedient' - Dhaniya said. 'Obedient is my wife'. 'Gopi' - the word '(?)', which is translated as 'obedient', and also in the next verse, comes from the same root as 'savaka', or 'sravaka', 'to hear' - so if one 'hears', if one 'listens', one, as it were, takes notice of what is said [63] one takes heed of what is said, and in that way you get 'obedient'. See? But it is much more than 'obedient'; it's more like 'paying attention to', 'hearkening to', 'paying heed to', and because of that, obviously, one is obedient. And then Dhaniya says that his wife is 'no trull'. What does 'trull' mean? It's a rather old-fashioned word.

Priyananda: I've looked it up, and it (??) with 'prostitute'.

S: Yes. It's a lady who doesn't behave herself very nicely. (Laughter) Actually, this is not a very accurate translation. It's 'alola'; it literally means, 'one who is not distracted', especially not distracted by desire. So, clearly 'trull' is too strong a translation, but the translator needed to get in a word of one syllable. So you can begin to understand what the more accurate meaning is 'My wife is one who takes notice of what I say, and is not distracted by desires' - this is what Dhaniya is saying. 'Long hath she been a loving mate/ No rumoured wrong I hear of her/ So if thou wish, rain, deva, rain!' So having congratulated himself upon his house and his herds, Dhaniya is now, with typical self-complacency, congratulating himself upon his excellent wife; and clearly, he reflects the attitudes of his day, and the terms in which he praises his wife show very clearly what he thinks a 'good' wife should be. First of all she should be obedient, she should take heed of what he says, and also, she should not be distracted, especially by anything unskilful; that she should be completely loyal to him. So Dhaniyas is stressing these qualities in his wife. 'Long has she been a loving mate', - apparently, from this, you gather that Dhaniya is not a very young man; perhaps he's an elderly man; his wife has lived with him affectionately, for a long time.

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'No rumoured wrong I hear of her' - in India, this is still regarded as important: that the woman should have a 'good' reputation, and in India, it is very easy to lose her 'good' reputation if she so much as talks with another man who is not her husband, or not a close relation, for too many minutes. Well, the word can go round the village, that she is a woman of 'loose' behaviour. This is how they would actually describe it. And the higher the caste, the stricter they are about these things. I've related one incident in my memoirs, you may remember, about the Brahmins of South India, of (??) - if an unmarried girl as much as looks at a strange man a bit too intensely, she's thrown out of the house. They're as strict as that! So, I mean, Dhaniya doesn't seem to be as strict as that, but this is also important to him - 'No rumoured wrong I hear of her' - he's aware that nobody in the village, or nobody in the locality is able to reproach her for anything. She's got a flawless reputation; and, yes, as I said, still, in India, this is regarded as quite important. So, by the way in which he praises his wife, one gets an idea of the sort of qualities that a wife was considered as - or the ideal wife was considered as - possessing in those days. So, 'Obedient is my wife, no trull',/ Thus spake the herdsman Dhaniya,/ 'Long has she been a loving mate,/ No rumoured wrong of her:/ So if thou wish, rain, deva, rain!'

So he thinks he's all right on account of being married to the ideal wife! I don't know if you want to say anything about this ideal wife. The point is really the comparison that follows, but, if you like, we can go into this - whether she was really an ideal wife or not, and so on. Some people may have different ideas. (Pause) Or maybe you are quite happy with that.

Aniketa: Putting your security in another person is ... [65] ... sounds as if it is something that he can be very sure of, but in fact you cannot be sure or that.

S: Yes, that is very true, even in India, even though the women are watched over so closely. Occasionally, (not very often I must say), things do go wrong.

Aniketa: Putting all your expectations on them ...

S: I'm not so sure about that, as regards India. I'm not so sure that it works in that way - not so

much expectation - it's more that someone is brought up knowing what is expected of them, and that gives them a certain stability and security. For instance, even now in India, in most places, certainly in the villages, the women are brought up convinced that it's their ... not only their happiness, but also their duty, to marry, to have children etc. They feel no conflict about this - it isn't that these expectations are put upon them, and they have difficulty in living up to them - no! They don't have difficulty at all, except in a very, very few cases indeed, and they usually become wandering 'sanyassinis'. So we must be careful of thinking that it is an imposing of expectations which are quite unacceptable to that particular person. In India, it doesn't usually happen like that, in this particular case. It's more a question of people knowing what is expected of them, and being perfectly happy with that. (Pause) With very few exceptions. (Pause) It's a bit like ... also, in the West, we sort of, very often, are not supposed to have, or to give our children any expectations, just leave them to behave as they want to behave, more often than not. That just results in the child feeling insecure. So, I think human beings also, (if one leaves aside the question of development in a more spiritual sense), human beings also, within the group, need to know what is expected of them, in a reasonable and healthy sort [66] of way - not to be left to their own devices, especially as they are growing up, without any sort of guide-lines. I think this is one of the reasons for a lot of the trouble that we have now-a-days in Britain, certainly, with young people; there are no guide-lines for them to follow, and this leads to great insecurity, and that, I think, in some cases, leads to violence.

Aniketa: Because standards are no longer appropriate, and many people have not really come to any other.

S: Yes. It is very difficult for an individual, (if you are an individual), to create his or her own standards. Usually as you grow up, you take your standards from the group; what else are you to do? But you can only hope that you're born and brought up in a group within society, which has reasonably healthy standards, so that you, brought up in accordance with those standards, will be helped by those, to develop as an individual - that the preparation would have been done; that the basis will have been laid. (Pause)

Udaya: Bhante, in your lecture, the last in 'The Sutra of Golden Light' on the moral order, you were saying that, in a sense, there were (??) of laws or society should reflect the laws of karma. Can you ... ?

S: Yes I remember about that.

Udaya: I only heard the lecture once, but it would seem a very difficult thing to implement, even in a sense, within the spiritual community, or, you know, as a sort of ...

S: Well, one is not talking about the spiritual community in this context, one is talking about the group; ideally, about the positive and healthy group.

Udaya: Because, like what I was thinking of, was that if one was committed and part of the spiritual community, that, you [67] know, in a sense, you should be by-passing that anyway; it would only be for those who didn't know, in a sense, or weren't that clued up.

S: Mm. Well, this is the position, because, as I said, the majority of people are not yet individuals, and, especially when one is dealing with children, one is not dealing with

individuals - potential individuals, perhaps - but positive guide-lines have to be laid down; guide-lines which are, so to speak, 'open-ended', so that, when people reach a certain level of maturity, within the group, there is the possibility for them to develop as individuals, even going beyond the group. (PAUSE) But if you're not an individual, and people certainly aren't born as individuals, then you can't create your own standards. You take your standards, good or bad, or your lack of standards, from the people in the midst of whom you're brought up; the society, in the midst of which you are brought up. (Pause) Anyway, how did we get on to that? What's the connection? Yes - that one, in a sense, can have expectations of people within the context of the group, and they do not feel so, as regards India; (what I've seen of India) people within that group did not resent having what we would regard as expectations made with regard to them. (Pause) They find their security in that, even their means of growth to some extent. (Pause) All right, pass on to the next verse, and see what use is made of the comparison.

Ratnaketu: TEXT

The Master: 'Obedient is my mind and freed,'
Thus spake the Master in reply,
'Long hath it been well-quickened, tamed,
No ill is found or known in me:
So if thou wish etc.'

[68]

S: So Dhaniya is speaking about his wife; he's proud of his wife; he's even a bit complacent about his wife; but what is the Buddha speaking of? He's speaking about his mind. So what is the difference between 'mind' and 'wife'? There are similarities, but what about the differences? What's the big difference between your wife, if you have one, and your mind?

: Your mind is your own.

S: Your mind is your own. Yes! So your mind is, or should be, under your own control in a way another person cannot be. There is the possibility of bringing your own mind under control, though that may be difficult, but there's no possibility of bringing another person under control - not absolutely. Yes, you can certainly bring people under control to a certain extent, at least you can bring them under an appearance of control, but, with regard to your mind, you can really bring that under control without there being any mere appearance of control, because your mind is your own; your mind is you. So that is the difference. So Dhaniya is depending on something that he cannot really depend upon. There is a reasonable expectation, but not an absolute one. But the Buddha is depending upon something he really can depend upon, that is to say, his own quickened, tamed mind. All right, that's the difference between 'Dhaniya's wife' and the 'Buddha's Mind', or between 'wife' and 'mind', but what are the similarities? In other words, is there a real analogy here, between one's 'wife' (looking at it from the masculine point of view), - between one's 'wife' and one's 'mind'? Is there an actual analogy as distinct from simply a resemblance, just for the sake of comparison, as it were?

Udaya: Both, in a sense, can be a sort of 'refuge', you know, one's sense of well-being can be tied up in ...

[69]

S: Mm.

Ratnaketu: You can think that you've got them both under control. You think that you've got your wife under control. You think that you own your own wife.

S: Right. So why do you think, or, who is this 'you' that thinks you have got your mind under control? Because there seems to be a distinction between 'me' and 'my mind'. So, when we make that sort of distinction, what sort of meaning are we attaching to 'mind' here?

Aniketa: As something that is exterior ...

S: Yes, but what sort of exterior thing?

Ratnaketu: (??)

S: You're getting a bit near it.

Vijaya: ... and drives, and ...

S: Ah! Yes! Yes! What you are referring to in this sort of context, when you speak in this sort of way about the mind, is - you are really referring to your emotions; your drives, your deeper energies. When you say you can't control your mind, this is what you mean - that some irrational factor gets in the way. So you can say, therefore, that there's a sort of analogy between 'wife' and 'mind'. I mean from the masculine point of view.

Priyananda: Well, the 'feminine' is the unknown, the intuitive.

S: Yes. Right.

Priyananda: ... the uncontrollable ...

S: Right.

Purna: ... the irrational ...

S: ... the emotional, the irrational, and so on. So what is the Buddha, therefore, telling you about his own state? His own enlightened state?

[70]

: (??)

S: He's integrated; you could look at it in that way. It is not that he, that is to say, the conscious, rational mind, has brought the irrational mind under control. No. It is much more a question of integration and synthesis. Let's look at these words which he uses about the mind. Well, first of all, let's look at the words which were ... the word which was, first of all applied to the wife, and now, to the mind. We saw that the word 'obedient' was derived from a root 'to hear', the same root as the word 'sravaka', or 'listener', or 'disciple', is derived from. So, 'Obedient is my wife': 'Obedient is my mind' - 'my mind takes heed of what I say'; you see the

suggestion? It's not so much that my mind is under control in an iron-disciplined way Rather that 'my mind listens, my mind is receptive; the irrational is open to the rational, which also suggests, perhaps, that the rational is open to the irrational; that they are open to each other; that they mutually permeate; they fuse, and therefore there is a state of integration. So this is what the Buddha is suggesting, or at least telling us indirectly about himself, about the enlightened state; that the enlightened mind is one in which there is no schism, as it were, between rational and irrational, between thought and emotion. I think most people experience this, at least occasionally, at least on a relatively low level - that there are some occasions when your thought and your feeling come completely together; that they're not divorced. You are thinking about something, at the same time, your emotions are fully in harmony with what you are thinking, and 'vice versa'; there's no conflict at all. So, at the very highest level from this point of view, this is the state of the Buddha, or one aspect of the Buddha's state, the enlightened state: that the mind hearkens, is completely [71] receptive, is completely in harmony, just like a faithful and loyal and, so to speak, obedient servant or wife, and so on. So, 'Obedient is my mind and freed'. So, with regards to his wife, Dhaniya says, 'Obedient is my wife, no trull' ('she is not distracted'): 'Obedient is my mind and freed' Yes, the mind also, is not distracted, is not carried astray, it's freed. What's the word for 'freed', here? 'Vimutta', yes, 'Vimutta', 'freed', 'Liberated' - 'Thus spake the Master in reply'. So, that's interesting, in a way, there's a sort of conflict - 'Obedient is my mind and freed'. What do you make of that?

: (??)

S: Yes.

Aniketa: Well, sometimes, 'obedience' is associated with a kind of enforced thing ...

S: Yes.

Aniketa: Or, rather, as if you are being obedient to the commands of someone.

S: Yes. Right.

Aniketa: ... Commanding you to do something, and perhaps you're not (??) you are obedient to it, whereas if you're freed it's a kind of obedience that comes from listening and being receptive and responding to ...

S: Yes. Right. And this is very important, because it suggests, in a way, the principle of spiritual hierarchy. It's not a question of being obedient to the next one up in the hierarchy, it's a question of, well, recognizing that someone is more experienced than you and listening to them, and taking heed of what they say, with all sincerity and wholeheartedness. Not just feeling 'Oh, I'm having to knuckle under and do what they tell me to do'. So this should be the sort of attitude among order members, or between [72] order members within the Order, and ideally, it should be the kind of relationship between order members and mitras. I mean, a healthy, positive mitra should feel in this sort of way about an order member: that he or she is more experienced than me, therefore it's for my own benefit that I just listen and take notice of what they say, and act upon it. It's not any question of exerting authority, or exercising power, or anything like that, no! Obviously, sometimes, people may fall a little by the wayside, but, ideally, it isn't like that at all; it's simply a question of listening, of taking heed and taking in, and acting upon. So traditionally, of course, in India, this is supposed to be the

relationship between husband and wife: that wife takes heed of what the husband says; though it should also be in certain matters, as those of you who have lived and worked in India know only too well, that the husband does take notice of what the wife says, especially if it has anything to do with domestic matters, and such things as marriage and name-giving; there, the men-folk very much have to take heed of what the women-folk think and feel and say. So it isn't altogether one-sided; one must say that. (Pause) So it's much the same in the case of one's mind and one's self. So it isn't just 'mind' purely in the more conscious, intellectual sense, it's more in the emotional sense. But, 'Long hath it been well-quickened, tamed', - 'well-quickened' here is 'paribhavitam', that is, 'made to develop', 'made to become', 'to grow'. It's been growing a long time; and 'tamed', 'sudantam', this is 'tamed', 'controlled', but again, not in the sense of forcible exercise of authority or forcible restraint. (Pause) But doesn't this sort of comparison between the wife and the mind - does it suggest anything more to you that we have talked about in the past? I think it's something that came up in the course [73] of the last convention, quite strongly, in the question and answer sessions. Do you remember, those of you who were there?

Vijaya: It seems to suggest projection ... parts of our mind (??) if you can more or less project those energies on to someone else, and you can control it in someone else, you feel you can come to terms with all aspects in your mind - say, there's a couple; you feel you are a more complete person as a couple, and that you're not really ...

S: Well this is an instance or two halves not making a whole. (Laughter.) Or as I put it, I think, in one of my aphorisms, that, 'You don't run a race more quickly with three legs than with two'. Do you remember: that aphorism? Did you realize what I was getting at? Well, the couple is like two people tied together in a three-legged race.

Voices: Oh! Yes. Yes.

S: That's the couple. So you don't necessarily run more quickly in a race because you've got three legs, than because you've got two. You see what I mean? (chuckling) One person with two legs can run more quickly than two people with three. Actually, one finds this. No. I was thinking of something quite different.

Priyananda: There's a suggestion of being sort of (??) feminine qualities of the integrated mind (Pause) of what the mind in the sense of ... in the sense of the 'dakini'.

S: Right. This is what I was thinking of. This is what came up at the last convention, the question of the 'dakini'. Because you remember ... how did it come up? ... yes - the 'dakini' being the esoteric, so to speak, Vajrayanic form of the Sangha, [74] you see? The 'dakini' being the spiritually inspiring 'partner', so to speak, in whose company you lived the spiritual life. And we also made the point, via William Blake, that you related to other people, so to speak, through your 'dakini', through your 'Emanation', through your more emotional side, through your integrated emotional side, you see what I mean? So, here also, we find the same sort of analogy of the 'mind' and the 'wife', as it were. Do you see what I'm getting at? Not only can you not be an integrated person, an enlightened person, unless you bring your own mind, so to speak, 'under control', but you can't even relate to other people, because you relate to people, as Blake said, through your 'Emanation', through your more emotional side, as it were, through your empathy and feeling. So, if these are not developed and integrated, well, you've no means of communication, you're just cut off from people, you're just cold and dead.

So, this is why the 'dakini' is the esoteric form of the 'Sangha refuge'.

Udaya: Did you make (??) of the sort of 'dharmapala' aspect?

S: I don't remember. So, therefore I also said, in order to take refuge in the 'dakini', you have to develop your own 'dakini', so, the 'dakini' has to take refuge in the 'dakini'. Do you remember, those of you who were there? Or those who heard it on tape?

: (??)

S: So, you find this a little bit in social life, certainly in India. I'm more familiar with Indian social life than English social life, because there isn't really any sort of structured social life in England, as you might say. In India, if it's any question of a social thing, especially with the question of marriage - how is it all arranged? The women get together and they [75] sort it out and then tell their husbands. You see what I mean? It's not just that the women are sorting out their own affairs between themselves. No. Because the women are also married women, they are also part of a family, so it's a question of the relationships between whole families: this is very often done through the women. You see what I mean? They are, as it were, the channels of communication. So, in the same way, when you relate to other people, your channel of communication, whether you are a man or woman, is your, as it were, integrated 'woman' within you: that side of your nature, the more developed emotional side of your nature. So unless you have developed that within yourself, you cannot relate to it in others (to 'relate' to it as distinct from 'projecting' it of course). So, unless you have your own 'dakini' within, you can't relate to the 'dakini' without, so therefore, I said, 'Dakini has to go for refuge to Dakini'. You can't go for refuge to the 'dakini', as it were, but your 'dakini' can; but then, of course, that 'dakini' is an integrated part of you. So, one has all these sort of reverberations, it seems, in these two verses. (Pause) SO~ 'No ill is found or known in me' - that suggests, that when we do go off the rails a bit, and we do get a bit of a bad reputation, it is because, usually, our emotions have got out of hand in some way or other. It's not because of mistakes of intellectual calculation usually (chuckling).

Purna: It's the tie-up between 'anima' and 'animosity'.

Anjali: What's the tie-up?

S: Mm. What's the tie-up?

Purna: Oh. What's the tie-up - The word, the same root, one being for 'ill-will' and one being for the 'feminine' aspect (ed. within the man's psyche).

[76]

S: Ah! It's not quite as simple as that, because it is 'anima' - feminine; 'animus' - masculine; but when you say you've got an 'animus' against anyone, what do you mean? So the tie-up seems to be more on the masculine side (chuckling). See what I mean? Though 'animosity', yes, is connected with that word in its undeclined form. Maybe there is more connection with 'animus' than 'anima'; though, of course, when your 'anima' gets out of hand, yes 'she' can become an 'animas' (Laughter). So, unfortunately, what you see in the case of many people, is a sort of juxtaposition between a 'skeleton', a 'spectre', in Blake's sense, and the alienated 'emanation' - it's between the 'spectre' and the 'trull' - this is what you get in most people; a

sort of combination of 'spectre' and 'trull', instead of being, like Dhaniya, living happily with his obedient wife, or the Buddha enjoying his own enlightened mind. (Pause) To go a little further: in the Tantric symbolism you get the 'yab-yum' figures, what the Tibetans call the 'father-mother' figures, that is to say, the male and female figures actually represented in sexual union, meaning the perfect interpenetration of these two aspects, as it were, of the mind, the psyche, at the very highest possible level, that is to say, the level of Enlightenment, where they become Wisdom and Compassion respectively. (Pause) But this whole question of, so to speak, making the mind, the emotions, the irrational part of oneself obedient, is very, very important, and requires a great deal of tact. I don't think you can go about it directly by means of control. This is one of the points that came up very strongly in the course of the recent women's study seminar, the really crucial importance of 'metta'; 'metta' representing the sort of archetypal positive emotion - that unless you could develop strong 'metta', there was really hardly any question or real spiritual [77] life, or even ordinary human development. That seemed really crucial; and that is associated with this whole side or one's mind. It's the emotional, the non-rational. So, it isn't so much a question of bringing the irrational under the control and subduing it, it is much more a question of developing 'metta'. If that is done then there will be less and less a conflict within the mind. (pause) It's as though 'awareness' represents the, so to speak, more 'masculine' aspect, and 'metta' represents the more 'feminine' aspect, and you need both. You can't do without either of them. (Pause)

Any further points arising out of these verses? How do they carry on, so to speak from the previous verses? (Pause) Well the Buddha, as it were, is repeating the psychological emphasis, isn't he? Dhaniya's still concerned with outward things, with material things in a way, people; but the Buddha is speaking very much in psychological-cum-spiritual terms. Here he is speaking in terms of the mind. (Long pause)

All right, let's go on to the next verse.

Anjali: TEXT

Dhaniya: 'By earnings I support myself,
Thus spake the herdsman Dhaniya,
'Hale sons and I together dwell,
No rumoured wrong I hear of them,
So if thou wish etc. '

S: So it's beginning to look as though Dhaniya has got quite a family. What is this? 'By earnings I support myself'. Now what do you make of that? What do you think of that?

Udaya: He's stating his independence.

S: Yes - independence.

: Self-sufficiency.

S: Self-sufficiency - 'I'm not beholden to anybody'. Now where [78] have you heard all that sort of thing before? (Pause) In what sort of way do people usually say that?

Achala: A wife would say that in a family situation, if she was an independent earner.

S: Ah! Yes, there is that too. (Pause) That's to put it in a modern context, isn't it?

Purna: 'I've always paid my way.'

S: 'I've always paid my way' - yes. You hear elderly people in Britain say this when they are asked why they haven't drawn certain allowances they are entitled to, - they say, 'Oh, I've always paid my way, I don't want to live on charity'. This is not charity at all in many cases, it is what is due to them, it's what they paid for when they were working and earning. This is their attitude: they don't want to live on charity. Sometimes it's regarded as an admirable attitude, well, in some cases perhaps it is, but I think, also, it sometimes represents a false independence, and a false pride. Or, sometimes you find - I think we talked about this on one seminar - very elderly people who are no longer able to do anything for themselves, for instance, they're so weak and frail they can't do everything for themselves, but if you try to help them, they don't like it; they say, 'What do you do that for, do you think I can't look after myself, do you think I'm old?' So, in that case, you don't accept the fact that you are dependent on other people. I remember going, some years ago, to see, in the nursing home, an old friend of ours, a woman who used to go to the Brighton Centre, or the Brighton Buddhist Society, as it was then. She'd been a nurse, a missionary out in China for about forty years, and then she'd become a Buddhist, or, at least a semi-Buddhist. And she had been a very independent old lady; she was unmarried - she'd never married; she [79] lived on her own, and she'd done everything herself; she enjoyed good health till she was about - ooh - she was nearly eighty, and then her health and strength suddenly went, and she became dependent on others, and she was very, very upset about this; very annoyed and angry and resentful and really hated having people do things for her. She had to be moved into a nursing home eventually. And I used to go and see her. She was in a whole series of nursing homes because she was such a difficult person to have. And I was visiting her over a period of five or six years, and it was quite pathetic to see her. She was constantly finding fault, and criticizing and resenting the fact that she was dependent on others. So this is the sort of situation that one often finds in different ways. Yes, one, as an individual, wants to be independent, but at the same time one must recognize that there are certain matters in which, objectively, you are dependent on others. Not in a neurotic-way, not in a way that militates against your development as an individual, but just in an objective way, and you must accept that sort of dependence happily and gratefully, and use it in the best possible way.

Udaya: I think this is why the whole thing of people giving each other things generally ... a lot of people find it hard just to receive. If someone wants to give you something, just to happily take that; without feeling indebted or that you've got to give something in return.

S: Yes! Exactly! Yes!

Aniketa: Or even (??) .

Udaya: Or even if they have, it's their problem, you've got to take it at face value.

S: Yes. (Pause) So Dhaniya seems to be giving expression here, to a false sense of self-sufficiency - 'By earnings I support myself'; but one could say, does anybody ever really support [80] themselves? Even if you've got a job, and you go to work every day, and you earn your own money, are you even then really independent and self-sufficient, because what about the whole set-up? What about the firm you are working for? (If you are working for

some firm or some department) - Did you create it? No, of course you didn't! You just go along and work there. So, though you are supporting yourself for the very possibility of being able to work, you are dependent upon other people. You are dependent upon the whole economic system ultimately - the rest of the population, or a very big slice of it, so, what becomes of your independence? So, this sort of dependence we have to recognize. We can be dependent ...

end of side one, tape 3

side two, tape 3

S: (cont'd) ... objectively, in this sort of way, in a positive way, without it necessarily conflicting with our independence and self-reliance as an individual; that is a different thing. If, of course, you are so dependent upon your job that if you lose it you have a mental break-down, well, then, you are dependent in the wrong sort of way. But, if you're merely dependent on it just for your livelihood, and you recognize that, you're grateful if it's a positive work situation, there's no dependence in a negative sense. So, we have to recognize that we are dependent on other people. We are dependent on other people for our food, our clothing, our housing, even if we pay our own way. Who has produced those things? We haven't produced them. We're interdependent with the rest of society; now-a-days, increasingly, with the rest of the world. Even if you have a simple breakfast, look where everything comes from. It doesn't all come from next-door; it doesn't even all come from Britain, half of it probably comes from New Zealand. (Laughter) So, that sort of [81] dependence and interdependence we have to accept as part of the basis on which, and from which, we operate, and it doesn't necessarily conflict with our independence as individuals. That's much more a question of emotional attitude. (Pause) So, Dhaniya apparently thinks that he really is independent: that, 'By earnings I support myself',/ Thus spake the herdsman Dhaniya,/ 'Hale sons and I together dwell,/ No rumoured wrong I hear of them.' This question of sons, healthy sons - in the old days, well, sons were a form of wealth, just like cows or wives, because they helped you with your work. Even now-a-days in India, this is people's main form of insurance - their children - who will look after them when they are old; when they cannot work for themselves. If you've got two, or three, 'good' sons, ('good:' meaning 'dutiful' and 'considerate' sons), you are very fortunate because there's no old age pension while you are in India. There's no 'social security' or anything like that. People can't think in terms of insurance or anything of that sort, either. So what are you going to do when you are old? And when you can no longer work? If you can't work it means for most people in India you can't eat. You can only depend on your relations; and who are your closest relations? Your own sons. Your daughters can't do anything to help you, because they'll be married into other families - it's your sons; so your sons are your security, your sort of 'investment'. So here Dhaniya is saying, 'By earnings I support myself',/ Thus spake the herdsman Dhaniya,/ Hale sons and I together dwell' - 'I've no fear for my old age; I've made the necessary investment. Yes! I'm able to work and earn now, and I've no fear for my old age either, because when I'm too old and weak to work and earn myself, my sons will support me; these hale, healthy sons; they are good boys, - 'No rumoured wrong I [82] hear of them'. So, the whole sort of image, the whole picture, is being reinforced in various ways, isn't it? Dhaniya is giving increasing expression to his complacency, self-satisfaction, and sense of security. So, what would be the modern equivalent, as it were?

Purna: Good Job, good life assurance.

S: Yes, right!

Suvajri: Your own dwelling.

S: Yes, your own house.

Udaya: (??) some insurance somewhere - it's motto is a couple walking around with an umbrella - the umbrella is the roof of a house shielding them from the rain. (Laughter)

Purna: 'Rain, deva, rain!'

S: Yes. Exactly! (Laughter) And there's a verse in the Dhammapada which mentions sons, 'putta m'atthi, dhanam m'atthi' - 'these sons are mine, wealth is mine'. 'Sons' come even before 'wealth', because they are the source of wealth for the aged parent. I think I've also touched upon this strong feeling for the son, on the part of the father in all primitive communities. It's partly for economic reasons, but not completely, it's partly psychological too, but at least partly economic, as it is in India.

Priyananda: This sort of emphasis - does it have a sort of metaphysical sort of meaning too: that being a father had a connection with the future through the sons.

S: Oh yes! Indeed! Yes.

Purna: Continuity.

S: Yes. I included that in the psychological view: the father is born again in his son. In some primitive communities they believe that quite literally the father is sort of reincarnated in the son; there's a sort of part of the father's spirit in [83] the son; that the son is the father, in a sense.

Udaya: It's your avenue to immortality.

S: Yes. Mm.

Udaya: I was thinking, what about Lokamitra taking these young men in India and trying to get them practising full-time in the Dharma - I wonder if their parents get a little bit concerned, that their 'life insurance' in a sense ...

S: Well, in some cases that will be so. In some cases one might even feel you can't encourage those particular young men to follow that particular path, because it might result in their parents simply being left destitute. One has to take those sort of factors into consideration in India. If it's a large number of Sons, fair enough, you can take one or two, (Laughter) but if there's just one son who has a job and the parents are no longer working, the parents are dependent on that son's earnings, what are you going to do, you are in a moral dilemma? You can't then just light-heartedly say, 'Go forth young man'. It's not so easy then, even if the young man wants to go forth. I mean, the likelihood is that his feelings for his parents will be so strong, his sense of obligation will be so strong, he won't even be able to consider going forth. The desire will, in a sense, not be allowed to reach consciousness. You see what I mean?

: Yes.

S: He sees the situation, he accepts the situation, he might otherwise have liked to go forth, but it is so remote a possibility, he doesn't even bother to think about it. So, very likely there won't be a conflict in that situation. He will say, 'Oh no, I'm sorry, I can't. I've got my parents to look after. But sometimes you might find a young man who wants to go forth, who's [84] got other brothers to look after the parents; perhaps you'll find that his parents have died, in that case he'll be free. (Pause) The sense of social and family cohesion in India is very strong, and that does have a positive, or at least, useful side, in as much as there are no safety nets for people there, such as the Welfare State spreads for us in this country and in many other 'developed' countries.

Purna: One of our keen young mitras in Ahmedabad, who has just asked for ordination, has been told by his father that he needn't necessarily think in terms of getting married, which is quite something, as he's also an only son.

S: Mm.

Achala: I suppose as long as they kept working, that would be all right - they needn't get married.

Purna: But, as it's a whole consideration that comes in about our 'right livelihood' situation ...

S: Yes, because in India, it's not only a question of a young man continuing to work and support his parents, it's also a question of getting married. He may be less willing to get married than to carry on working, but he's got no choice, because there's a lot of work which is done in the house by the womenfolk, and if his mother is getting too old and frail to do it, she will just keep nagging him. She'll say, 'Look, I just can't do it, you'd better get married; bring a young woman into the house; I need help.' And so he will be forced to get married; so it won't be enough for him to just carry on working and not get married. You've got to get married to bring another woman into the house to help his mother with the work; because there's usually things like drawing water, washing clothes, these things are done by the womenfolk, and the older women can't always cope [85] with everything. So, in some ways life is simpler, but in some way it's more complicated. (Pause) Anyway, what does the Buddha say? Let's read that.

Megha: TEXT

The Master: 'Servant to none whate'er am I,
Thus snake the Master in reply,
'I fare the world with wages won
Nor find nor know the need to earn
So if thou wish etc. '

S: Mm. 'Servant to none whate'er am I' - so what sort of self-sufficiency is this? This is the genuine self-sufficiency, the true independence. The Buddha is not anybody's servant. Let's see what the word is - (Looks up word) - it's more like, 'not dependent', '(??)', 'not dependent'. This translation - 'I serve no man for hire'.

Vijaya: (??) by implication means Dhaniya has to work, although he says he supports himself.

S: In a sense, the Buddha is dependent on others, because, I mean, in a sense, he's more dependent than anybody because he doesn't work; he's a wandering mendicant; he lives on alms, so he is dependent upon that alms. So, in what sense does he say 'he's servant to none' - that he's not dependent upon anybody? It's in respect of his emotional and spiritual attitude. Even the Buddha, materially, is dependent upon others. (Pause) But it's the emotional and spiritual independence that is important. Of course, you have to be careful - it's not really as simple as that - because some forms of material dependence may tend to create emotional dependence, or even limit your freedom of action. Do you see the sort of thing I mean? Can you give ...

[86]

: Large donations.

S: Yes.

: People want to have a say.

S: Yes. Right.

Priyananda: People being supported by relatives and friends, in that sense, will create dependency.

S: Yes. It will put you under a subtle obligation. You're not just being supported so that you are free to do whatever you want to do; there's an unspoken understanding that, well, 'We'll support you, but, OK, you won't do this or that, or you won't go too far in that direction; or you'll be available when we want you.'

Ratnaketu: It happened in New Zealand, when we were raising money for Tyn y Ddol and painting a house of a mitra ... a friend of a mitra ... he didn't want the money to go out of New Zealand - he was putting controls on it - when I found out, I was really amazed.

S: There's sort of strings - always strings.

Anjali: (??) tied up with that - there are strings attached and you pull it back ...

S: I used to say in India, with regard to people who gave donations in this sort of way, 'There's no question of strings attached, there's a great big thick cable!' (Laughter) - And they used to haul on the cable! (Pause) When the Buddha says, 'I fare the world with wages won/ Nor find nor know the need to earn' - Do you think he's just talking about economic matters, or is he referring to something else; if so what?

Purna: The fruit of Enlightenment is 'his wages won'.

S: I'm not so sure about that. In a sense, yes, but I think it probably refers more to 'karma'. You see what I mean? [87] Because karma is a sort of 'profit and loss' business, isn't it? Whereas, Enlightenment transcends all that. 'I've finished with 'karma', I'm not accumulating any more 'karma' - 'Nor find nor know the need to earn' - 'I've finished with previous 'karma'

and I'm not creating any fresh 'karma'. So, what the Buddha is saying is something more like that. (Pause) So, 'Servant to none whate'er am I/ Thus spake the Master in reply,/ I fare the world with wages won/ Nor find nor know the need to earn,/ So if thou wish rain, deva, rain!' I mean the Buddha really doesn't mind what happens. It doesn't make any difference because he is enlightened; he's finished with 'karma'; whatever occurs to him now is pure 'vipaka' - 'from the past' - which he experiences through his surviving physical body, and once the physical body has dropped off, there will be no way 'karma' can get at him; and he's not creating any fresh 'karma' in the mean-time anyway. (Pause)

Ratnaketu: So, once the Buddha becomes a Buddha, he can still experience like ... reap the results of 'karma'?

S: Yes. This is certainly the Theravada point of view. This seems to have been the Buddha's own point of view: that, in as much as the physical body is still there, then the results of previous actions, previous 'karma', can be experienced, but no fresh 'karma' is set up.

Ratnaketu: ... and it's not really that effect the physical body?

S: Yes. Well, it will affect the mind too, in the sense that, if you effect the body you effect the mind. If someone sticks a pin into your body it's sticking a pin into you, isn't it? You feel the pain; but that is 'vipaka' - that is something which you experience, it's neither skilful or unskilful - [88] the 'skill' or the 'unskill' is in your reaction to that. So, in the case of the Buddha, even when he experiences pain as a result of actions committed in the past, he does not create fresh 'karma' by reacting to that experience of pain in an unskilful way; he simply endures it without reacting; or he may become absorbed in a higher mental state in which bodily pain is no longer felt.

Udaya: I've had a bit of difficulty (Pause) with the whole question of 'karma' because it is quite a difficult thing to come to terms with. Initially I used to think it was something almost 'outside' that would reward you or punish you, and then my thinking became refined enough and I was thinking more in terms of the way you react or respond to the things that happen to you ... is almost like things have become a little habitual, so when similar circumstances arise, then it's pretty well worked out that you will react in a certain way, so the results will be the same.

S: Mm.

Udaya: And that's OK; it helped me to relate to a lot of things, but, you know, 'karma' from one life to another, which we are told does happen, can effect you in a quite physical way. I really have a lot of difficulty relating to that.

S: Mm.

Udaya: ... that somebody can have a really bad accident, and that's because of their past 'karma' in a previous life.

S: Well, it isn't necessarily due to past 'karma'. One mustn't assume that it is, because Buddhism doesn't teach that whatever happens to you is the result of past 'karma'. There are a number of possible explanations of which 'karma' is only one. What is usually said, is, if

despite all your other efforts to [89] remove some persisting condition, it just remains for no apparent reason at all, you may assume that it's something carried over from a previous existence; but, if something unpleasant happens, you don't at once jump to the conclusion 'Oh! That's my 'karma'. It may be nothing to do with 'karma', directly at least, at all.

Udaya: I was wondering if you could say something about the way in which 'karma' does work in that way, because, you know, we're told that it can work in that way (coughing) the fact that a lot of the time it may be something else.

S: Well, the basic way in which it works is that behaving in a certain way you modify yourself in a certain way: you become a certain type of being; and because of the sort of being you are, you have a natural affinity for certain situations; that is why we find, if we look at people's lives, that they very often fall into a sort of typical situation - you always find them in the same situation, again and again. Well, this can't be coincidence, you could say it was 'karma', except that they are creating the 'karma' usually, in this sort of way.

Udaya: Some people are 'accidents walking' around for somewhere to happen'.

S: (Speaking over last phrase) Some people are 'accident prone'. Some people are always falling under buses, apparently. (Laughter) Some men are always marrying the 'wrong' woman. They seem to have a fatal fascination for the wrong woman. The one they know from their experience 'is the wrong woman, but they marry her two times, three times, four times. The same with women, they have a fatal fascination for the wrong type of man; they get involved with him again and again and again. It's not just coincidence, surely!

[90]

Udaya: I can really ... I can really see quite clearly how that works. I can really feel it; but there are big leaps - you get a situation where there was a baby on the beach; it was a calm day, and it was under a tree and a branch fell off and killed the baby, you know ...

S: Well, these sorts of things can be explained in some cases by the law of averages. Take a certain number of babies under a certain number of trees (Laughter). You see what I mean?

Voices: (together and indistinct)

S: So I think one has to be careful before assuming that something is due to 'karma'. I think there must be certain definite leads or pointers.

Udaya: But my point is not so much assuming something is karmic, but knowing that 'karma' can work in that way - and sort of not being able to relate to how it can.

S: Well, what is the problem; if it is, in fact, 'karma that is working like that, I mean, maybe that baby isn't as innocent as it looks. (Laughter) You see what I mean?

Udaya: But that whole thing of coming up in a seemingly unrelated area ...

S: Well, if it's 'karma' it's not unrelated. If it's ... Well, supposing it is 'karma', past 'karma', due to which this innocent little baby lying under a tree, a perfectly sound tree, a big heavy branch suddenly breaks off and falls on the baby, crushing it. Well, if it is due to 'karma' then

you could trace back that that baby was a really horrible character so many lives ago, and once, it took a great big, heavy branch of a tree and brought it down on somebody's head and killed that person. So, what's the problem? Direct connection! If it is due to 'karma'; if you are able-to trace it back in this way; [91] so it is identified as 'karma', there's no difficulty in establishing the connection. It is only ... the difficulty arises if you assume it is 'karma', and it isn't, or you're not justified in assuming ...

Udaya: But I can't see that as clearly; it seems a little 'magical' - that there's something working it all out, so that person, like the baby, 'gets it in the end'. (Laughter) I've known someone for some time who gets into this sort of 'cops and robbers' paranoia thing, and this person always gets into compromising situations, where they're always doing something a little shady, whereas, if he handled it a little more openly, the situation would, more or less, blow away.

S: There seems to be no problem there either; if they get, again and again, into that sort of situation, well, clearly, they want to. Like the person who is constantly losing his way, well, he usually wants to.

Purna: Perhaps your problem comes ... you can see it in one life, and you don't see how it connects with one life to another.

Udaya: Even with things ...

Purna: (Speaking at the same time - words lost)

Udaya: No. But even with things quite outside that person's sort of immediate sphere of influence - it's often situations where you get a situation that is potentially loaded, depending upon how you handle it, and because of past 'karma', or the way in which you relate to things, it tips it over into one way or another. Like, you could just ignore that woman that ... you know, the 'wrong woman', not invite her to that party, and then the movies, and then into a relationship, and then get married, you could just leave her there - but it is sort of when things seem quite unrelated.

[92]

S: Well, there are some 'karmas' so powerful: actions that you have done of such gravity and ethical significance, that this is how the consequences of those actions operate.

Priyananda: This is perhaps seeing it as a mechanical law rather than something being a will that is being exerted by another being or something outside you.

S: Well, one must say that, certainly, in the Theravada scriptures, (and this seems to have been the view of early Buddhism), 'karma' is seen as operating as though in accordance with a definite law, almost like a natural law. It's not just a sort of tendency that you have in this life itself, or tendency present in your actual present state of mind, due to which you do certain things, and then there are certain consequences. It would seem to be something rather more than that ...

Udaya: Mm. That's what I meant.

S: ... in terms of the Pali scriptures at least.

Udaya: Must be really big.

S: Mm.

Udaya: I think it must be quite a big (??) to be able to get ...

S: On the other hand you have to bear in mind that sometimes rather sort of striking examples are given to sort of impress people with the general significance of the law, so to speak, of 'karma'. In some cases, perhaps, you can't take those quite literally. In some cases they do seem to be exaggerated, and to regard the law of karma in an over-mechanical sort of way. For instance, this is something which Christmas Humphreys is fond of emphasizing - this 'iron law of karma', as he calls it - that isn't quite 'Buddhistic': the iron law of 'karma'. In some books about Buddhism and Eastern Thought, you read statement to the effect, that even [93] if you commit the slightest unkind action towards another being, even millions of lives later you'll have to pay for that. This is not the Buddha's teaching. This makes it much too much mechanical, because the Buddhist teaching is that there are certain 'karmas' which are so light that if you don't reap the consequences of them in this life itself, or, at the most, the next life, the consequences peter out, and you never experience those results. So there is no question of an absolutely 'iron law of karma' operating with regard even to the tiniest of actions; if there was, you'd never get liberated, because you've got an infinity of 'karmas'.

Aniketa: Mm. You wouldn't get an opportunity for changing.

S: No. So therefore, there are numberless actions which have some karmic significance, in the sense that they are skilful or unskilful but if circumstances do not permit the immediate reward or retribution, well, it 'goes by the board'. You don't have to experience the results of those actions. So therefore, it is self-contradictory to imagine a situation in which certain kinds of actions are held over for too long a period. You see what I mean? If it's a very small action, it can't be held over for a long period, because the force behind the action is not strong enough. If circumstances don't permit of a pretty immediate retribution there's no retribution at all. Similarly, if an action is of really serious consequence it will tend to bring about its reaction pretty quickly; so therefore, it's highly unlikely you'll get the sort of situation you imagine even though there are stories to that effect in popular Buddhist writings. It's unlikely that if you commit a really serious offence, you'll go hundreds of lives without experiencing the results and then one fine day when you are an innocent little baby it will suddenly catch you up unawares. The way the question is posed, that sort of question, that sort [94] of situation would seem to suggest a wrong view of the law of 'karma' itself, in other words, an over-mechanical one. You see what I mean? What sort of action on your part would bring about that sort of retribution? That is to say, you as a baby lying under a tree, the branch falling on your head: clearly, one of extreme violence; it is what you call a '(??) karma' a 'heavy karma', the results will come almost immediately, not that you will have to wait for hundreds of lives before it catches up with you; that is a sort of vulgarization of the teaching. You see what I mean?

Achala: Also, the same sort of thing, of physical acts, might be experienced differently by the person.

S: Indeed!

Achala: Maybe the baby was quite happy, and then a sudden black-out! So it might not have been such a 'bad consequence'.

S: Yes! Right. Or you could even look at it the other way: for a certain person under certain conditions, death might be a welcome relief; they might be quite happy to die, so, it would, in a sense, be a punishment then, even if they did experience that as the result of their previous 'karma'. Again, you mustn't look at it so mechanistically and literally. So, it's best to think of it in terms of one's own mental attitudes, if persisted in, tending to set up the same type of situation again and again and again, until you learn your lesson. You learn your lesson, because the situation in which you find yourself is an objectification of your state of mind.

Voices: (in unison) Mm. Yes.

S: This is what happens; I mean, if you take this rather worn example - if you've married the 'wrong woman' for the fourth time, you might start asking yourself, well, 'Why do I find myself in this situation four times?' Twice, well you might think, well, [95] it's just my bad luck, the wrong sort of woman happened to come along; but four times! You think, 'Well, maybe I seem to pick out these sort of women; maybe it's something in me. Maybe it's nothing to do with the situation'. It's Just holding a mirror up to your mental state. (Pause)

Anjali: Bhante, do you think contracting some disease can be the result of 'kama'? I always thought that the fact that I got polio was to do with 'karma', then recently Marichi showed me some astrological report she was reading, that, out of a large selection of people who caught polio, one distinguishing factor, astrologically, is that they were born at something called the twentieth harmonic, and that they all had similar personalities (??) and you saying ...

S: Well, the two are not necessarily incompatible, because you could be born on that harmonic, or beyond that harmonic, as the result of 'karma', so to speak.

Voices: (indistinct) (laughter)

S: But according to the Abhidharma view that disease can be due to past 'karma', but it can also be due to any of the other 'niyamas'; (the five types of cause-effect relationship) - disease can be the result of any one. Usually it is said that if all efforts to eradicate a certain disease fail, even though there seems to be no rational explanation of the failure, one may assume perhaps it's due to 'karma', but no more than that. (Pause)

I mean this question raises the whole point of the significance of astrology. Is it a separate cause-effect relationship, or is it just a certain way of describing a cause-effect relationship? All right, if you're born under a certain constellation, well, you have certain characteristics, but why are you born under that constellation rather than some other?

[96]

Voices: (indistinct) (laughter)

S: I think it's tea-or-coffee-time. Oh~ Yes, it is~

TEA BREAK DISCUSSION

S: With regards to 'karma', it's just as with other Buddhist teachings, you just often look at them, (pause) or even some Eastern authorities ... present them too literally and mechanistically, in a very cut and dried, hard and fast, rigid sort of way.

Voices: (Speaking all at once.)

Vijaya: (Indistinct)

S: Oh, yes; or they're presented in a pseudo-scientific sort of way, almost 'Science proves Buddhism'!

Vijaya: A lot of people that I've met seem to waste their mental energy in working out interpretations of science where, normally you wouldn't bother, you know? If a branch falls off a tree, it sort of means something, (background noise obscured words)

S: This is quite an interesting thing, that people want that everything should have a meaning. But why should it have a meaning? They want it to be rationally intelligible because then they can control it. You don't want to leave anything meaningless or without explanation, because then you have no means of controlling it; but if you happen to know it is because of so-and-so, well, then you've got the possibility of controlling it. We are like Urizen in Blake's prophetic book: we like to think we've got everything under control. So we don't like these areas of meaninglessness or mystery.

Aniketa: Because if you've got a law that's inevitable then you don't have to do anything about it.

S: Yes, right! (Pause)

[97]

Purna: It's not even a question of control; at least if you can understand the process, it makes you in some way above it.

S: Yes. Right. True.

Vijaya: There was ... an appearance of these flying saucers in Christchurch during that retreat ... everyone was rushing to say what it was (??) that you don't know, you know, you can't really say.

S: ... you just saw something in the sky.

Vijaya: Yeh.

S: You saw objects, or what appeared as objects, of a certain size moving at a certain speed.

Vijaya: Maybe they find (??) can't really say. Whereas, people's tendency is to find an explanation.

S: So any explanation is better than none at all.

Vijaya: Yes.

Udaya: Also, people don't believe in Christ returning, but maybe flying saucer will ... (Long pause)

S: But if you were to ask yourself, 'Why am I always getting myself into this situation? Why am I always late? What is making me late? It is not circumstances, it's me. So, what is it in me? So then, of course, you start understanding or learning something about yourself. (Pause) Some men always cut themselves when they're shaving.

Voices: (indistinct) (Pause)

S: So people's observable patterns of behaviour are quite interesting. Then, according to the pattern, they will tend to get themselves into certain situations, and when they don't see the connections, then they say, 'Why should this happen to me?'

Udaya: In a sense, you can use that quite skilfully ...

S: Oh, yes!

[98]

Udaya: ... with people who come to the Centre, and Friends and mitras, where it wouldn't work with anyone; in the same way you can see people getting themselves in the same situation, you can see sort of openings for people ...

S: Yes, right.

Udaya: ... that if they change in that little way, this area will open up to them, and you're quite sure, if they are in that situation they're learning.

S: Yes. Right. (Pause) It was interesting what Vajradaka was saying about his two hour conversation with a man he met in a restaurant, while he was waiting for someone else, and how he felt sure that if he had only had a few more hours that chap would have definitely gone in a certain direction. He could see one half of the pattern. He knew the other half of the pattern was there also, given enough time. Sometimes you feel that with people; in a way, it's unfortunate you meet people but somehow circumstances will break things up and you know if only you had half an hour more, or two hours more, things could have been quite different.

Aniketa: Mm. You meet someone on a bus and get on to quite a deep level of communication in conversation with someone, and (??)

S: Sometimes it's only convention that prevents you from continuing. I mean, practically, you could say, 'Well, this is a very interesting conversation, let's get off the bus at the next stop and go and have a cup of tea together. But you don't dare to say that. You let them get off and you go on.

Aniketa: Yeh.

S: Mm.

Aniketa: You're not quick enough to make that sort of response to that unknown ...

S: Mm. Yes. Well, the force of convention is so strong.

[99]

Voices: (Murmuring agreement.)

Udaya: So we have to be more outward going and take a few risks and try to overcome that.

S: This is one thing I've noticed about Vajradaka: notice how things seem to be happening to him.

Voices: Yes. (Laughter)

S: They don't happen to other people. You can travel from one side of America to the other and no one ever speak to you, but it never happens like that with Vajradaka, and I think it is partly because he sort of looks around as if to say, 'Come on, please speak to me', so somebody does. Believe it or not, he was once in Leningrad, travelling on the Leningrad Underground Railway, and he got into conversation with some Russians, and it turned out that they knew English and wanted to learn to meditate (Laughter). You see? So, sure, you could say it is Vajradaka's karma, in a sense, but it's karma in a sense of a pattern he has set up himself: a pattern of positive karma, because of which certain things are always happening to him. He's always meeting people and getting to know people who are always doing things for him wherever he goes.

Vijaya: I was amazed at someone like that of an apparently romantic temperament, could go right round the world having these adventures.

S: Romantic? Well, he is romantic in a way, but he's also got his head screwed on (chuckling) very firmly, yes!

Achala: Getting back to someone who is actually enlightened: could they not actually set up their own positive karma, or ... ?

S: Well, yes, in a sense, though Karma is not the word: 'this is the 'Pure Land', so to speak. That's the sort of pattern they tend to set up. I mean, to the extent that they are in [100] contact with other beings, other people, they tend to sort of - I wouldn't say shape them, that's too crude a word - into a 'pure land' ...

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side 1, tape 4

... just as, you know, you can strike a certain musical note over a tray of sand, and the grains of sand form a pattern, in the same way a Buddha, 'sounding' his particular 'note', which is the note of Enlightenment, over a world full of sentient beings, tends to create certain patterns. And they are, after all, individual human beings, with their own powers of resistance: they can resist the Buddha's influence; but if they open themselves to it, they can form, or approximate to even a pure land.

Udaya: Mm. That happens in quite subtle ways.

S: Mm.

Udaya: ... because I remember on a Zen retreat with Roshi, um, one of the (??) one of the people there said, 'What does an enlightened being do for other people, you know, for the world?' And the Roshi (he's quite a funny man) he said that 'Just by shaving my face - when a Roshi shaves his face he's of incalculable benefit to people.' So you get the impression, from what he was saying, just an ... enlightened ... just being ... even if he didn't bump into anybody, in quite subtle ways would be changing them.

S: Though, of course, one might also say that if someone was enlightened, if the Buddha was, he would bump into people, because Enlightenment is of that nature: it's, as I've said, self-communicating.

Udaya: Yes, but I think what the Roshi was saying ...

[101]

S: (breaking in) It would be a very strange Buddha who never happens to meet anybody. (chuckling)

Udaya: So what the Roshi was saying, I think, was that it didn't necessarily depend on sort of doing external physical things - he doesn't have to run around raising loans and renting buildings, you know, though it doesn't exclude that, but there's something more essential than that. (Pause)

S: Anyway let 's get back to Dhaniya and the Buddha.

END OF TEA BREAK DISCUSSION

S: All right, let's go on and see what Dhaniya has to say for himself.

Priyananda: TEXT

Dhaniya: 'See here are goodly cows and calves,
Thus spake the herdsman Dhaniya,
'And here are breeders great with calf,
And here the bull, lord of the herd:
So if thou wish etc. '

S: So what's Dhaniya doing here?

Vijaya: He's displaying his wealth.

S: Yes, he's displaying his wealth. But hasn't he already mentioned his wealth?

Purna: This is the possibility of it perpetuating itself.

S: Yes, there's that.

Ratnaketu: Perhaps the Buddha is beginning to get to him.

S: Yes! Right! Yes! Don't you actually notice that people do this? Well, you notice yourself, that if you're met or confronted by certain situations, your response to it, or your reaction to it, is simply to repeat in an enlarged and elaborated form, what you have already said. Don't you find yourself doing this in discussion or argument with people? You don't make a new point; you just repeat what you said before, but more strongly. [102] It's a bit like the little story I sometimes tell about the clergyman who was preaching a sermon, and someone happened to look at his manuscript and they saw he had written in the margin, against one passage, 'Shout here - argument weak.' (Laughter) So, it's a bit like that: if you feel your argument is weak you tend to shout a bit, or you raise your voice, or you repeat yourself all the more emphatically. And a lot of discussion is simply like that: 'Yes it is!' 'No it isn't!' 'Yes it is!' 'No it isn't!' The same sort of words, the same arguments with increasing emphasis, or with elaboration. So Dhaniya here, seems to be elaborating. Well, there is a new point in a way, in the sense that he's making the point that his herds are going to perpetuate themselves; they are going to increase. They are his investments, as it were, they are going to bring in returns, but at the same time he's still, in a general way, concerned with the same thing: his possessions, his herds, his cows, his bulls; he has not really got anything new to say to the Buddha. (Pause) So that's ...

Vijaya: ... just hanging on.

S: Um? ... just hanging on. So that's another sort of pattern in people: if you notice that they, in discussion with you, (or you can notice it about yourself) that they are just repeating the same point over and over again, you can be pretty sure you've got them in a corner. You see what I mean? They've nothing more to say. It seems as though they have, but if you listen carefully, if you analyse it, you find they're saying the same thing over and over again in different words. You've got them! So you should just sort of drive home your advantage and maybe sooner or later they'll just explode. (Laughter) (Pause)

Udaya: Um, I've been wondering (words obscured by coughing)[103] I've been accused (not (??)) but at the Centre in Auckland, by people, of being too high-powered when they come in.

S: Too high-powered?

Udaya: Yes. I wonder whether or not one can be, in talking to newcomers.

S: I think you can be, actually. Yes. You could have a sort of electrical analogy ... What is it? What do you ... I don't know anything about electricity.

Udaya: Ask Vijaya.

Purna: Voltage is the 'pressure'.

S: Suppose the voltage is too high ... isn't there something you can put on it to step it down. What do you call it? Transformer? Is that it?

Voices: Yes.

Vijaya: A resister.

S: Otherwise if you don't do it, if you don't step the power down, what happens?

: You fry! (Laughter)

S: You see! So I think there is that possibility. I think when you are young and enthusiastic you tend to do this. I've probably done it myself, in my younger days. You meet someone who seems a bit interested - you give them the whole works in five or ten minutes - the result is, you never see them again. You scare them. So, I think one needs to watch this.

Udaya: What I'm wary of doing, though, is ... sort of people do come along to FWBO centres wanting to be reassured, and they want ... and a lot of people think what the FWBO is about is getting more members and more group members, and so I'm wary or compromising in any way, with that; and I think as soon as [104] people come in you should be quite clear - I mean, I don't think I come across negatively, usually I quite enjoy being with, and talking to that person, but it is just a bit much or something. I find it quite difficult sometimes reaching that sort of ...

S: I think you should be careful not to expect people to be able to accept everything all at once; even just theoretically. No. I don't think one can tell everybody everything all at once and expect them really to be able to accept it, even in a theoretical way.

Priyananda: In a way, you almost have to talk round the subject, even, in a way, be quite indirect about ... not talk directly about Buddhism or the Higher Evolution; even be quite indirect. Especially with ... depending on how integrated that person is, how 'together' they are. If they are less integrated, you have to be less direct.

S: Someone may be just looking for another pleasant group, but I don't think there's much point in telling them the very first time they come along: 'Well, if you're just looking for a nice cosy group, well, you'd better look elsewhere, you won't find it in the FWBO. (Laughter). You see what I mean? Maybe that's what they are looking for, but there is the possibility that if they've been coming along for few weeks, a few months, they appreciate the atmosphere, they like the positivity, then they can begin to take in the fact that there's more to it than that. But if you sort of tell them that, in a very blunt, powerful way, you may just scare them away altogether. On the other hand, if they've been coming along for weeks, for months, and they've clearly got no interest beyond the group, well then, there's a limit to your contact with them. But even they have [105] a place, because we've not only got Order Members and Mitras, we've also got Friends, so then they should be allowed to fall back into the position of just being a Friend, and at least for the time being, you won't, so to speak, 'waste' time trying to work on them, or work with them, you'll just concentrate on more rewarding people, but you'll be careful not to scare those people away. You see what I mean? Well, one has to strike a balance, because if there are too many people of this sort around the Centre, people with more potential could be put off, because, sometimes a very 'group' atmosphere develops, which some people don't like; they're not looking for that, so one has to keep an eye on the overall situation. But I think, not just discourage someone from coming because they aren't at once able to appreciate everything that one has to offer, and what the FWBO is really about. I can remember there have been so many points that Order Members in the early days couldn't even understand, even after two or three years. And after I had explained those things two,

three, four or five times, fully and clearly, they still couldn't grasp those points. So, one mustn't be too hard on very new people, because ideas that are familiar to us may be quite unfamiliar to them. They take time to sink in theoretically, not to speak of acting upon them.

Anjali: This is something we've done in beginners' classes at the LBC, um, me and Sridevi have been quite choosy about who supports the class, so it doesn't get laid on too thick.

S: Yes. Right.

Anjali: ... about single-sex communities and things like that.

S: Yes. Mm. You don't want to scare people away.

Anjali: It's not a compromise in that situation.

S: It's not a compromise. I think that is the important thing, [106] because you want to be able to communicate everything, but if you give people everything all at once, you are not in fact giving them everything all at once, because you are saying all the right words, but something else is getting across.

Vijaya: Even, you say the words like 'individual' and 'the group' - the FWBO has evolved a whole range of meanings for those things.

S: Yes. Right.

Vijaya: ... and to a new person it would be quite a foreign thing and it takes time for them to understand.

S: Yes. Right. Yes.

Vijaya: It takes time for the meaning we put behind words to be appreciated.

Priyananda: (??) of having a definite course of instruction - courses in Buddhism and study classes where people can systematically be introduced to the FWBO.

S: Mm. Yes. On the other hand, if someone has been around for quite a few months, they should be able to, say, 'confront' whatever the FWBO has to offer. One shouldn't pull any punches then: if they do seem to have made themselves at home in the group, and they say that they're interested in Buddhism, they say they want to evolve, all right, you can be relatively frank, even forcible, with them. But with the completely new person, perhaps the person who's just stopped by just to have a look in and you give them the impression that unless they're prepared to move into a single-sex community pretty quickly, well, they're not much good, and you're not going to waste much time on them, well, you could just sometime scare away a perfectly 'good' person, that is to say, someone who, if they'd been allowed to come along in their own way for a few months, would then perhaps, be quite open to what you had to say, and even act upon it. (Pause)

[107]

Anjali: People, I think, mostly need to be inspired to go along to what they want to.

S: Yea. Mm.

Anjali: ... rather than ...

S: Right. Well, yes, not that 'This the right step, and you ought to take it.' They must really feel fired to take it, and want to take it, even though it still feels difficult. (Long pause). But, nonetheless, in spite of what I've said, one must be no less careful not to go to the other extreme, that you make everything so easy and accommodating, and in a way, even compromising, for so many people, that in the end, you just have a group. You must really watch that too. So the Middle Way is never easy to follow. (Pause) And also, another related question - it isn't easy to maintain multiple levels, especially with a relatively small movement. Do you know what I mean?

Voices: (together) Mm.

S: Because people do have a tendency all to do the same thing, to want to do the same thing. It's quite difficult for people to accept, well, some people have gone so far, and others have not gone so far, and people should be allowed to go ahead in their own time, and their own way.

Priyananda: You're saying that there is a need to maintain these multiple levels - that there is a need to maintain some hierarchy?

S: Oh yes! Yes.

Udaya: I think new people coming along can really do that, because a mitra who's been around for a while sees somebody who has come along for a few weeks and after a short time they are a mitra, and then they start just rolling past. So, I think this constant influx of new people ... instead of the whole thing of 'where people are' ... their depth of involvement and commitment [108] compared to others, sort of shakes people up a bit.

S: Mm.

Udaya: Rather than sort of having one level, where they all joined a group.

S: Yes. Mm. (Pause)

Udaya: I mean, I think Daren coming over showed a few people ... only three months since he first came to the Centre and he's in England! A lot of people have been saying they're going to do that, for years!

S: (chuckles) Yes.

Udaya: ... and they haven't done it. (Pause) It took him a short time to find out what is most useful. (Pause)

S: All right, let's carry on and hear what the Buddha has to say. Who's next?

Vipula: TEXT

The Master: 'No goodly cows and calves are here',
Thus spake the Master in reply.
'Here are no breeders great with calf,
Here is no bull, lord of the herd:
So if thou wish etc. '

S: Yes. So what is the Buddha in effect saying? Dhaniya is (coughing obscures the words - 'displaying'?) his property, which he believes will continue to exist, which will even increase. So what is the Buddha saying? Is the Buddha saying, 'Well, I've got even more than you have?' He could have said, 'I've got an even more extensive property, a spiritual property.' He could have said that, 'I've got Enlightenment.' But he doesn't say that. What does he say, in effect?

Purna: He considers these things are of no consequence.

S: I think he's saying more than that; because Dhaniya is [109] thinking entirely in terms of, let's say, cows; so what is the Buddha doing in relation to that? (Pause)

Achala: Perhaps he's saying he's very happy with material poverty.

: (Indistinct)

S: Well, no, it's even more radical than that. Someone said something there.

Aniketa: He has ... um ... he has nothing.

S: He has nothing. This what he is saying because from Dhaniya's point of view, to have no cows is not to have anything at all.

Aniketa: (while S is speaking) No thing.

S: Mm. Yes. To Dhaniya, cows are everything, so when the Buddha says, 'I have no cows', he is not saying, 'I have no cows but I might have horses; he's saying, 'I have nothing'. So the Buddha challenges the very idea of property. He doesn't sort of go beyond it on it's own terms, he doesn't say, 'Well, I've got a bigger, or better property,' he says, 'I've got no property at all.' He rejects the category of property altogether. And in connection with some other passages in the Sutta Nipata, we investigated the word for the 'arahant' - (akincanna?), 'the man with naught' it's translated here; 'the man who has nothing on any level', 'the man who has no conception of possession.' So there's a sort of parallel to that here. The Buddha is saying, 'I am a man of nought', so to speak, 'I have nothing. I have no possessions. I don't think in terms of possessions, not even of mental and spiritual possessions, what to speak of material possession.' He doesn't think in terms of possessions at all. So he's rejecting that whole way or thinking of Dhaniya's. You see what I mean? He's not simply saying, 'I don't have this particular kind of thing, but I've got something else which is better'. He's saying, 'I don't have anything at all.'

[110]

Vipula: (Speaking while S. is speaking,) Dhaniya's saying ...

S: ... which is much more radical.

Vipula: Dhaniya is saying 'Possessions are security'.

S: Yes.

Vipula: ... and the Buddha's saying, 'Nothing is security'.

S: The Buddha is saying, 'Nothing is security'. There is some truth in this even in a purely worldly sense. I've heard people say, and I think it's been my own experience, in a way, if they had very little money they worried, but if they had absolutely no money at all they stopped worrying.

Vipula: Yeah! Right! (laughter)

S: You seem to have experienced that! (Chuckling). When you touch rock-bottom, well, in 'rock-bottom' there's a certain security, because things can't get any worse, so there's nothing to worry about because they can only get better, they can't get worse. (Pause)

Vijaya: That line in a Beatles' song - 'That magic feeling, no where to go' ...

Aniketa: Also more energy is taken up in keeping them, or looking after them and Maintaining them. Ohhhh ...!

S: But on the other hand, is it actually possible to reach a state of no material possessions, literally? Is that possible?

: You'd need clothes.

S: You'd always need clothes presumably, unless you lived in the Chatham Islands (laughter) or somewhere like that.

Achala: The only way would be to regard what you use as not your possessions.

S & Others: Yes.

S: To be willing to part with it if somebody else needed it more. That's really the test, I suppose: when you can cut things down to a minimum; but we know you can be just as attached, psychologically [111] to your few miserable possessions, as somebody else is to his luxurious possessions. So, even, yes, certainly, one must try to cut down materially, but in the end it comes down to one's attitude. We know there are some people who just heap up possessions and say, 'I'm not attached to them, I can give them up any time'. And you really suspect it really isn't like that. So, you must show something externally: you must show your non-attachment to possessions by not having actually too many of them. But even so, you'll be left with a minimum you can't really do without, at least not on ordinary terms; but those, you should have a non-attached attitude towards, and be willing to part with.

Aniketa: Yes. It's a different feeling towards a house, or a home ... and the feeling of it being 'my home' and you ... and any sort of disruption to it is a sort of rearrangement of oneself. But

when the attitude comes up that 'I am living there, it's a useful place to live, other people that come, they live there too, they use what is necessary. Then there's not that feeling of hassle or anxiety or discomfort.

S: Yes. I remember in my younger days, I lodged with a woman who referred to everything in the house as 'my' habitually. She even used to refer to 'my electricity'. She'd say, 'I don't want to turn on my electricity just yet', and things like that. And, 'Someone's been using a lot of my electricity' - even the electricity was 'My'! Everything in the house: she always said, 'Please put my chair there' or 'Take off my tablecloth' - every single thing was 'my' quite literally. (Pause) But this is the attitude of some people towards their possessions. They may not always make it explicit, but this is how they feel. You touch something that is theirs, very often they don't like it.

Anjali: I've found (?) some people's possessions [112] (?) go down to the minimum (?) they lose (?) but they get attached to what they've got left.

S: Yes. There may be certain favourite things; that may have what you call a 'sentimental' value, and you can really get upset if you lose those things. I mean, the teddy bear that you had as a child, you know. I mean, I know some grown-up people who still have their teddy-bears, and still keep them. (Laughter) (chuckling) I hope none of you have brought your teddy-bears to the convention.

Udaya: We had to cut down on what we brought because we were flying.

S: Well, some people would give preference to their teddy-bears. They'd leave other things. But then the question arises: to what extent does one need material things as a means of your own development as an individual? It's not such an easy question, is it?

Anjali: I think actually, to get personal, I use more than I thought I would (?) that actually I think you do need those things (?).

S: Do you need to have them as your personal possessions? In the case of books, and say records, could not one get by, say, by borrowing them from public libraries?

Anjali: Well, I do, but still you need (words obscured by S. speaking at the same time) need certain things.

S: You need certain things.

Anjali: ... you can't depend on other people for some things.

S: Yes. Right. So in that sense there are certain things one needs, so to speak, material things, as means of one's development, let us say, as an individual. It would seem so. I think people, certainly in England, or in London, over the last few years, and I think I'm right in saying, perhaps more among the women than the men, have come to the conclusion, just for the sake of, well, let's say psychological development for the moment, they needed [113] nicer surroundings than they thought, once upon a time, that they did need; that these things are important, and they do make a difference. You see what I mean? They genuinely thought at one stage, they shouldn't bother, and they didn't bother, and they lived in comparative, well,

almost squalor, some of them, as it were 'on principle', to some extent - to some extent it was sloth and torpor (Laughter) - but there was a mixture of principle too, one has to recognize that. But some of them, at least more recently, have come to the conclusion that in the genuine interests of their development as an individual, they need to live in an, inverted commas, 'nicer' kind of place; cleaner, tidier, more roomy, with a few more conveniences, and altogether pleasanter to live in.

Anjali: I think it's not only the women, but at Sukhavati ... they've found it very different, especially with their appreciation of each other, because they ...

S: Well, the dining-room has been decorated now, but for years no one seemed to bother very much, and I think it really was neglected in a way.

Voices: (All speaking together - words blurred)

Ratnaketu: I think a lot of that was because they were so busy ... the way I look at it: people living at Sukhavati put up with things so that they could have their LBC.

S: Up to a point - that's the element of 'principle'; but I think there also was an element of sloth and torpor. I know money was short etc. etc. but, yes, I think quite a lot of people didn't bother. I even noticed in regard to individual rooms, that there were some people bothered and did their rooms up a bit, others didn't bother at all, for years. But I notice all the women's communities I've been to, and been shown around, not a single woman [114] didn't bother about the way her room looked, not one! But among the men 'not to bother' was the rule, rather than the exception, until comparatively recently.

Udaya: Women are hunters and adventurers.

S: I'd like to think that! (Laughter)

Priyananda: It's almost as if men have to ... or most men ... have to make an effort to actually pay attention to their environment and make it aesthetically pleasing.

S: Right. Yes.

Priyananda: Whereas women (well, maybe that's a generalization) - women tend to naturally do it.

S: Yes. We have to be aware of these generalizations of course. (Laughter) But nonetheless there is some element of truth, no doubt, in that. But to come back to the point I was making, you know, yes, what the Buddha says is true: the truly spiritual person has nothing, and this is one of the great beauties of the Jainist symbolism of the naked enlightened figure. In Buddhism, well, especially if one is dealing with the figure of the historical Shakyamuni, at least there is a robe, at least there is a begging bowl, the Jainist image doesn't even have that, no robe, no bowl, nothing! So that state of spiritual nakedness - their physical nakedness, represents the state of spiritual ... of what they call 'aparigraha' (?) 'non-possession'. So that's a very powerful symbol, a very appealing symbol. In Buddhism, in the Vajrayana there are some naked figures, Buddha figures, Bodhisattva figures, with the same sort of significance: non-possession. But as one is developing psychologically and spiritually, it does seem that

you need, as it were, possessions: things to which, at least socially speaking, you have an exclusive right, which are as it were, 'under your control'. This raises another point, [115] say, about community property. It has been found, unfortunately, that what belongs to the community belongs to nobody.

: Yes!

S: And what belongs to everybody belongs to nobody, and no one, therefore, has the responsibility for looking after it, so it would seem to be, bearing in mind the weakness of human-nature, if you live in a community, perhaps it's best that certain things are recognized as yours, that they don't belong to the community literally, but at your discretion, you are happy to let others, so to speak, 'borrow' them. You see what I mean? That if you give your tape-recorder to the community, it won't last as long as it would have done had you kept it to yourself, and just lent it from time to time to those who wanted to use it. I mean, this is unfortunate, but it is what you find.

Priyananda: The other alternative is for someone to be given stewardship of certain possession.

S: Yea. This is what happens in the Tibetan monasteries. Someone has definite responsibility, and if things are broken or damaged, he has to replace them himself. That's not easy to institute in our communities, but I think we could try, or take some steps in that direction. You have to with regard to office typewriters and so on, or keys. There has to be someone whose responsibility it is, some designated person, who's actually responsible, and who can be called to account by the council, or by the community meeting, for those things. But that means you have to keep a register and inventory and an account. That also, is necessary; which is what the Tibetan monasteries do. At the end of every year or every two years, or every three years, there's a general accounting, and what it supposed to be in somebody's possession - in some monk's possession - is compared with the inventory and it's checked, and if it's found complete, he hands it all over to his [116] successor, and the successor signs for having received those things. (Pause) That's the system that they've developed. The monastery may have so many cups and saucers, for entertaining - well cups and lids - for entertaining distinguished visitors, these are all inventoried; there is a monk in charge of those, if he breaks one in the course of his turn of duty, he has to replace it. He has to hand them all over complete, and he signs for them, and the person taking over checks that everything is correct with the inventory, and only then he accepts, and he accepts for a certain number of years, or a certain number of months. This is all quite well organized in Tibetan monasteries, with regard to all property of the community. So, either you have that system, or just allow people to retain personal possessions. (Pause) But even so, there will be some things which are community property, that, it probably is a good idea an individual community member is responsible to the community for those things. But then there is a further question: to what extent is the sense of ownership itself necessary for at least psychological development? What do you think of that? Do you think you could, at a stroke, dispense with the whole concept of ownership; that 'This is not mine'?

Achala: Well, maybe not at a stroke.

Priyananda: There seems to be an almost psychological need for a sense of a territory, and a sense of ...

S: This is what I'm getting at more. Not that you can ...

Aniketa: ... and a sense of responsibility too.

S: Yes. Not only that you can not dispense with property, but actually to possess certain things at a certain stage of your career, psychologically and spiritually, may actually be necessary in the sense of 'being good for you.' You see what I mean? Yes. [117] You've mentioned the point of responsibility, yes.

Aniketa: Yes, well I've found this with children: it seems to be ... ah ... there seems to be a more developed sense of responsibility; a more responsible attitude develops towards the usefulness of things in their environment, and a less wasteful attitude. On the other hand, you notice very much in schools where education is provided free, and a lot of the facilities they have, where they have beautiful schools and grounds and everything, and very few are involved in doing it, so much is taken for granted and ...

S: Yes. If you smash things up, well nothing will happen, you might get ticked of a bit, but the Education Authority will replace everything next week.

Aniketa: Yes, and I think it is removing the people who are actually being in the schools from any involvement, and any say in how things are. They haven't had to make the effort to become involved in what is provided so therefore they don't have any conception of their value.

S: There was a very strange item of discussion on the radio, which I heard a few weeks ago: apparently there was a school somewhere in Britain, (just an ordinary school), and they had not been able to get any caretakers or cleaning staff - there were just no people available in the area, and there were better paid jobs, but for one reason or another the Headmaster had been unable to get any cleaning staff, so he got the children to do that work and paid the children for doing it in their spare time. There was an outcry from some educationalists and teachers about the exploitation of children etc. etc.: that they were cleaning their own school and getting paid for it was regarded as exploitation. Do you see what I mean? I mean, it's sort of pseudo-liberalism gone mad! (Laughter) And then, it wasn't all the children, it [118] was children who were willing to do it, and wanted to earn the money. Someone made the point in the discussion, well, these children were getting part-time jobs anyway, outside school hours and at week-ends to get a bit of pocket money, so what was there wrong in working for their own school, keeping it clean, and getting a bit of money too. But, no, it was not accepted - it was exploitation of children; it was outrageous etc. etc. I thought, well, really, it sounds just crazy! And the headmaster who explained it in the course of the discussion - 'Well, only those children do it who want to do it, and in, any case they would be working outside if they weren't working for the school. I believe he even made the point that it encouraged them to care for their school. But no, it was absolutely rejected by other people in the discussion - I think it was educationists and teachers from other schools - they thought it really shameful that these poor children should be exploited in this way. Yes! As though there was something degrading to the children in using them in this way. I think one person referred to 'slave labour.' Oh yes. They got very heated about it.

Vijaya: It's more degrading.

S: Yes ... Right. (Laughter)

Aniketa: It's strange - people's attitudes - ... The college behind the house where I live participate in a community project, which has a creche, where young pre-school children are brought after parents go to work - a sort of play-centre - and the school takes part in it - the fourth formers, both boys and girls go to the creche and take part in the activities, observing children, how they relate to one another, and helping and learning about human relationships and communication in early stages of life; there was a great outcry from some of the parents, especially [119] about their boys being made unpaid baby-sitters - it was absolutely amazing that people couldn't appreciate the fact that the whole project was to do with the fundamentals of human communication - one parent was declaiming that her son should be learning English - he wasn't too good at English and so on - quite unaware that the whole project that was being developed in that situation was about communication, and that the difficulty their children were having with their reading and literature and language was mainly due to poor communication.

S: Yes. Right. (Pause) So it does seem that responsibility means responsibility for something, and clearly, you can't only be responsible for something to the extent you are able to be responsible for it. That is to say, you have to start by being responsible for very small things. I mean, a child can be responsible for his toys, or for putting his toys away, or maybe, responsible for washing the dishes, when he or she gets a bit older, and when you get more responsible still, you can take responsibility for another person. You see what I mean? It's as though you need responsibility for material things to practise on! And that means - well, part of the deal, so to speak, is that your things ... I mean 'your thing' means 'things for which you are responsible' - so, it is as though you can't dispense with ownership because you need to develop responsibility. And even in the case of the Buddha who has nothing, if you look at it in terms of compassion, well, in terms of compassion, he's not responsible for things, he's responsible for other beings, so he is, as it were, giving up responsibility for less important things so that he is free to devote himself to being responsible for things that are infinitely more important. (Pause) So when you give up your material possessions it's because you've got more important things that you are [120] responsible for, including yourself, your own development, your relations with other people, your mobility, you know, these are more important things for which you are responsible, so therefore, though we speak - Buddhism speaks - in terms of non-possession as the ideal, it doesn't mean just automatically giving everything material away and leaving it at that. It may do, if you feel that your responsibilities and interests are so much on the spiritual plane that you just don't want any responsibility for anything on the material plane, well, fair enough! But it doesn't mean that the concept of responsibility is therefore being discarded. I mean, in the case of objects - in the case of material things - you are responsible for them because you own them, or, in order to be responsible for them, you usually have to own them, or hold them in trust; but you can't really do that with people. That's what makes it so difficult: you are responsible for people (chuckles) but on the other hand you have no control over them. You see what I mean? In the case of small children it's different, because, yes, you have control over them, because you have physical control, you are stronger than they are, that's all it boils down to; so, in the case of children, you can in a sense be said to own them and your responsibility goes along with that; but not in the case of adults, or not in the case of individuals. So you can be responsible for them without any control over them, which creates a much more sort of delicate and subtle situation. You've got the responsibility to influence them, but you can't influence them against their will. If you're doing that, well, you're not being responsible. If you are coercing

them, you're not being responsible because your responsibility is to help them to be individuals.

Vipula: Even coercing them into something which you feel is definitely better for them - even that wouldn't help.

[121]

S: Yes. In the case of children it's different because they are not yet individuals, in the sense of having self-consciousness, you may have to coerce them, though, probably, you are not a very wise parent if you let things get as bad as that, or to that stage.

end of side one, tape four

side two, tape four

I think if the child has been carefully managed, so to speak, from infancy, you won't need to coerce later on, though, even then, you can't be quite sure, so you may have to, you know, exert a little bit of force or gentle pressure in the case of the child, but this is purely within the context of the group situation - with in the spiritual ... within the context of the spiritual situation you can't even do that, not really.

Udaya: Umm. That's what I was thinking about when Indrajala wrote that thing to 'Shabda' saying that Purna and Udaya had put all that pressure on him to go to England, and Purna said the same thing. I felt it was really a misreading - how could Purna or I put pressure on him? I sort of felt, in a sense, it would be truer to see it in terms of, you know, Purna and I were definitely encouraging him to do that, but all it really was doing was putting him in touch with his own conflict, with his own indecision, that a bit of him did want to do that and a bit of him didn't, and that is what he misread as being pressure I think. Because I don't think, short of physical violence, that you really can put pressure on anybody ...

S: Right.

Udaya: ... and if they do, then really it's not your problem.

S: Someone said something like this to me once, I think it was a year or two ago - they said, 'Supposing one Order Member forces another Order Member to do something' - so I said, 'Such a [122] situation is impossible within the Order. It's quite impossible for anyone to force you to do anything! So that person said, 'Well supposing someone does come along ...

: (Breaking in)

S: Eh? What was it?

: (Indistinct)

S: Ah! Well, it's come up elsewhere, too. 'So suppose someone does force me to do it.' I said, 'Well, why do you not resist? As an Order Member you have not only the right but the duty to resist!' So you co-operate if you are forced, I mean, you have accepted the force, so the responsibility is yours within the context of the Order, because, in principle, no force can be

used, and no one who tries to use force within the Order has any basis to stand within the Order, in that respect. So no one can force you to do anything.

Udaya: So if anyone is feeling pressured, in a way, it is symptomatic of them not taking responsibility ...

S: Yes. No one can be pressured within the Order. No! It's impossible! It's a contradiction in terms. So if you feel pressured, it's you. Take it that it is you. Even assuming that the other person has momentarily forgotten himself and sunk to a sub-individual group level, even if he has, the fact that you are not resisting it means that you have sunk to the same level too; or, if you are unable to resist it, it means you were already on that level.

Aniketa: Especially if you react, you're not really seeing what is happening, even if it is unskilful in the other person. I feel this in myself, if I have that reactive feeling, I know that I've not seen the situation completely, that there is something in me.

S: Yes. Supposing somebody said to you - one Order Member to another, 'You ought to go on solitary retreat. Go on, off you go. You ought to go on solitary retreat.' Supposing you don't believe that, but [123] you allow the other person to push you on to a solitary retreat; you give in to that, well, what does that mean? That you are not acting as an individual, and that's your responsibility, not his. He is responsible for his behaviour? You're responsible for yours. You can't say, 'Well, I acted in such and such a way because of the pressure that was put on me' - that means you are saying, 'I'm not an individual, I was purely, passive in the situation'.

Aniketa: Whatever happens you feel you can blame the other person.

S: Umm.

Udaya: What it may mean is that you have to sit down and try and discover how you feel, and what you really want to do, and make a decision, and even if it's the wrong one, it's you making it.

S: Yes. Right. You can always tell if someone has made up their own mind about something quite definitely, whether it's right or wrong. You always know. The undecided person gives off a completely different feeling.

Udaya: At least they've decided to do it.

S: I mean, if you felt, if you sensed, that someone has decided 'Well, yes, I'm going to stay in New Zealand, and that's that. I know what I'm doing', you wouldn't attempt to persuade them or even to encourage them. You'd sense what the situation was. Or if they decided to go, you wouldn't try to stop them; but where you sense a conflict, and you sense their better part is struggling with their not-so-good part, then you try by means of your encouragement, to strengthen the better part. But then sometimes their not-so-good part stages a powerful comeback. (Laughter)

Vijaya: I think there's been cases of persuasion where ideas like 'commitment' get used like a sort of psychological lever, and saying 'Unless you're in tune with the whole movement what you say can't be taken very seriously, or your commitment can't be taken too seriously' -

things like that - a sort of leverage.

S: Um. Yes.

Purna: Sounds reasonable to me.

S: Well, even if it is leverage, it's your responsibility if you are an individual not to be levered, that's your responsibility. The other person has got a responsibility not to lever you, but if he does try to lever you, well, it is your responsibility not to be levered. (Pause)

Vijaya: Yeah.

Aniketa: It really comes about - at least with me - when I'm not really sure about something, and feeling a bit insecure about something, and am in that indecisive state ...

S: Yes.

Aniketa: ... if I feel that whatever someone says to me is ...

Udaya: You want them to take responsibility for you?

Aniketa: Yes.

Udaya: (?)

S: Then you can say, 'Well, so-and-so advised me'. You're not sort of fairly and squarely accepting responsibility yourself.

Aniketa: Sometimes it's just wanting to please someone.

S: Yes, of course.

Aniketa: ... and not wanting to say 'No', because I know it's going to mean a bit of self-assertion, a bit of confidence on my part to say, 'Well I feel this is right for me.'

S: Yes.

Aniketa: ... and not being forthright enough to say, 'Well this is how I feel.'

S: Yes. So the axiom is: It's impossible to put pressure on an Order Member. (Light laughter) Yes! I think this is [125] actually what I said in the end to summarize it on that previous occasion, whenever it was - that it is impossible to put pressure on an Order member. If an Order member thinks that any pressure is put on him then he is deluded. No such thing is happening! It's impossible that this should happen!

Achala: It gives one a great sense of freedom actually.

S: Yes. Indeed. People can advise, they can make suggestions; they may even shout at you, raise their voices; that's not pressure. There's no pressure. No! None whatever! It's just up to

you to make up your mind. I mean, they can't ... what ... they can't bring any machinery to bear on you. It isn't as though they can call the police and have you arrested (Laughter) and sent off to gaol if you don't do what they want you to do! No! What can they do? That's the criterion: that if you don't agree with what they suggest they can do nothing about it. Whereas in social life, if you don't agree with what the law says, well, the law can do something about it. (Pause) So if you say, 'Well, if I don't give in to the pressure so-and-so will be displeased', well, what does that mean? You're not being an individual, because you can be influenced in that sort of way; and the responsibility for being an individual is yours, nobody else's. So the Buddha, the Individual, can really say, 'Well, rain deva, if you please. What is that to me!' There's no question of pressure; that there is any sort of pressure exerted, or what people think of as pressure, at all! (Pause) 'It may be raining cats and dogs, it doesn't affect me! People could be shouting at me, telling me I'm wrong, that's not pressure, because I know I'm right.' (Laughter) I mean, many years ago, though not so many, people were trying to bring pressure on me to stay in India, not to come back to England, and not start up anything in 1967. I mean, they all thought [126] ... hardly a single person wanted me to come back - well, just a few friends, who didn't think I'd dare to come back anyway, though they'd rather like me to come back. But, you know, I just felt I was perfectly free to come back. People can't stop me. After all, it's a free country to that extent. I could come back if I wanted to, I had my passport, I was a U.K. citizen. But some of my genuine friends were really surprised when I came back in the face of the disapproval of certain persons, as though that could really have affected me! And that seemed extraordinary to me - that they had no power to stop me, they merely did not want me to come back ... (Laughter) ... which is quite a different matter. But some of my friends, even genuine friends, felt that the fact that these people didn't want me to come back actually meant that I could not come back. You see what I mean?

Udaya: It sort of becomes objectively real, a 'thing', physical.

S: Right! Yes! 'How can you come back? Mr So-and-so and Mrs So-and-so don't want you to come back. How can you come back?' Well, it's a free country! And then when I was here, people could hardly believe it. I remember there was one instance - (and then we'll close for the morning) - I remember I'd been having these letters telling me I shouldn't come back, ought not to come back, such and such people would be very displeased if I came back, and so I came back, (Laughter) and I went to see one of these friends, who's quite a good old friend of mine, and he really wished me well. Yes. He was more or less a Buddhist and he was quite unhappy that people didn't want me back, but he really thought I couldn't come back. So I went to see him. A few days after I returned he invited me for lunch - he had a flat somewhere in Central London with one of these intercoms - you just speak at the door and say who you are; so he pressed the button from upstairs and [127] I started coming up the stairs, so, from above, he was looking over the banisters to see me coming up, and as soon as he saw me, he ran back into the flat and called out to his wife, 'He's all right Angela, he's all right!' (Laughter) I really got the impression as though he expected me to come up covered with bruises and wounds and blood. (Laughter) Yes! And he seemed really surprised that I was all intact, and that nothing had happened to me, that I was just as I was before, and he ran back in saying, 'He's all right Angela. He's all right.' So I said when I got in, 'Of course I'm all right.' But it was just as though he expected I would come staggering up the stairs as though I'd had terrible blows, with wounds and blood dripping everywhere. (Laughter) Yes! He brought up this picture of poor Sangharakshita getting all these letters, and bludgeoned in this way, and attacked, but what did it amount to? That certain people had written a few letters, that's all! And they didn't want me to stay in a certain place, all right, stay somewhere else. It

was extraordinary that they thought I couldn't come back, that it was all in their own minds. They had invested these people's wishes with almost the force of law, as though these people had literally put up a blockade so that I couldn't come back; or built a wall that I couldn't climb. In fact there was nothing.

Purna: Parental authority.

S: Yes. And I think the fact that I did come back broke a spell, so to speak, for these people, it really did! They saw that Sangharakshita had come back and nothing had happened. The sky hadn't fallen! (Laughter) No thunderbolts! He wasn't struck dead, nothing at all had happened, he just came back! And that was extraordinary! I remember this really vividly.

Udaya: People can build up a sort of belief, which if enough people [128] share it, becomes almost a consensus reality.

S: Yes, indeed!

Udaya: And you can say, well, 'I'm not going to believe in your reality.'

S: Yes. Right.

Udaya: '...I'm not going to play that game', and the whole thing can just crumble.

S: Well, it's like the famous story that used to be told about Bradlaw, the atheist - he used to have a sort of stunt, so it is said, though some would deny it, that at meetings he'd take out his watch and say, 'Now I say there is no God, and I challenge God if he does exist, within five minutes to strike me dead and prove to you all that there is a God, but I say there is no God, and he'd pull out his watch, and some people would get really uneasy. (Laughter) Yes, uneasy, well, you know, it might happen. He'd just stand there, and the minutes would tick by, and some people were definitely quite uncomfortable, because you never know. You see they believed in God, or had believed in God, and that sort of a God. Then in five minute he'd put his watch away and nothing had happened, people would breath a sigh of relief. (Laughter) Yes. It's this consensus reality, exactly! But people are doing this all the time.

I mentioned with regard to convention a little while ago that you get to talking to someone on the bus, you don't dare to break the conventions and say, 'Well, look, we're having a really good conversation, why interrupt it, let's get off together and go and have a cup or tea'. It's as though there's something iron [bar] as if it's actually preventing - something tangible, physical, stopping you - but it's not. It's just like, for instance, two people have been living together, maybe they've been married, and one of them, one day has had enough and feels like walking out, but he or she feels as though they can't do that, it is as though the marriage bond is like an iron bar almost, which is there holding them together. [129] The door is open, they've got money, they've got a place to go, but they feel that there's a sort of bond. They don't just feel, 'Well, I feel attached, I feel reluctant to go' - it's as though there's some external factor holding them there, which they struggle against as though against something external. It's all in the mind!

Aniketa: It's the same thing with marriage being a sacred thing, I mean that weight of feeling it being ...

S: That God has taken a personal interest in your marriage - that you are married in the sight of God, and if you go away, and you go stay with someone else you'll be committing a sin, you'll 'be living in sin'.

Aniketa: It's a funny expression, that - 'living in sin.'

S: Somebody will think it sounds very attractive! (Laughter) Well, isn't it strange, when you think of it?

Udaya: You can see how things like the wedding ceremony gives that reality even more validity, that helps convince people that it's actually real - there is some thing ...

S: Yes. It has, obviously, from a positive point of view, in a positive way, a psychological validity, yes. Society deliberately creates these things to reinforce certain situations, and there's a kind of social sense in that, but for the individual, someone who is trying to be an individual, there's no sense at all in regarding these agreed conventions as sort of ultimate realities having a sort of real objective force of their own.

Udaya: Umm. We're doing the same thing in the Movement, anyway, we're building up realities, but they're more, skilful realities.

S: Yes. Right. Indeed! Open-ended realities.

Purna: It struck me particularly as I got to know Hinduism a bit better, how such a so-called 'spiritual truth' and religious truth [130] is, in fact, just an attempt to justify, on a higher level, a lot of this so-called convention.

S: Yes.

Purna: People want the reality to be such a way, so they give it a sanction on another level.

S: Yes. Right. They want the holy man to be a real holy man, so they ignore how he's actually behaving.

Voices: Yeah.

Purna: The caste system itself is essentially a social set-up that has set up a religious sanction.

S: Yes. One more little incident just to really bring it to an end, to come back to where we came in. I remember reading (talking about the wife, Dhaniya's obedient wife) - I remember a story I read once, about - this was in the days of the British Raj - there was an Englishman working as a clerk in a bank, and quite sort of unusually, he got friendly with an Indian, who was working as a clerk in the bank, and the Indian, after some months, greatly daring, invited the Englishman home for tea, and the Indian was one of those Indians (they're not completely unknown) who was a hen-pecked husband, and he had a really hot-tempered wife who was always shouting at him, and throwing things at him; but, anyway, when visitors come, of course it is a bit different. All the time he has this idea of the obedient Hindu wife. So, apparently she was really annoyed that her husband had invited this stranger, however, she did everything, but in a very bad grace, in fact, just before the guest was expected they had a

terrible set-to, and she hit him over the head with something, but then, the visitor arrived, and she disappeared behind the curtain. The visitor came in and he happened to remark a few minutes later, 'Oh I thought you were married. Where is your wife?' So the host said, [131] 'Oh, my wife is behind that curtain, she is not coming out. She's so shy'. (Laughter) You see? In his mind he said, 'Oh ...' He'd like to have this idea of his obedient, shy, little Hindu wife, when in actual fact, a few minutes before, she had been giving a demonstration of a completely different kind. Well, perhaps he actually thought, at least for the moment, that that was what she was actually like, because that was supposed to be how she was like. That was the agreed reality, as far as wives were concerned in Hindu society: that they were shy. So if anyone wasn't shy, you just ignored it, you didn't even 'see' it, perhaps, not much of the time anyway. So, you know, we often do this. We imagine things are there, which, in fact, are not objectively there at all; but we act as though they were things like rocks and mountains.

Aniketa: And it just limits your whole ability to do things ...

S: To live. (Pause) Anyway, leave it there for this morning, and we've got a nice number, yes, six, seven more verses to finish tomorrow. We've had a few digressions, but I think that they've been worthwhile anyway.

end of side two, tape four [ends half way through Side 2]

side one, tape five

S: All right - bottom of page four, someone would like to read, then, verse 28.

Vipula: Suvajri isn't here.

S: Oh. Ah, where is she? Has she been seen?

Udaya: I think she's doing the washing-up.

S: Ah. We'd better wait a minute. (Pause)

All right, read that verse then, verse 28.

[132]

Achala: TEXT.

Dhaniya: 'The stakes are sunk unshakeable,
Thus spake the herdsman Dhaniya,
'The rush-made cords are woven new.
Truly no calves can break out now:
So if thou wish etc. '

S: So there is a repetition: Dhaniya is sort of restating his position even more forcibly, but with a bit more elaboration. Do you see what I mean? He first of all talked about his cows, then he talked about how they were breeding - so the future was taken care of: they were a sort of insurance; and now he's maintaining that the calves on whom the future depends, are quite secure; they can't break out; their stakes are sunk unshakeably, and the cords ... (Here,

presumably, the cord that the calves are tethered with - it could be a sort of woven fence, you know the sort of thing? Stakes sunk in at certain intervals and you weave something like bamboo or thick rope in between - so it could either be that, a sort of fence, or it could be that the calves are actually tethered, but whatever it is they can't break out. Dhaniya is quite convinced of that: his young calves are under control; they are going to be there, and going to grow up as big cows and bulls, and they're going to breed, and his stock is going to increase. So, he's restating his position with some elaboration. But what is the point he is making, in a way? Where does the emphasis fall? (Pause) It's sort of on tying things down - on having tied things down - that's the point that the Buddha takes him up on. Dhaniya is, as it were, proud of having tied things down; he's proud of being, in a sense, tied down himself. This is what the Buddha is going to be getting at in a minute; because the Buddha wouldn't be proud of [133] being tied down.

Ratnaketu: It's sort of acquisition isn't it?

S: Mmm.

Udaya: In a way, also, (?) is problem orientated, or orientated towards disruption, in a sense, or, the prevention of it.

S: Mm. Yes. Not only disruption, in a way, it's directed towards preventing things happening which are bound to happen. The calves have got a natural tendency to break out, well, he's restraining that. He's boasting that the rush-made cords are woven new, because after all, these cords, or whatever they are, they've got a tendency to rot; they have to be woven new every now and then. (Pause) So, Dhaniya here, sort of represents the sort of person who is tied down himself, and tries to keep everything else tied down. In a way, he keeps himself tied down by keeping other things tied down; and we often find this. We find this particularly in relationships: you try to tie the other person down, but what happens? You've tied yourself down. You see what I mean? It's like when you are somebody's gaoler. Suppose you've got somebody locked up, you don't just lock him up, you lock yourself up too, because you've got to stay around keeping him under lock and key. So the gaoler is just as much the prisoner, in a way, as the person who is actually in the gaol itself. So, often we don't realize that by trying to tie people down, we are tying ourselves down!

Aniketa: It's also got the feeling of keeping energy restrained and restricted.

S: Mm. (Pause) All right, let us go on and see what the Buddha says in response to this.

Vijaya: TEXT.

The Master: 'As bull asunder bursts his bonds'

Thus did the Master then declare, [134]

'As tusker rends his rotten bands,

I go no more to bed-of-womb:

So if thou wish etc. '

S: So the Buddha takes Dhaniya up on this whole question of bondage. I mean, Dhaniya is himself in bondage; he tries to keep other things in bondage, so as to maintain the security of the situation. But the Buddha has no such care. The Buddha's attitude is completely the

opposite one. The Buddha wants to rend, to burst asunder all bonds. So, therefore, he says, 'As bull asunder bursts his bonds/ Thus did the Master then declare/ As tusker rends his rotten bands/ I go no more to bed-of-womb.' There is a contrast, you see, between the calves about which Dhaniya is speaking, and the bull, about which the Buddha is speaking. The Buddha, traditionally, is compared to the bull; he's the 'pungava', the 'bull among men'. So, the Buddha is, as it were, saying, 'Yes, you can control calves, as it were; you can tie them down, they're little, immature, undeveloped things, but the bull, that's another matter. To keep the bull under control, and to keep the bull among men under control, that's the most difficult thing of all; he just bursts his bond asunder! And not only the bull, the tusker, the fully grown male elephant, he too, breaks the bonds in which people try to confine him. So the Buddha is saying that he, the bull among men, or the elephant among men, has burst asunder all the bonds, all the conditionings that tie him down to mundane existence. So that is the peak, the culmination of this whole process of breaking through bonds. Dhaniya is thinking in terms of bonds, material bonds, and wanting to fashion those bonds for himself and others. The Buddha is speaking in terms of psychological and spiritual bonds [135] and he's wanting to break those bonds, because he wants to be a true individual, he wants to be an enlightened being, wants to be a Buddha. And of course there is the corollary, that having burst asunder those bonds of psychological and spiritual conditioning, since those bonds are also the bonds of karma, there is no more involuntary rebirth: you go no more to bed-of-womb/ So if thou wish, rain, deva, rain!' So someone who has burst the bonds in that sort of way, he doesn't mind what happens. Anything can happen, it's all the same to him. So here you get the great contrast between bondage and liberation. These are the two things that confront each other. At the beginning, or up to this point, the Buddha has confronted Dhaniya; or, you could say, the Ideal of Human Enlightenment has confronted Everyman in a very general sort of way, but here, it confronts it under the aspect of freedom: the free individual is confronting the bound individual, the restricted individual.

Udaya: I quite like that: 'I go no more to bed-of-womb.' That can be taken figuratively, as well, you know: in a sense, every person's sort of bondage is going to bed-of-womb'.

S: Mm.

Udaya: ... the thing that people are drawn towards ...

S: 'Back to mother!' Back to the womb, when things get tough, when the going gets difficult.

Udaya: And it can take (coughing obliterates words)

S: You run back to comfort. You don't have to wait to be reborn, you're doing it all the time! It's a constant process. (Long pause) So one could say that this is the aspect under which, perhaps, more than any other, Buddhism confronts the world: the aspect of freedom. I mean, this is how Buddhism appears in relation to the world; and this may be why the Buddha says in a well-known passage [136] that, 'just as the ocean has one taste, the taste of salt, from whence wherever in the ocean you take the water, so my Dharma has got one taste, the taste of freedom.' - or liberation, the 'vimuttirasa': this is the aspect which is, as it were emphasized. (Pause) So this suggests if Buddhism, or the Dharma, confronts the world under the aspect of freedom, it suggests that the world is in a state of bondage; that to be unenlightened is to be in a state of bondage. (Pause)

Anjali: (It's a paradox that people like their bonds.)

S: In what way is it a paradox?

Anjali: Well (very faint and indistinct)

S: Because they're always saying they want to be free? (Chuckling)

Anjali: (?) but I find, you know, the great open space.

Aniketa: Or even to look back on something, and be quite sort of admiring of it, and feeling quite self-satisfied and feel ... looking back rather than feeling there's any real need to move on ...

S: I think ...

Aniketa: ... there's not any energy there.

S: I think this is something one has to be careful of, the older one gets. I mean, the older you get, the more of your life, that is to say, this life is past, and the less there is of life left, so the life that you have lived is more than the life that you have yet to live, so you tend, if you're not careful, to get more and more occupied with the past, because that's something you've been through and known, and experienced, and there doesn't seem much of a future left, so you start thinking in terms of the past; but you have to sort of consciously try to resist that, if resistance is necessary, and, you know, right up to the very end, so to speak, be thinking in terms of the future, even if it's the next birth, the next life! There was a friend of mine in India [137] who had a father, and he told me once, that his father took up the study of Sanskrit at the age of eighty, and he said to his father, 'What's the point of taking up this study of Sanskrit, you're eighty; you're not going to learn very much.' So he said, 'Yes, I know that, but I'm developing an affinity for the subject for my next life.' (Laughter) You see what I mean. You know, as you grow older, there is that tendency, the natural tendency, and if you're just left to yourself without any spiritual incentive, to dwell more and more on the past, and to live in the past rather than in the future. Young people tend to live more in the future, well, that's all they've got, so to speak. They haven't got much in the way of a past; (chuckling) the past isn't very interesting; the immediate past, their childhood and their school-days they want to get away from that as quickly as possible! It's the future that fascinates them! But as you get older, you see, as you look back, maybe twenty, thirty, forty years, to your childhood and your schooldays, a sort of rosy glow settles over them, you see, and in that way you start lingering quite lovingly over the past, and living even in the past, forgetting or ignoring the future because there is, so you think, so little of it, but as I said, that tendency must be resisted. (Pause) I think the danger when you're young is that you've got so much future it's very difficult to realize it's going to come to an end one day. So I think the danger with the old person is that you either bemoan the past, or you just sentimentalise it; and in the case of the younger person, I think the danger is that you're so conscious of being young and having a lot of time ahead of you, that you waste time, only too often, and by the time you start realizing that time, after all, is very precious, you haven't got much of it left. (Pause) Maybe when you're around thirty, [138] or thirty-five, you begin to see backwards and forwards, in both ways. I think, before that it's quite difficult to appreciate that fifty year even, is not a very long time. You might think now you're twenty or twenty-five, well, that fifty years ahead is a

tremendous amount of time, you can hardly imagine it. But when there's only ten or fifteen years or that fifty left, it doesn't seem very much. It seems as if fifty years was quite a short time, in which you couldn't do very much. So it's best when one is young to realize that time is, in fact, very precious. It doesn't mean you should be anxious or worried, and always trying to be busy, but certainly not get lost in any sort of dead-end activity, or dead-end relationship, or dead-end experience, or dead-end anything, (Pause) - or just in a dead-end!

Udaya: In a way, sort of seeing rebirth or 'bed-of-womb', (Using that figuratively) it's like you're getting reborn all the time, but hopefully, gaining slightly higher rebirths, while (?) an addiction, because, in a sense, rebirth is an addiction. Sometimes, I'm quite aware of when ... I can feel bits of me being drawn towards a certain sort of 'refuge', not a true refuge. But I think if one is quite integrated, (at least I find this in myself), um ... there's a sort of 'after death' sort of state, a twilighty, you know, emotionally, sort of ... it's not quite sort of ...

S: Umm. When you could go either way.

Udaya: Yeah. And you can feel that the pull is on you to move down, or at the same time, move forward to a higher 'rebirth'.

S: Um. (Pause) All right, read the next verse, and see what happens next.

Megha: TEXT

Then burst a mighty cloud of rain,
Flooding the hollows and the land? [139]
Whereat the herdsman spake this thing,
Hearing the storm and deva-roar:

Dhaniya: 'O gain indeed! NO small gain this,
We who have seen the Master here!
Unto thy refuge, seer, we go;
Be thou our teacher, mighty sage!

Shall I carry on?

S: No. I was just turning over the pages to get to the text. No. Let's dwell on this verse 30. As I said at the beginning, the day before yesterday, this is a sort of ballad, as it were. It is highly condensed; it's also a bit dramatic: you don't get every step of the development. So what has happened up to this point? Dhaniya has been asserting his position; the Buddha has, so to speak, been asserting his position; they've each been restating the position with elaborations, and there hasn't seemed to be any change. The Buddha certainly hasn't changed (chuckling), but Dhaniya doesn't seem to have changed. He seems to have just been restating his position more and more vigorously; but perhaps, in a way, he was just restating it more and more desperately: that what the Buddha was saying each time was undermining Dhaniya's position a little bit. This reminds me of an illustration I sometimes give, (you might have heard it in the course of the tape-recorded talks), about the fact that, sometimes, it's as though you've done quite a bit of meditation, quite a bit of spiritual practice, but, no results, apparently! So the illustration is: that someone gives nineteen blows to a mighty rock with a great, big hammer - the rock is intact - not a mark! Not a dent! But on the twentieth blow it

splits right down the middle. So the previous [140] nineteen were doing their bit; they were weakening the rock along the line down which it eventually split. So, it's not that the twentieth blow does the trick, and the previous nineteen were completely useless, even though the results are quite dramatic with the twentieth blow. Nonetheless, each of these twenty blows was weakening the rock and contributing to its eventual splitting. It's just the same here. Every verse that the Buddha speaks, everything the Buddha says, is actually weakening Dhaniya's resistance even though he doesn't show it, and he tries to maintain his position. But then in the end, he gives way completely; and it is this that the mighty cloud of rain seems to represent. We're not told the whole story; we're not told what happens in Dhaniya's mind; we're only told that, 'Then burst a mighty cloud of rain.' Well, perhaps it did. Perhaps, just as they were speaking, there was a tremendous crash of thunder! Lightning! The rain came down! But this also represents something that is happening in Dhaniya's own mind; this is the way the sutta conveys it to us. It doesn't go into a long psychoanalytical explanation: all the things he went through, etc. etc., the sort of thing we might do (chuckling) - it just describes the sudden burst of rain. But that symbolizes the whole thing: the tremendous upheaval in Dhaniya's mind is letting loose all these torrents he previously held in check! So, all you see, is the end result. Dhaniya says, 'O gain indeed! No small gain this,/ We who have seen the master here/ Unto thy refuge, seer, we go/ Be thou our teacher, mighty sage!' He goes for refuge! And the picture that is given of the storm, flooding the hollows and the land: this represents the tremendous upheaval that took place in Dhaniya's own mind as the result of what the Buddha said. (Pause)

Purna: An overwhelming 'priti' experience.

[141]

S: Yes! Right! Indeed!

And there's the same symbol of the Dharma as the rain cloud ...

S: Yes! Right! Yes. And it's also a breaking through: a breaking through of all the things that Dhaniya had built up - defences against it. It's the breaking through of Reality, you could say.

Dhaniya has tried to build this safe, secure little nest, this cocoon, and shut himself up inside it, and made it very tight and very snug, but it's broken down now, the rain is coming in, Reality is coming in; pouring in, as it were. So he can't do anything about it. He just has to give in, so to speak. Of course, it's not really anything from outside; it's his own deepest nature which is breaking through; his own true nature which wants to be free.

Aniketa: Yes. In a way, almost from the beginning, this is what he was sort of challenging - the rain - You know, 'Rain, deva, rain!'

S: Yes! Yes!

Aniketa: ... the simile is that ...

S: Yes! He knows it's a bit dangerous, but he thinks he's got it under control. Yes. He's sort of flirting with it almost.

Ratnaketu: ... where it says, 'flooding the hollows and the land' - it's like that experience

permeates everything; it doesn't sort of (blurred by others talking at same - time).

S.: Yes, indeed! Not only that, it says, 'Nearing the storm and deva-roar.' It's a tremendous uproar, a tremendous disturbance; they can hardly hear themselves speak. (Long pause)

And 'the mighty' refers to the cloud - 'mahamegha', the 'great cloud'. It is very reminiscent of the 'Great Cloud' of the Saddharma Pundarika Sutra, isn't it, the cloud of the Dharma raining down? And it also suggests a sort of cleansing, a washing away of all impurities, which is very much what you find in India: there are all sorts of impurities, (no need to go into details), strewn all [142] over the place, in India; but when the rainy season comes, well, everything is washed away, everything smells very fresh and clean. (Pause) Then Dhaniya, of course, says, 'O gain indeed! No small gain this,' (? is the word for 'gain', which is a quite everyday word) 'We who have seen the Master here' ('Master' is 'Bhavagant') 'Unto thy refuge, seer we go' ('seer' is 'cakkhuma' - I've mentioned this on some previous occasion - 'the one possessing' 'the eye', 'the one who sees', 'the seer'.

Purna: The caksu ... ?

S: Yes. And then, 'saranam tam upama cakkma' and 'sattha nohoi tuam'. 'Sattha' is of course, 'teacher', and 'mahamuni' is 'this great sage' 'mighty seer'. So Dhaniya is saying, 'O gain indeed! No small gain this', (that is to say, their meeting, their confrontation with the Buddha). 'We who have seen the Master here/ Unto thy refuge, seer, we go;/ Be thou our teacher, mighty sage!'

This is very important and significant, because you see the significance of 'the going for refuge': the going for refuge, so to speak, is the spontaneous response to this overwhelming experience, in which the limitations of your whole existing mode of being are revealed, and in which you can see the possibility of freedom and recognize your affinity for that. You just, as it were, not exactly automatically, but simply spontaneously just go in the direction of that; you give yourself, you commit yourself to that, and that is what 'the going for refuge' represents. You see what I mean? It is the opposite of the attempt to simply tighten one's bonds, and to tie things down. It is the complete opposite to that sort of tendency. (Pause)

Megha: I've also got the feeling of a sort of rush forward.

S: A rush forward. Yes. Yes. It's not sort of - 'I think I'll commit myself' - it's nothing like that. It's a movement of one's [143] whole being; there's no choice, in a way, there's no discussion, because it's just that that you want; there's nothing you have to think about; you just do it. (Pause:) So one sees this sort of response in quite a number of the suttas of the Pali Canon especially the Buddha gives a teaching, and a certain situation arises - something happens to somebody, and then, as a result of their experience, they just 'go for refuge', and sometimes it seems to us as though they 'go for refuge' almost (I was going to say) at the slightest provocation, because it's as though the Buddha comes along, says few simple words, and bang: they 'go for refuge!' We might not find it so simple and easy as that; but then, perhaps, the Buddha comes along, and they meet the Buddha at the right psychological-cum-spiritual moment; he says just the right things. Maybe they've been preparing themselves over a long period of time, perhaps not even fully consciously. So the potentiality is there, and that is just sparked off by the encounter with the Buddha.

Ratnaketu: I get the impression from this that the Buddha knows what to say to each individual (?) talking about security.

S: Yes, right. There is nothing about Buddhism, in a sense; he doesn't mention anything about 'the noble eightfold path' or 'the four noble truths': it's all implicit in his whole attitude; but it's not actually mentioned; it's not spelled out; apparently, it doesn't need to be when the situation is as existential as that. Well, we notice much the same sort of thing in the case of the people who come along to the FWBO, who come along to the Centres. Sometimes their experience of the Centre has quite an effect on them, and they know pretty quickly that they just want to get involved, and that is a sort of anticipatory 'going for refuge', you, could say. That is their spontaneous response to the situation that they meet; [144] the situation that they encounter; they just want to give themselves to it in a quite straightforward and uncomplicated sort of way, even before they're sorted out about the 'Eightfold Path' and 'The Four Noble Truths' and 'Sunyat', and all the rest of it. They may, or may not, do that afterwards.

Udaya: There was a girl that came along, started the course, and the first night she came along she had a lot of make-up and was dressed up like a dolly-bird, and after the first class - (I had actually thought when she walked, 'God, she's in the wrong place') (Laughter)

S: You jumped to conclusions, eh. (Chuckling)

Udaya: And the first night she said, 'I like it here, I think I'll keep on coming.' And I thought, 'Oh yeah?' And she's only missed about two or three classes since.

Megha: And she's a mitra now.

Udaya: Yes. So it was very much that sort of thing.

S: I gather [she] has wiped all the make-up off.

Aniketa: She's lost her job because of it!

S: Yes! She wrote and told me about that. That was quite interesting. She had a job as receptionist - that's right! And she was apparently, by her own account, a bit of a 'dolly-bird', as you put it. Yes, and apparently when she stopped going to office parties and wasn't the smart, presentable young woman that they wanted, complete with thick layers of make-up, she was more or less given her cards.

Udaya: She is very much an example of what the effects had on her straight away. It was what she wanted.

Anjali: Does she want to come to England?

S: By the end of the year.

Megha: If she can get the money together.

[145]

S: She's the one who is a good typist. (Chuckling - Laughter) There are big 'Welcome' banners already out! (Pause)

The thing is, one shouldn't, (just to go into it a bit more) one shouldn't underestimate the effect even of what we might consider as an ordinary centre situation, where a new person is concerned; because, if we're not careful, we can get used to it all and even a bit blase about it, and take it all for granted. 'Well, of course, you know, there are meditation classes, and of course, yes, there is the Centre, and, yes, it's quite nice.' And you get so used to it you don't realize how different it is because you are going there so often. Maybe, in a sense, you don't quite appreciate it as much as you used to, or ought to, and so you don't realize what an impact it has on a new person. Even what you feel is a quite ordinary situation, ordinary class, can sort of send the sensitive newcomer reeling almost, and they take it dead serious, as they should. And they just feel, 'Oh, they've really got something here.' And there's a response in the case of someone who has, perhaps, been looking for something. There is a response, and they want to throw themselves in. So we should beware of this, and not be sort off too off-hand, or too blase, or take things too much for granted, or get too accustomed to things. That's very easy. I'm sure you're not very likely to do that if you're working in India, managing for class space on verandas and things like that. In India you really do appreciate some of the facilities that we have got. I couldn't help thinking after Lokamitra's slide show, when we walked back into this place, we're sort of having our convention in a palace by Indian standards, and I hope people realize that. If our Indian Friends had a place like this for a retreat they'd think they were in a devaloka, wouldn't they?

[146]

Purna: One of the series of six week classes I took, especially at (?) was in a hut. The 'hut' we had it in was a wooden canopy of a railway-wagon (Laughter) set on a low mud wall, and that was one of our 'rooms'!

S: I'm hoping Lokamitra is taking pictures of this place to show people, to give them some idea of what we hope to have in India too, one day. But you get very used to these things and take your facilities for granted. That is one of the advantages of going and working in India. You're lucky if you get the roof of a railway wagon sometimes! (Chuckling)

Megha: I quite appreciated it, just being a month in Australia, not having a place where I could meditate. It really put things a lot clearer for me.

S: Yes. Especially for those people who not only go along to a Centre, but live in a community and work in a co-op. You've got such a positive situation, in spite of all the ups-and-downs and aches and pains! You've got such a positive situation, you've forgotten what it's like to live in the world, and you begin to grumble about little things, and get a bit disgruntled because things aren't perfect, etc. etc. But, you know, to the person coming in from the outside who, perhaps, are holding down a quite demanding job under quite difficult conditions, and having to work long hours with difficult people, and to do not very pleasant things, well, to him it is like walking into a little heaven and it can have quite an effect. Well, it's more than heaven, of course, because heaven is just mundane, but in the case of a Centre, or of a community, or a co-op, there is the purely spiritual element, or even the transcendental element, or at least a reflection of it. So that can be a quite overwhelming experience. The fact, even, that people are even kindly and gentle on the whole. It once gave me [147] a start, when one of the women Order Members in England said what a relief it was to walk into the

Centre because women were treated so differently inside the FWBO, from what they were treated outside. So this - I hadn't thought of this very much - so I said to her, 'What do you mean?' And she said, 'Well, you walk into the Centre and there's no wolf-whistle or anything like that, but, she said, walking about outside, you encounter those sort of things, you're treated in a different sort of way. So, she said, talking very personally, 'Within the FWBO I feel very safe.' (She didn't mean it in the Dhaniya sense)- she could be herself, so to speak; she wasn't regarded in a particular, slightly unpleasant, kind of way. So that holds good in so many respects. (Pause) Ideally, in the Friends, on the whole, people listen to you; outside, very often, they don't listen. You can communicate with people, or you can meditate with people; you can't do that very often, easily, outside. I think, if one reflects upon it, there is remarkably little disharmony and conflict within the FWBO. When I was in India, also in England for a while, I was in contact with a lot of Buddhist organizations, Buddhist groups, and the amount of conflict, and all that sort of thing, was amazing, it went on all the time, but we are almost totally free from that sort of thing, and that is also a great relief.

Udaya: It quite stands out actually, the way in which we do communicate, and we tend to forget that. I remember there was a bunch of us going over to Waiheke on the ferry, and Gunaprabha and Priyananda were a little bit forward, and I was sitting with Suvajri and (?) and we actually noticed how they stood out, because Gunaprabha and Priyananda were looking at each other in the eye, and it was quite gentle, quite friendly, quite relaxed. Most people when they talk, they sort of look above each other. It really stood [148] out how well and how gently they were communicating. I've never forgotten that.

S: Ah! Mm.

Ratnaketu: The same thing happened when I went to pick up the New Zealanders at the airport; we were coming back on the tube - Dipankara and I were standing at one end of the tube and Darren was sitting there (?). It was really funny because you could tell he was from overseas; he was looking around, and everybody else (?) he looked so bright and awake, sitting looking, really smiling all over the place.

S: Well, You looked a bit like that in Bombay. (Laughter) At least at two O'clock in the morning. (Laughter) (Pause)

Anyway we've run a little off the track, but just to draw attention to the fact that if we're not careful, we may forget a bit, the sort of impact the Centre, or a Centre, can have on a new person, just because we ourselves have got so used to the Centre and take it a bit for granted.

Udaya: (?) conscious attention as well, when we get our Centre together, the impact and effect it will have on people.

S: Even ordinary physical things, like the decor, the colour scheme, and all that sort of thing. It all has an effect, even if people aren't conscious of it. So it's all quite important. (Long pause) There's a question that's arisen, or did arise, recently, in England - I'm wondering if it has ever arisen in New Zealand, but in any case it might be useful to discuss it. We were talking about influencing people in a way, or people being affected by the Centre in a particular kind of way - has anybody suggested that Buddhism or meditation brainwashes people? Have you heard of this suggestion in New Zealand?

[149]

Priyananda: It came up particularly with the question of cults this time last year.

S: Ah, yes, this is how it come up in England. Yes. Sanghadevi encountered it when she went to give a talk in a school ...

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side two, tape five

... and people, that is to say, some of the pupils, were even asking, or even saying, 'Well what you are doing is just brain-washing people - you just brainwash people with meditation', and so on. And clearly, they'd been hearing and seeing on television this criticism of these cults. So I was wondering if this question had arisen in New Zealand, and if so, how you dealt with it, because I think this is quite an important question, and we should where we stand. So, how would you deal with it? How would you answer this charge, that Buddhism brainwashes people? (Pause)

Achala: Possibly through the idea, that the individual who's in touch with it is encouraged to probe and examine for themselves and not take anything on trust.

Udaya: Also, there are no laws or commandments in Buddhism: it doesn't say it's wrong to do this, or it's right to do that, it merely says if you do this you get such-and-such a result, and if you don't, you get such-and-such a result, and that it is for the individual to decide, and it usually becomes quite obvious what it is they want to do.

S: This is true, but I think one of the things that one has to do first, is to ask, 'What does one mean by 'brainwashing'?' to arrive at a clear idea of what it is one is talking about. So, what do you think, as it were, is the characteristic feature of actual brainwashing? Or the sort of thing that people are, one assumes, actually talking about?

[150]

Vipula: An unaware person - not aware people for a start.

S: Yes.

Ratnaketu: Taking away individual choice - something is put into your brain that you don't know anything about ...

S: Mm.

Purna: A person is responsible for their actions.

S: Yes. It's that. You produce a certain effect on people without them knowing what is happening, or even against their will. In other words, you don't enlist their free co-operation, based on an understanding of what is happening. See what I mean? When I talked, in one lecture on psychotherapy I gave a definition of Jaspers. He said, among other thing, that the cooperation of the patient is always required. When it's a question of brainwashing there's no real cooperation required; you are only expected to submit, or sometimes you don't even have

to submit because you don't know what's going on. It's as bad as that! But in psychotherapy the co-operation of the patient is required. The patient has to understand what is happening, agree with what is being done, and give his conscious, willing co-operation. In other words, he has to do it himself, virtually. So it's much the same in the case of meditation, and practising Buddhism. First of all a possibility is made clear to the person; I mean as Udaya said, 'If you do this, well, that will be the result, it is up to you to make up your mind whether that is, in fact, what you want to do; but if you want to do it, this is the way it's done and let's do it together. So this cannot be described as brainwashing. So these are the sort of things that we have to make clear. But I also said, discussing this with Sanghadevi and others, that we ought to, as it were, take up the offensive, because I think it is outrageous that Buddhism should be accused of brainwashing, and accused by whom? I said, that in [151] this particular case, the children, the pupils who asked, or who suggested, that Buddhism and Buddhist meditation were just brainwashing, well what were they doing? First of all, they were students, they were at school, so this meant that they were being brainwashed. I mean, (chuckling) their co-operation hadn't been enlisted freely, you could say, as they were there having things done to them. They were having a certain kind of information, a certain point of view, inculcated, and their minds were being affected in a particular way. You could say, 'Well, you are the ones who are being brainwashed. And what about all the TV that you watch? What about the newspapers that you read? So, what I, in a way feel annoyed about is this colossal assumption that, 'We're not brainwashed - brainwashing is the exception, it's something that Buddhists do - it's something that happens when you meditate - this is brainwashing; overlooking the fact that their whole life is nothing but a process of brainwashing, and they don't realize it, and that's what makes it, to some extent, 'brainwashing'. So one should return to the attack and not only repudiate the charge of brainwashing as regards Buddhism, but make the point that - you're the very last people to object to brainwashing because it's happening to you all the time; you're submitting to it all the time. And really make quite a point of this, really launch a counter attack that it's really quite objectionable from our point of view, that we are basing ourselves undoing psychological conditioning and helping people think for themselves, helping people to be free! This is what Buddhism is all about, and this is the sort of thing people get involved with when they come along to our classes and Centres. And - 'You are the very last people to object to brain-washing.' Do you see what I mean? (Chuckling) So this is to illustrate one of the things I think, more and more - I feel - I personally [152] feel fed up with Buddhism having to be on the defensive; as if we have to justify ourselves and prove ourselves, as though everybody else is perfectly all right, with clear, balanced, enlightened minds, and it's Buddhism that's got to justify itself. You see what I mean?

Voices: (Indistinct)

S: As though we have to prove that we ... 'Oh, Buddhists are very intolerant' ... One has only to raise a little whisper about Christianity, and they're down on us like a ton of bricks, for our intolerance! The very people, or at least the people do belong to those churches and religious bodies - they burned people at the stake, and drowned them, and tortured them, by the millions for hundreds of years! You've only got to raise a little cheep about Buddhism being a little different from Christianity (Laughter) - and - 'Oh, you're very intolerant, I thought Buddhism was a tolerant religion.' I mean, in that little circular that was put out in Auckland ... a second ... other Buddhist Centre in Auckland - was it in that? Or maybe it was in Ham Wol's remarks. It was about these 'certain elements' in the FWBO Auckland, tending towards violence!

Ratnaketu: Yeah?

S: Oh, yes! The word 'violence' was used, yes. I forget whether it was reported in the minutes, or was what Ham Wol said. Yes! It must have been in those minutes - that these 'certain elements' (I'm not looking at anybody)(Laughter) were accused of violence. This is one of the charges, apart from being anti-Christian and anti-family - that due to their sort of inference, Buddhism, which was so tolerant, was actually heading in the direction of intolerance and violence. You imagine people going along to the Centre and getting hit over the head with a mallet, or someone lined up by Udaya, (Chuckling) [153] (not Purna because he wasn't there any longer), but by somebody. You see what I mean? Well, this is outrageous! So one shouldn't put up with it and just refute these sort of allegations and assumptions quite strongly and clearly! It really is quite deplorable! So we mustn't be on the defensive and always apologising for our attitudes. 'Buddhism is very escapist' - this is another one! As though people were not escapists all the time. I mean, what about when you are watching your TV? What about when you go and do some unnecessary shopping? Or if you are a woman, you buy yourself your forty-fifth hat, or something like that; or if you are a man, you go and have a 'flutter' on the dogs or on the horses! What's that? Isn't that escapism? And you, people come along and charge Buddhism with escapism because we sit and meditate, and try to see into our own minds and understand ...

Aniketa: And go on solitary retreats ...

S: Yes.

Aniketa: ... because when you do meditation you're not doing anything for society ...

S: ... as though ... and then, again - selfishness - 'Buddhists are selfish', as though they themselves were sort of bodhisattvas incarnate, working for the good of humanity! (Laughter) You see? It's such impudence in a way. So I think we shouldn't take this lying down. If someone sort of perks up, you know, jumps up at a meeting and says, 'I think Buddhists are really selfish', Well, What are you doing for humanity? You just look into that, you find he's not doing very much, but he asks that sort of question on the assumption, so it seems, that he is a benefactor of humanity and you're just ... in fact everybody's unselfish, it's only the wretched Buddhists who are selfish and have to be taken to task for that! (Pause)

[154]

Aniketa: There's also a misconception about meditation ... where it comes to this thing of being brainwashed ... where brainwashing comes in ... that the technique is, that the mind is made completely blank, and then someone can sort of influence, or put 'things' into it, in some way, which results in the individual ...

S: Not knowing even - your mind is so empty you don't even know that 'something' is being put into it ...

Aniketa: Yes. It's kind of like the parable or the story in the New Testament where this person's mind is cleared (the devil exorcised) and because nothing was put back in, seven devils rushed in.

S: Yes. Right.

Achala: I think in these sort of situations, confronted by something almost the opposite of the truth, it's important not to just sort or reply quickly, and then get into a quick sort of (?) but just sort of tease it out of them.

S: Yes. Indeed! In a 'Socratic' sort of way ...

Voices: Yeah!

S: Yes.

Achala: The ideas might be there but ...

S: Yes. If someone accuses Buddhism of selfishness, well say 'Yes, selfishness is a terrible thing, but what is selfishness? How is one selfish? And in a way, get them to entrap themselves, if you are skilful enough in debate and discussion; so that it becomes evident in the end that they're the selfish ones and not the Buddhists. One shouldn't simply retort, as it were, if people say, 'Oh, you Buddhists are very selfish' - 'Oh no we're not!' That's not going to carry much conviction. You have to be more skilful than that. (Pause)

Vijaya: There was a religious studies class given in Christchurch and the teacher was a Christian lecturing on Buddhism, and for the [155] lecture on Buddhism, he didn't choose very good examples; and he did a lecture on meditation, and a few people were getting really interested by the end of the lecture, in meditating, and he finished by saying, 'It's all self-hypnosis anyway'. (Laughter) And everyone just went away and left it at that. That upset me. Later on I went and talked to him, and a few days later I met him and showed him the 'Survey', and he said 'Oh yes, I've seen the 'Survey', but I can't really read that, because you're certain to get too involved'. (Laughter)

S: Yes! Yes! Well, exactly! The same sort of thing happened in Finland. A prominent publisher in Finland wanted to bring out a book on Buddhism, so Vajrabodhi tried to interest these publishers in a Finnish translation of the 'Three-Jewels'; so the publishers thought it over a bit, and in the end decided against it. They said they wanted a book on Buddhism that would be 'objective'. You see what I mean? So in the end they published something by Alan Watts (Laughter). Yes! So, there again, this is an extraordinary assumption! It's almost like saying, 'Well, if you really want to know about Christianity, the priest is the last person you should go to. I mean, that would logically follow, but that, they probably wouldn't accept, but 'you can't really know about Christianity unless you're a Christian, because you've got to know about it from within.' Well, fair enough, perhaps you have, but they don't apply that to Buddhism, 'a Buddhist can't be trusted to speak about Buddhism because he is prejudiced, well, because he is a Buddhist, but of course, a Christian can be trusted to speak about Christianity because he knows about it from within!' (Pause)

Vijaya: (?) curiosity just little labels.

S: Well, you know what you have to do to things before you can [156] pin them up on the museum walls - you have to kill them dead, with a little whiff of cyanide, (chuckling) or 'Christian love', or whatever you call it! (Laughter) There you are! You've got your grubby little specimen, that bluebottle, that rather unpleasant specimen, well, that's a Buddhist; they've got some rather nasty habits! (Chuckling).

Ratnaketu: It's really a gigantic assumption by the Christians that they are 'normal' - that Christianity is the norm, and, I mean, all these things are all very well, and they might be nice, but they are not Christianity - there can't be any possibility of anything better than Christianity.

S: Well, you see, in New Zealand you are not really up against this in the way we are in England, or would be even in the States - some parts of the States - because this sort of tradition is much less strong, just because it's got a much shorter history in New Zealand. Also, you've got, though there's not much of it left, you've got a bit of Maori culture and religion, a bit of a sort of indigenous, if not exact, alternative; but at least it's there, and it can't be altogether ignored. So you have a much better opportunity of taking this independent stand and not ... or insisting on not being judged by Christian standards. In New Zealand those standards, from a cultural point of view, are pretty weak anyway; but here they are still very strong.

Priyananda: The only other danger in New Zealand is being seen as a cult.

S: Yes. Yes.

Priyananda: ... in the sense of the Jonestown cult, well, the anger that's aroused, and the paranoia ...

S: But there again, you see. One heard these sort of mainstream churches as they call it, denouncing the Jonestown cult, when they've [157] done the same thing on a much bigger scale. What they were objecting to was that Rev. Jones led these people to their deaths. Well, lots of Christian churches have done that: they've sent young men to fight, blessing them, and saying, 'You're fighting for Christian civilization, and you're fighting for God, and God is on your side!' The net result is that they are all dead! Churches on both sides, in both World Wars, have done just that! But, you know, they all gang up on these little cults - it's the big cults not wanting the rivalry of the little cults, this is all it is!

Priyananda: One can usually treat it pretty well on a rational basis, and counter the accusation, which I have had levelled at me on one occasion, but you have to actually deal with it on a rational basis.

S: Yes. That particular cult was accused of 'brainwashing'; but then, what do the churches do? I mean, for instance, they talk about these cults taking young people away from their families, but if it were the Catholics doing it, or the Church of England people, or the Methodists, there would be no complaint at all; they would just be 'winning people for Christ!' (Pause)

Aniketa: There is one school just outside Auckland which is being run like a military institution.

S: Well, I saw in Kalimpong, Christian missionaries picking up half-starving Tibetan refugee children and taking them to their school and not allowing their parents to see them; not allowing any Tibetan or Buddhist to see them; and the parents could not do anything about it, because in any case, they knew that if they did manage, with the help of the local authorities, to get their children out of the school, they wouldn't have anything to feed them with. So they took advantage or that. So these are the people who talk about the sanctity of the family and

all the rest or it; and these are the sort of people who denounce the Rev. Jones for taking [158] people away from their families and so on. They don't hesitate to do it, ever! So it's exactly the same. They are bigger, they're historically older, they've more influence, they're more established, but what they do is no different in principle. (Pause) And they try to lump Buddhism also with these cults.

Ratnaketu: Yes. They try to make out that Buddhism is something that's new and it's 'small', and it's just a little cult, whereas, it's been going at least 500 years longer than Christianity ...

S: Longer than Christianity - yes. And it's got a better record, even by ordinary human standards.

Ratnaketu: ... and they try to make out it's (?)

S: Yes. (Pause)

Ratnaketu: I remember when I was (?) a woman offered incense to (?)

S: Ah!

Ratnaketu: And that's the sort of thing people say, that we're worshipping a graven image, or a guru, or something like this; we're sort of surrendering ourselves and being brainwashed, but they're offering incense to the (?)

S: Or even worse than that, I mean, offering incense to dead bodies nailed to pieces of wood. (Laughter) Well, who's brainwashing who? You see? You go into a church, there's all this organ music, and clouds of incense and choirs, and as Vajradaka was saying, all this music in the background, and then someone says, 'Jesus loves you'. Who are they to talk about brainwashing! (Laughter) And you get the little kids and you whip them into these church play-groups - what have they got? Cubs and scouts - Well, what are you doing? Aren't you brainwashing and indoctrinating them? Of course you are. As much as the Communists or Nazis, or anybody else.

Vijaya: So true! It's incredible - the Fundamentalism in 'the States' - [159] razzle-dazzle - very impressive, using all these psychological tricks ...

S: And playing on fear and insecurity, as cults admittedly do; but then Christianity is a cult, you could say, in this sort of sense.

Aniketa: There was an incident that happened with Andrea, when she was, oh, she must have been about eight, where she was invited to a friend's home, which I thought at the time was just a quite innocent sort of barbecue party for children and so on. It turned out to be one of these sort of 'Brethren' gatherings, where she was being told that her soul was black as ever, and she had to give herself to Jesus. She came home, and said she'd signed a paper. I received all this literature in the post. I wrote back a really strong letter - Why, I wasn't even present! I didn't know what was going on!

S: And she was a minor ...

Aniketa: Right!

S: Under your guardianship ...

Aniketa: I sent them back all their literature, and made it quite clear I didn't like that sort of thing one little bit!

S: These are the very same people who accuse us of brainwashing! Therefore I think we should take the offensive much more than we do, and not allow ourselves to be put in a defensive position, or have to be apologetic, and excuse ourselves, as though we need a special dispensation, or special permission to exist. Anyway, let's have a cup of tea or coffee.

TEA BREAK

S: That second verse of Dhaniya - we haven't had that yet.

Suvajri: TEXT

Dhaniya: 'Obedient, the wife and I
Will fare Wellfarer's godly life: [160]
'Yon-farers over birth and death,
Enders of ill will we become!'

S: You notice the repetition of the word 'obedient'? And you remember what we said about that? In a way, it comes in even more appropriately here - that they will both hearken to the Buddha, or hearken to the Dharma. By the way, the original does not say, 'the wife and I', which is a rather English idiom; Dhaniya just says 'gopi', which can be taken as a proper name, or not a proper name. It means ... it's sometimes translated as 'milkmaid'. You hear about Krishna and his 18,000 gopis, or cowherd girls - 'go' is 'cow', a 'gopa' is a cow-man, and 'gopi' is a cow-woman, as it were. So he simply says, 'gopi', calling her presumably by her own name. He doesn't actually say 'the wife and I'. Let me just look back to the beginning; there might be some extra significance (looking up text). Yes. Earlier on he says, 'gopi (?)', he says 'my gopi'. This translation says, 'a strong and loyal dame have I'. At the beginning it is 'gopi (?)', as it were, 'my gopi', but at the end he simply says, 'gopi'. Do you think there's any sort of change of attitude reflected here?

Aniketa: Not so much 'mine' - less possessive.

S: Yes. But the translation says: 'Obedient, the wife and I', well, 'Obedient, Gopi and I/ Will fare Well-farers' godly life:' It's not a very nice translation! 'Sugata' (that is to say the Buddha - 'the Well-gone One', 'the Happy One') 'brahmacariyam', (We'll go into that in a minute), 'caramasi', 'will practice', 'will walk', it really means 'will practise', literally it's 'walking' but actually it's 'practising' - 'we shall practise the 'brahmacariya' of the Buddha; so what is that 'brabmacarya'?

Purna: Chastity.

[161]

S: Yes. But how does it come to mean ... what does the word literally mean - 'brahmacariya'?

Achala: 'Brahma-faring', 'faring like a Brahma.'

S: Yes. 'Brahma' literally means 'great', 'superior', 'noble'. So there are what we would describe as mythological beings, the Brahmas, who inhabit the Brahmlokas, the higher levels of consciousness in the 'rupa' and 'arupa' lokas, so 'brahmachariya' is, strictly speaking, that kind of life, if you like, that way of life, that practice which is based upon, or has for its aim, those higher, super-conscious, Brahma-like states. You see what I mean? So, in as much as the Brahmas, and these Brahma-like states pertain to the 'rupaloka' and 'arupaloka', they transcend the 'kamaloka', and it's only on the 'kamaloka' that there is this distinction of sex in the ordinary sense; only on the 'kamaloka' that there are physical senses at all. So if you are faring on those 'Brahma' levels, there can be no question of sexual activity in the ordinary sense. You see what I mean? So you are, as it were, naturally celibate, because there is no possibility for anything else. If you don't have a physical body which is differentiated according to sex, well, what sex-life can there be for you, as we understand it, anyway? The natural, spontaneous thing is, as it were, what we call celibacy, which, in a way, is not a very appropriate word here. In other words, by the time you get up to the Brahma world, or rather, the Brahma-loka represents a degree of integration which transcends the male-female polarization, so that, even on this earth, in this body, even with your male or female body, you experience that particular state, which is a state of such integration and self-completeness, that your natural tendency is to be, as it were, celibate, in the sense that you are complete in yourself. You are not driven by need to seek your 'other half', biologically and psychologically. [162] You see what I mean? So 'brahmachariya', if we speak of it as celibacy at all, it's celibacy in this sort of sense. So, in a way, it's quite appropriate that Dhaniya says to Gopi, 'That we ...' or says of himself and Gopi, that 'we shall fare the 'brahmachariya'. He doesn't mean that, 'we are each going to take a vow of celibacy, and grit our teeth and live together as though we weren't actually married.' You see what I mean? It's not that! But what he formerly looked for from Gopi he now finds within himself; what she looked for in him, she now finds within herself. They don't need each other in the way that they used to. All right, they may continue to live together, maybe they won't literally 'go forth', but they will live together faring the 'brahma-faring', that is to say, following the life: of 'brahmachariya'. You see what I mean? The attitudes change, the relationship changes.

Achala: It seems as though she's gone through a similar sort of experience.

S: Presumably. In India they tend to include the wife in the husband, as it were. It's assumed that the faithful wife goes along in the footsteps of her husband; but, you know, when you come to the border-line that separates the mundane from the spiritual, there can't be any question of following along in somebody's footsteps, even your own husband's. So once you come up to that border-line, even if you've come to that point following in your husband's foot-steps, from that point onwards, you have to fare independently; you can't just simply follow in his footsteps in the way you did before.

Anjali: Metaphorically, talking about (?)?

S: One could say like that, except that the frame-work of the story is, as it were, literal. But, yes, there is another level of allegorical meaning too, yes. He takes with him his 'wife' - he takes with him his irrational side, so to speak, his emotions, [163] they are not left behind when he 'goes forth' - that is very important. It's not just an intellectual 'going forth'. It's not a theoretical 'going forth'. His 'wife', inverted commas, goes with him; his 'dakini' goes with

him. (Pause)

'Yon-farers over birth-and-death' - they entirely transcend the realm of 'karma', the realm of the 'conditioned', they become 'enders of ill', the whole mass of suffering, of conditioned existence ceases for them. (Pause)

This seems to be quite an early sutta, (you know, some suttas were committed to writing, even compiled later than others) - because of the way in which this word, 'brahmacariya', is used. There are a number of terms - of this sort in Buddhism, say, early Buddhism uses the word 'dharma brahmacariya', also a bit later, 'dharma-cariya' or 'dhammacariya', and then of course, in the Mahayana, 'Bodhicarya'. The suffix is the same, 'carya'. It comes from the root 'carati', 'he walks', 'he fares'. It also means 'practising', even 'experiencing'. So there is the 'brahmacariya', then the 'dhammacarya', and the 'bodhicarya' - there is a slight difference of emphasis. Broadly speaking, 'brahmacariya' refers to the practice or experience of higher states of consciousness and being, not necessarily transcendental, but 'dhammacarya' refers to the practice or experience of the Buddha's teaching itself, which, presumably, includes the transcendental as well as the mundane, and 'bodhicarya' refers to the actual practice and experience or the Bodhisattva Path. Not simply, so to speak, the path or the Arahant. So you could say, each represents a higher degree or specialization - the 'brahmacarya' is the spiritual life; the 'dhammacarya' is the Buddhist's life, and the 'bodhicarya' is the altruistic Buddhist's life. Or you could say, it's the spiritual life, the Buddhist's spiritual life, the altruistic Buddhist's spiritual life.

[164]

Aniketa: Would the 'brahmacariya' also be closely connected with higher mental positive states the 'brahmaviharas'?

S: Oh yes! It is the same word which is used in much the same way. Yes.

Purna: You could almost have 'sucarya', the happy, healthy human, 'brahmacariya', the higher states ...

S: Yes, you could ...

Purna: ... ! dhammacarya', the ...

Udaya: When you translate 'bodhicarya' differently, you know, like Matic's book - that has 'entering the path of enlightenment', - could you have 'entering the life of enlightenment'?

S: Yes, because 'carya means 'life', 'practice', 'experience'; it means all these things, not just 'faring' in the literal sense.

Udaya: It made a world of difference to me. I saw it completely differently - that you 'entered the life of enlightenment'; you start practising it now and you start experiencing it now, to the extent you deepen it, rather than a path that you are walking along going (?).

S: Yes. And you've got your eyes so fixed on the goal you don't bother about the path, as it were.

Udaya: ... and it is external to you.

S: Yes. Right. (Pause) So, 'godly life' for 'brahmacarya' won't do, will it? The word 'godly', you know, has got such different connotations for us.

Udaya: (In a sense, the sexual aspect, or celibacy of 'brahmacariya' sort of, in a sense, is a relatively insignificant sort of by-product ...) (Note - Above sentence was difficult to hear, so is an approximation).

S: Well, relatively, once you get up to that level it becomes relatively insignificant. (Chuckling)

Udaya: But it's just an aspect of it, in a sense, indicating something quite (full?).

[165]

S: Yes. There isn't that sort of neurotic compulsiveness or desperation behind one's sexuality, as very often there is usually.

Udaya: Or even if it's a bit of an abnegation of something ...

S: All right, let's go on to the concluding verses and see what 'Mara' has to say. (Pause) 'Mara' starts to get a bit worried - things are getting a bit out of control; so he thinks it's time to interfere. So what does he say?

Priyananda: TEXT

Mara: 'Whoso hath sons delights in Sons',
Thus Mara spake, the Evil One,
'The cowherd too delights in kine:
Affections are delight to man,
Th' affection - free hath no delight.'

S: Mara is saying - 'What's in the spiritual life, eh? There's nothing in it. There's no happiness in it; no delight in it. Happiness comes from possessions. No possessions, no happiness! what are you doing Dhaniya, giving up these things? You're going to lead a miserable life. Happiness is based on possessions, - 'Whoso hath sons delights in Sons'/ Thus Mara spake, the Evil One,/'The cowherd too delights in kine:/ Affections are delight to man,/' Th' affection - free hath no delight.' We've heard that one before, haven't we? - 'If you don't have ties based on emotional dependence, well, there is no savour in life, there is no joy in life!' This is what Mara is trying to convince Dhaniya of. So the Buddha speaks. What does the Buddha say?

Anjali: TEXT

The Master: 'Whoso hath sons grieves over sons,'
Thus spake the Master in reply,
'The cowherd too grieves over kine:
Affections are sore grief to man, [166]
Th' affection-free hath never grief.'

S: So what is the Buddha actually saying? Is the Buddha saying that sons are only a source of grief and nothing but grief? Is the Buddha saying that? (Pause) 'Whoso hath sons grieves over sons.' Is the Buddha saying that you can't possibly have any delight from sons?

Vipula: No. He's just saying they are impermanent.

S: No. He's not saying that. Yes, you can have delight in sons, but you can't have delight entirely divorced from grief, because your delight is based upon, or bound up with, something that is impermanent; so you can lose it, and that very source of delight can become grief, this is what the Buddha is saying, 'Whoso hath sons grieves over sons' - sooner or later - 'Thus spake the Master in reply,/ Affections are sore grief to man/ Th' affection-free hath never grief.'

He is not saying that all you have to do is get rid of affections and then you'll have no grief. It isn't as simple as that. It is not a purely negative ideal. The language of the Pali texts is quite formally or dramatically negative, but you know, from what we've seen of the sutta so far, especially the mighty rain-cloud and Dhaniya expressing his sense of the gain he has got, we don't get a purely negative impression. So it isn't just a question of being free from affection; it's something beyond that sort of duality, or that sort of opposition. That is to say, between grief on the one hand and delight on the other. (Pause) I mean, you are able to delight in things but you don't regard them as purely delightful, that is to say, mundane things, and you don't think that you are going to get nothing but delight from them. You see quite clearly that they are transitory, so you are neither the slave of [167] the delight, nor the slave of the grief; so you don't go to a state that's merely an absence of grief, but a higher state which is beyond grief and beyond delight, and which is not just a blank, but which is, in a way, more delightful than delight itself, because, you know, the arrow of attachment has been removed. It's a 'brahma-like' state, a state of, among other things, an intensely positive emotion. It's not that you become insensible, or insensitive. So the Buddha is sort of countering Mara's arguments. I mean, Mara draws attention to one side, the Buddha draws attention to the other. But the Buddha is not in fact identifying himself with that side exclusively. You see what I mean? (Pause)

Again, this is something people say about Buddhism - 'Oh, Buddhism is cold; they teach you to get rid of your feeling, and not have any emotions.' Well, this is all nonsense again. It's only the emotions bound up with attachment and pain and suffering and grief, that one is to get rid of; but the positive emotions one is to cultivate. This is why people land themselves in such difficulties: they say Buddhism is a pessimistic religion, but none-the-less if you go to Buddhist countries you usually find that Buddhists are very happy, so this shows Buddhism is contradictory! They ought to be miserable because they believe that life is suffering! So, you know, they don't try to understand what the actual position of Buddhism is? Or what the actual teaching of Buddhism is. They accuse the Buddhists of not really practising their own teaching properly, because, according to that teaching they shouldn't be happy; so a Buddhist who smiles is being inconsistent ...

End of side two, tape five

side one, tape six

S: ... and not being a good Buddhist; so it only goes [168] to show that Buddhism can't really

be practised! This is what they say! (Pause)

Purna: This word 'affections' - 'upadhi' - Could this be said to be something like 'tanha', or is it something separate?

S: 'Tanha' could certainly be included in 'upadhi', but 'upadhi' is one of those factors which go to make up, to constitute, a basis for rebirth. If you regard 'tanha' as carrying all those factors, well then, yes, 'upadhi' is synonymous. But usually 'tanha' represents the more volitional-cum-emotional factors, 'avidya' representing the more intellectual ones. So 'upadhi' is anything which provides the basis for continued rebirth. (Pause) 'Attachments' would probably be better than 'affections', I think, here, for the translation of 'upadhi'. (Pause) - both literally and metaphorically. (Pause) So, all right, look back over the sutta as a whole - what sort of picture do you get from the 'Dhaniya Sutta'? What sort of picture of Dhaniya and the Buddha? What do you think is the basic teaching, or basic teachings, that emerge?

Achala: It seems to be very much a sort of couplet thing. A statement from a lower level, and not a completely contradictory statement, but a sort of statement from a higher insight, from another level - something like that - and eventually the lower level changes.

S: Yes. Because the second statement doesn't challenge the first statement on its own level. It does that but it does more than that! It points the way to a higher level at the same time.

Purna: 'The material is not enough'.

S: Yes. Right. (Pause) It is not that the material is to be despised - well, yes, perhaps one needs a home, needs property, needs cows, needs a wife etc., etc., but that is not the be-all-and-end-all of humans.

[169]

Vijaya: (?)

S: Yes. Right. Indeed. It is not even said that Dhaniya and Gopi go forth. They 'go for refuge', but as far as one knows, they continue to live where they were living before. But perhaps they did 'go forth' and we're not told. But it certainly isn't mentioned explicitly. It's as though, having 'gone for refuge', they can be safely left to decide for themselves whether to stay where they are or to 'go forth'. Once someone has 'gone for refuge' in that sort of way, committed themselves, virtually attained 'stream entry' apparently; well, you don't need to lay down for them that they ought to behave in this way or that way; or live in this way or that way - the momentum of their own spiritual life will sort that one out.

Priyananda: It's possibly ... well, it is an indication of what 'going for refuge' (?) for the Order. It's just essentially that movement (?) expressions (?) and in their way of life.

S: It's not exhausted by any particular expression. (Pause) Historically, we're back at a very early stage in the development of Buddhism. We're certainly within the lifetime of the Buddha. I mean, we can't imagine that the Buddha and Dhaniya actually conducted their conversation, or exchanged in verses in this sort of way, but clearly, it is the sort of thing that did happen, and was sort of written up in this sort of way by the compiler of the verses; and the verses faithfully reflect the sort of situation and way of life of that time. There's no

mention of any Sangha, notice! There's no mention of the 'Four Noble Truths', though there is a reference to 'the ending of ill' - of 'dukkha'. There's no reference to the 'Noble Eightfold Path'; there's no reference [170] to 'nirvana'. You see what I mean? It's very basic; it's existential. Simply the enlightened individual in contact with, even challenging, the unenlightened individual in the midst of what he thinks of as his security, and the effect, the result of, that confrontation, the transformation that it brings about. It's very simple, very basic, very primary. So you could say that in New Zealand (chuckling), it's a bit like Dhaniya, because Dhaniya is ... well, he is a herdsman and in New Zealand you've got all these cattle (laughter) and sheep, and produce all this milk and cheese; so you could say it is a very good parable for New Zealand; you could probably have a whole course along these lines - Buddhism coming to New Zealand is a bit like the Buddha confronting Dhaniya and 'Mara'. (Well, of course, that is probably Mr Muldoon). (Laughter) I suspect that Mr Muldoon is Catholic - if he's Irish he probably is.

Priyananda: He's Church of England.

S: Ah.

Purna: It would be unusual for a Catholic to be a New Zealand Prime Minister actually.

Udaya: They are quite a large minority group though.

Purna: But there is a strong anti-Catholic (?) with the Protestants there. Probably related to (?).

Priyananda: The Catholic Church is powerful.

S: It's a powerful lobby no doubt ...

Voices: Yes.

S: ... according to Indrajala, it is.

Purna: One of the things that always interests me when you look at any language, or any different culture, is that the words ... the same thing ... but there's a lot of different expressions usually indicate people's preoccupations; not so much in this [171] sutta, but in the 'Great Chapter' generally, the variety of terms used for 'Mara'.

S: Ah.

Purna: ('Papamant'?) 'Namuci', 'Mara', 'Kanha'.

S: Here you've just got 'Mara', the Evil One, 'papiya' ... 'papaman'. Well, here he only makes one appearance with one epithet.

Priyananda: Are you saying that it indicates preoccupation with that sort of evil figure, that the ...

Purna: I mean, like in English you get an enormous variety of terms for toilets and sexual (?),

eh, all the same word, but (?) indicate a cultural preoccupation ... (Laughter)

S: (Breaking in) Oh no it's n... ! It doesn't ... No, it doesn't necessarily represent a cultural preoccupation, but perhaps a cultural diversification, because different social groups and even religious groups have got different names for the same thing. You see what I mean? It could be in the case of 'Mara', that 'Kanha' was a somewhat different conception, and 'Namuci'; but they represented concept of the same order, and they were brought together and regarded as names of one and the same person. So it indicates complexity rather than over-preoccupation. You see what I mean? So in the same way, for instance in English, different words for the toilet - it doesn't mean that each individual has got a vast repertory of terms which he uses on various occasions, no, certain terms are confined to certain classes - (You should read up Jerry Cooper about this) - So people can tell what sort of social class you come from depending on whether you ask where the 'toilet' is, where the 'loo' is~ etc., etc. (Laughter) ... the bathroom; or whether you just say, well, could I go and wash my hands somewhere. (Pause)

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Priyananda: Another point is - it struck me as very dramatic, in this translation, as Achala was saying, it is in couplet form and it almost comes across more - like a Shakespearean form ... Is it in fact, like this in the original Pali?

S: If anything, even more so. The wordplay is obviously more noticeable, as we saw in the first verse; and of course, the translation from a literary point of view is quite good. The rhythm is reproduced, but Pali is more condensed than English, so in order to get the same amount of condensation the translators had recourse rather, to Anglo-Saxon, excluding words of Latin origin, which gives a slightly archaic flavour to the English, which we don't feel with the Pali. The Pali is more straight forward and natural, as it were, than the English. The English translation has a slightly archaic flavour like 'godly life' and 'spake'; the Pali has no such connotations. (Pause) On the whole it's a good ... I mean, for instance, Chalmer translates rather differently - let me give you a few examples just to show you how different the translations sometimes are. The Buddha says: 'Well-fashioned was the bonded raft,/ Thus spake the Master in reply/ But none's the need of raft for him/ Crossed and yon-fared, the flood-tide ridden' - and - 'I framed a well wrought raft/ Which bore me o'er the flood/ I need no further raft, so and the Heavens' will,/ The storm may burst amain.'

(N.B. There may be incorrect line separation here)

It's a little bit different, isn't it? And then - (pause) - there is one about the livelihood - (pause) Dhaniya says: 'By earnings I support myself,/ Thus spake the herdsman Dhaniya/ 'Hale sons and I together dwell,/ No rumoured wrong I hear of them'.

Then - 'No hireling's livelihood is mine, I keep myself/ [173] 'Round me are stalwart sons/ Of whom I hear nought wrong'.

It's a bit different, isn't it? (Pause) Well, take that last verse: 'As Bull asunder bursts his bonds/ Thus snake the Master in reply,/ 'As tusker rends his rotten bands/ 'I go no more to bed-of-womb.' - and the other translation - 'Breaking my bonds in twain, with strength as of a bull/ Or elephant that snaps a creeper' - (there's no mention of a creeper in the other translation) - 'Never more shall I conception know.' 'Conception' instead of 'bed-of-womb'.

Purna: It's reminiscent of the end of the 'Karaniya Metta Sutta'.

S: There's an actual difference in the translation in the last two verses, - Mara says, 'Whoso hath sons delights in sons/ Thus Mara spake, the evil One,/ The cowherd too delights in kine:/ Affections are delight to man,/ Th' affectionless hath no delight.'

And in the other translation it's 'Upon his sons is based a father's joy/ As on his herds their owner's joy.' That sort of connection; that is not how it is translated by Hare. You see the difference? The Pali is ambiguous, it could be translated either way.

Purna: (?)

S: Yes. Right. (Pause) There's a lot of alliteration in the Pali - the last verse, for instance, is:

(Pali Text)

'Soccati putahi (?) ...

... yo nurojadi.' (?)

(Pause) You could describe it as a ballad, a Buddhist ballad, and it reads very differently, therefore, from the suttas in which you get a lot of formulas, and a lot of repetitions and so on, [174] out over many, many pages. This is a completely different sort of presentation; much more pithy, much more direct, or, as I said several times, more and more existential.

Anjali: What does that mean?

S: Existential? Well, I'm using the word quite loosely, not in the strict philosophical sense, but pertaining to one's actual concrete position in life, one's actual experience, rather than anything theoretical.

Purna: Touching you in the guts - rather than in the head ...

S: Yes. Rather than tickling you in the brain! (Laughter) (Pause) So you might find this material quite useful in New Zealand.

Achala: I think it's good in that Dhaniya's hang-ups have been stated almost - not simplistically - but very directly and economically, which is in fact, quite true to life, in a way, and in another way, in ordinary life, can be quite obscure.

S: Mm. Well, Dhaniya's position is almost the same as the ordinary, self-satisfied, suburban householder, isn't it? There's no real difference at all. In two thousand five hundred years nothing has really changed! He's like a small-town stockbreeder in some out-of-the-way part of New Zealand, isn't he? He sounds just like that: with a few hundred head of cattle, maybe his family and his wife, two or three stalwart, grown-up sons, and he thinks he's got it pretty well sorted out, and all that sort of thing. You really meet people like this. Maybe city folk are a bit more complex and difficult and neurotic. (Pause)

Megha: I've heard (?) likens (?) to cows - that they (?)

S: Who likens them to cows?

Megha: Roshi Suzaki (?)... when he came back from New Zealand.

S: Perhaps he was thinking of 'The Ox-herding' pictures.

[175]

Vijaya: (Very indistinct)

S: What usually happens with young people who experiment with alternatives, not only in New Zealand but practically everywhere - they experiment for a bit and then they settle down, or they go back. They've had their few years off; they've had their few years of alternative living and they find their way back into the system; or, even the alternative life-style itself becomes part of the system, by becoming materially successful.

Ratnaketu: ... a film 'Woodstock', a 'rock' festival in America - Danavira (?) and I went - and I was amazed - where are all these hippies now?

S: Where are the hippies of yester-year? Where are they all gone? (Laughter) You used to see thousands of them in the streets of London, with their beads, and cow-bells, and their bangles, and their long hair. You don't see them now. The streets used to be full of them.

Ratnaketu: (?) an article, I think it was in 'Time' or 'Newsweek', interviewing six people who, in the sixties, had been in California, involved in a long university revolution, and most of them were sort of teachers in (?)

Purna: I know the one - it was the surviving members of 'The Chicago Seven'. One of them was a key figure in TM (?).

S: Well, you couldn't get more square than that! Could you? (Laughter)

Purna: A lot of them had gone on to more 'religious' areas.

S: You see, there are so many of the alternative things that have been so commercialized, and have sort of 'joined', well, the 'establishment', you could almost say.

Vijaya: The whole wave of energy was probably just more of a reaction, rather than something really positive.

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S: To a great extent, but I think it's also, perhaps, because they didn't find the right sort of structure. You see what I mean? In the FWBO we've got a structure which is probably quite unique, though it is based upon Buddhist principles and even Buddhist structures in their original form - I don't think there's any other Buddhist group or organization, or any spiritual movement that has got the same kind of actual structure; and I think the structure is either helpful or a hindrance; and in most cases they've just taken over old structures automatically, and sort of 'poured their new wine into old bottles', (if it was 'new wine', that wasn't always the case), and so, in the end, the sort of 'smell' of the old wine in the old bottles spoiled the new wine: the structure has determined the type of consciousness in the end. I think this is

what has happened.

Vijaya: Lack of leadership possibly.

S: Yes! Right! I mean, alternative structures haven't been developed.

Aniketa: Sometimes it seems almost as if people like to have the illusion of a change or alternative - I'm thinking of a phenomena like 'Nambassa', which is an event where people living in 'alternative' styles come together in a large rural area, and each has their 'display' and so on, and people are given the illusion of alternative life-styles, and when it comes down to it, it's not founded on anything real.

S: The alternative has become fashionable. It's nice to think you are liberated and living in a 'new age', and you're not living like the old 'fuddy-duddies' that your parents and grand-parents were. It gives you a wonderful sort of boost, a boost to your ego practically! Where, basically you are just the same - you've just got a few beads and bangles, that's all!

Purna: This absence of structure, or an effective structure to use, [176] is something I've noticed with the bhikkhus in India - a lot of them are quite well intentioned in really wanting to change things, but they have no conception of how to do it. They don't have an Order.

S: Well, the old-fashioned 'bhikkhu sangha', though degenerate, exists, but it isn't an effective structure any more, that is very clear, or even where it is working properly along those quite rigid lines, conventional lines, as it does in Thailand. It can't work in India; it is just useless. So they've only got either this very rigid structure imported from Thailand - bits and pieces of it imported - which don't really work in India. Or they've just got the 'freelance bhikkhu' roaming about, addressing a meeting here, a meeting there, and not really able to work effectively in that sort of way either. I think this is one of the things that has been appreciated about the FWBO (or about the Trailokya Bauddha Mahasangha Sahayak Gana) in India: that it is an effective organization, so to speak. It is a positive structure which works!

Purna: We have a certain power too, that I think the others lack. That power is based, I think, on the confidence of the Order on what has been happening over the last few years, which has been channelled through the individuals.

S: Yes. I think that is true.

Purna: We can attempt far more than most of the other people, because of that confidence.

S: Also one must remember, in the case of the freelance bhikkhus operating in India, (those who are based on Ceylon or based on Thailand), they don't have much confidence in what's behind them, because in Ceylon or in Thailand to a great extent, it's on the defensive and on the decline in the race of Western values, modern Western material values, that they've not really been able to cope [178] with, and that have been making inroads into them for quite a number of years now. (Pause) In a way, it's quite pathetic how little bhikkhus from Buddhist countries, and even organizations based on Buddhist countries, have been able to do in India, especially among the ex-untouchables. They've really done nothing! Some have tried in certain ways - this 'sramanera' training that Lokamitra spoke about - they've put several hundred young men in robes, shaved their heads and got them to not take food after midday

for three weeks, and then sent them back again into ordinary life, and that's about all they've been able to do.

Purna: ... taught them a bit of Pali ...

S: Yes. Taught them a bit of Pali. So it was better than nothing certainly, but it has only served to whet their appetites and then frustrate them. It didn't lead to anything except the satisfaction of being 'sramaneras' for two or three weeks.

Anjali: Did they teach them to meditate?

Purna: Oh no! Bhikkhus don't meditate!

S: It would (?) regarded as presumptuous for 'sramaneras' to meditate, what to speak of 'upasakas', and they don't have any business with anything like that! (Laughter)

Purna: I think people often have a romantic picture of bhikkhus in India - most of them probably don't meditate.

S: You might just as well imagine the average Church of England clergyman spending all his time in church praying, that's about the last thing he ever does. I remember, as I've mentioned in my memoirs, I was regarded by the bhikkhus I met in my earliest days as being eccentric almost, because I meditated.

Purna: Mm. Sri Lanka is the heart of Theravada (?) meditation as a tradition has [179] died out until quite recently.

Anjali: (?)

S: That is more or less the Theravada view.

Anjali: (?)

S: Well, yes, the bhikkhus are regarded as sort of 'honorary' meditators. You see what I mean? I remember in this connection, in my very early days in London, when I was still at the Hampstead Buddhist Vihara, there was a very stout, worldly, academic bhikkhu who was over here taking a Ph.D., and he stayed with me at Hampstead Vihara for some time, and he used to ... he was completely academic, he had no interest in Buddhism as such, or in meditation; he was a fat little man and he used to really like sitting at the table with a few friends - he was quite a jolly chap - puffing away at his cigar. And one day (chuckling) we were talking about meditation, and I was trying to make the point ... I think I was talking about meditation classes. He seemed to think they were quite unnecessary, and you didn't need to learn to meditate, and he said to me at one point in the conversation, 'Sangharakshita, we bhikkhus, we are always meditating.' Puff! Puff! (Laughter) And that seemed that the average lay person takes it that all bhikkhus are always in a state of meditation any way - 'They hardly need to meditate' kind of thing. It's sort of good manners to assume a bhikkhu is always meditating. I even know bhikkhus not wanting to be disturbed - someone knocks on the door, they send someone to say, 'Please don't come now, he's meditating.' It's just an idiom. It doesn't mean he's actually meditating, it means he doesn't want to be disturbed. He

doesn't want to meet that person.

Purna: I think there's a more than a good mannered thing - there's a whole sort of thing with bhikkhus ...

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S: Yes! It's become a whole organized hypocrisy, as I stated in the 'Survey'.

Purna: I think people use the mystique of robes, because it removes them from that sort of worldly ...

S: ... from responsibility, yes!

Purna: I've noticed this, even in New Zealand, with Ham Wol, that people's attitudes towards him sometimes - also some of the mitras - that he's 'magically' more spiritual because he's got robes on.

S: Yes. It is a 'magical' thing in a way. Yes!

Priyananda: What it does is: it's said that you, the monk, can take responsibility for all the work of development, the 'higher evolution', and I, the lay person, can get on with my lay life - I can't really do that, you can!

S: Yes!

Priyananda: You get that in a small way in New Zealand too, and you get it in a large way in India.

S: That's one of the things that, at least some of the ex-untouchables (dislike [just like?] about us, that we say that they can 'get on with it' even though they are living at home, even though they've wives and children and jobs, they can still 'get on with it'. And that is a message of optimism for them, for they can't give up their lives and children, they can't go off to Thailand and study Pali and Abhidharma, they've got to do it wherever they are, without giving up (?) responsibility. So, you know, we've provided them with a way of committing themselves while remaining within that framework, or at least just modifying it, and not as a sort of compromise either. I mean, they are more truly Buddhists than the vast majority of the bhikkhus that they meet.

Priyananda: In connection with this, Bhante, I was wanting to [181] ask you - something has come up for me within the last year - the whole ... well, just the word 'upasaka' - I mean, it seems, very, very recently, it seems it's become less and less valid to use it as a title.

S: Yes. Right. This is very true. Well, this question has been raised by two people recently, one of the Indian order members has raised it, and interestingly enough, Piyasilo, the Malaysian bhikkhu who's going to be joining us, He's raised it. And they both suggested the same alternative, which Lokamitra and I had also discussed at one stage, which is 'dhammacari' - 'dhammacari' meaning 'one who is practising the 'dhammacarya'. So this is something that we will have to think about: that whether one shouldn't say 'dhammacari', which in India, would be perfectly acceptable and intelligible, rather than 'upasaka'. But it

would be quite careful thought, because actually, it would be quite an important development, and it would have repercussions about, you know, as regards 'other', inverted commas, Buddhist organizations.

Achala: Would it be going outside the sort of 'official' [traditional?] framework of 'upasakas', 'sramaneras'?

S: It would be going outside that, but it would be going outside it because it would be going back historically to a period before that differentiation assumed its present rigid form.

Voices: (breaking in) (content blurred)

S: ... because the word 'dhammacari' comes in the 'Dhammapada'. It occurs here and there in the Buddhist scriptures, but it's never become sort of formalized, in the way that 'bhikkhu' has become formalized, 'Bhikkhu' occurs in a very loose sense in the early Pali literature. There's a verse in the 'Dhammapada', where the Buddha equates the 'samana', the 'brahmana', and the 'bhikkhu', as though you could use any word. It really doesn't matter at all, it's [182] much the same thing, but later on, you know, these words were used in a narrower, more rigid sort of way. So 'dhammacari' never became used in a very technical sort of way, so it reflects the fluidity of early Buddhism; so, from that point of view, it would be very good. It is a traditional word; it is a word that occurs in the scriptures, in the earliest scriptures. So it suggests commitment to the 'Dharma' without defining lifestyle. You see what I mean? This is what it is: where the word 'bhikkhu' definitely defines lifestyle, 'upasaka' does, but 'dhammacari' doesn't. It expresses commitment without defining lifestyle.

Purna: You mentioned that other Buddhist groups ...

S: Well, you know, now, we say we're 'upasakas', so even though they're a bit uneasy about people who are upasakas meditating, etc., etc., at least from their point of view you don't claim to be anything more than 'upasakas', so they can pat you on the head and fit you in - 'These are 'upasakas' who are good, nice Buddhists.' (Laughter) But they can lump you with what they think of as 'upasakas', even though you do seem, strangely, to take it a bit more seriously than 'real' upasakas' do - 'born Buddhists' do! But if you say 'Well, I'm a dhammacari, that means they have to think. But since 'dhammacari' is based on the scriptures it wouldn't mean that you had broken away at all. No. It wouldn't be taken in that way. It would be like 'anagarika' - 'anagarika' has been revived quite recently, mainly because of Anagarika Dhammapala. The word 'anagarika' appears in the Pali texts, in the 'Dhammapada', but it didn't assume a sort of specialized meaning, though it does suggest lifestyle - one has gone forth from the home-life, but without being a bhikkhu in the highly technical, organized sense, which the word later assumed. You see what I mean? So, since the Buddhist world generally, has adjusted [183] to 'anagarika', meaning a 'free-lance bhikkhu', it will very likely adjust to 'dhammacari' as a free-lance 'upasaka'; but then it would have to become aware that there really wasn't much difference. You see what I mean? And I hope eventually, if we did take this step, that people would realize it meant, perhaps in their terms, 'a really committed Buddhist', regardless of lifestyle.

Anjali: What would be the feminine?

S: 'Dhammacarini'. But Piyasilo said that probably, 'dhammacari' would be used for both, but

in strict grammar you should say 'dhammacarini', as you say 'brahmacari' and 'brahmacarini'.

Udaya: Do you think in the West, in places like England and New Zealand (?) as the Order? First of all, I feel, in a sense, there is not really a need - the fact that someone uses their Order name, and has received ordination, is enough - is a member of the Order, that would be sufficient.

S: What would be sufficient?

Udaya: Well, other than having to call them 'upasaka' or 'dhammacari', or anything ...

S: Yes. Yeh.

Udaya: In India ...

S: Yeh. Right.

Udaya: ... I can see that is a 'skilful means', being a 'dhammacari' or 'anagarika' ...

S: Well, the fact that you've got a Sanskrit name means that - you've got ordination - yes, that's true. Yeh.

Udaya: And, well, you're not a freelance-Sanskrit-name-Buddhist either, you're actually a member of the Western Buddhist Order.

S: Mmm.

Purna: But perhaps socially, things may begin to change, I'm thinking of Srimala's children, Sundari and Shanti, they've got Sanskrit [184] names, but they're not committed Buddhists.

S: Yes. They're not Buddhist names.

Purna: But you may progressively see the use of Sanskrit names within the Friends' context.

Ratnaketu: Islamic names, or even names used by 'Rajneesh'.

S: Yes. They've all got Sanskrit names, though they don't use them in the way we do, I think, usually.

Purna: Also officials insist on giving two names - it seems - Upasaka so-and-so, or Dhammacari something, and you just (get them put?) as initials.

Udaya: They can be seen as a technicality, but I'm not very keen on them being used at all, at Centres. I feel that sort of thing should be played down - you can play it down - I think, you know, you say, 'And then we'll have a talk by Priyananda', or something like that, rather than giving ... usually that's enough for people anyway, to be going on with in a Buddhist context.

Achala: Well other situations ... there is an interface with other Buddhist groups.

Udaya: Yeh. Well maybe you can pull them out of the closet for situations like that, but normally it should suffice ...

S: Pull it out of the shrine room cupboard, you mean. (Laughter)

Udaya: Normally it suffices to say, 'These classes are under the auspices of the Western Buddhist Order - Priyananda and Megha - and other members of the Order can be identified by wearing white kesas' - and usually that is quite enough.

S: I think you will find that it adjusts itself. In England, usually people don't refer to Upasaka so-and-so, or Upasika so-and-so, they just say 'Buddhadasa' or 'Subhuti', or whoever it happens to be.

Purna: They say there are Order Members collected around rather than Upasaka so-and-so.

[185]

S: Yes, they do; otherwise they would have to say 'upasakas' and 'upasikas'. They usually say 'Order members', (Pause)

Vijaya: I think that's rude, actually, in Oriental circles, to use the straight language of (?)

S: Ah! Yes and no! Because in the Pali scriptures you find just names used. You find lay people saying to Ananda, 'Ananda, would you mind speaking to the Buddha for me?' You don't find ... (bhikkhus among themselves very often use polite forms) but the laity more often than not, address the bhikkhus just by their names, just as you find in Ancient Greece in Plato's Dialogues, you find the young men saying, 'Hello Socrates', just like that, even though Socrates is so senior and very wise; they don't say 'Mr Socrates', or 'Reverend Socrates', just 'Socrates'.

Purna: Or even a Bhante. (Laughter)

S: No. Nothing like that.

Vijaya: (?)

S: Yes. This is generally considered among many peoples, the Tibetan certainly - I think the Burmese and Thais also - not polite to use the personal name. You use the title or the social position in society or the ecclesiastical organization. In Germany, in the old days, I don't know about now, everybody was referred to by his title, and nearly everyone had a title or position or job, and his wife was referred to in that way. For instance, if you were a postmaster, a letter would always be addressed to 'Mr Postmaster so-and-so, and your wife would be 'Mrs Postmaster So-and-so'. The same as army titles - it was 'Mrs General So-and-so'. In other words the person is completely identified ...

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side two, tape six

... with their position in society, their place in the [186] in the institution. So, even though that

is reflected in Buddhist countries, and you always say 'Venerable Abbot', you don't say, oh, 'Lobsang', oh, you just say 'the Venerable Abbot'; one has to ask oneself even though that has become the custom in Buddhist countries, is it really in accordance with Buddhist tradition, or Buddhist teaching. You don't find it in the Pali scriptures. You see what I mean? Or in a Sanskrit text, come to that! Yes, there is some respect shown to the Buddha, and his disciples always say, 'Bhante', or 'Bhagavan', but among themselves it seems much more free and easy. Younger bhikkhus say 'Bhante' to older bhikkhus, or they say ' (?) ', and older bhikkhus say to younger bhikkhus. According to some accounts the Buddha directed that to be done just before the 'Parinirvana'; but at least during his lifetime, there were no such formalities or practices, you could say, observed; and lay people addressed the monks simply by their name, usually. (Pause) So, I think sometimes, one has to be quite clear as to what is 'traditional' and what is not traditional - there is 'tradition' and 'tradition'! It's a bit like, you see - to give a parallel - you might say it's traditional in the Christian Church that bishops, on certain occasions, should wear beautiful embroidered copes, beautifully embroidered, bejewelled mitres, and their croziers, and the bishops are the descendants of the Apostles, so you might assume that this tradition goes right back to the Apostles, and that the Apostles went around in these embroidered copes, and carrying croziers; and they are depicted like that in art very often, when actually, of course, they didn't. You see what I mean? So, yes, it's traditional for bishops in the Christian Churches to wear copes - it may go back well over a thousand years, but you can go back to an even earlier tradition, when there was no such thing. So something can be very [187] traditional, and have been traditional for hundreds of years without really being in accordance with what appears to be the original teaching.

Purna: Or even from a (?). I was just thinking of the Roman Catholic Cardinals - the uniform is apparently based on the Roman Senatorium.

S: Yes. The Catholic Church's priestly dress usually is based on senatorial dress in the second, third, and fourth Centuries. The development can be clearly traced - it's from them! Just like in England, the dress of judges and similar officials - it's sort of eighteenth-century court dress - the breaches and the powdered wig that barristers and judges still wear, it's just old-fashioned dress. So it's got this sort of halo of antiquity about it, and venerableness and age!

: (?)

S: Well not in the case of judges and barristers, quite. (Pause) So one mustn't put too much emphasis on 'tradition', in the sense of what is merely old, because as I've said in the 'Survey' some errors have got very ancient history. I mean, in some of the literature put out by Tibetans which make a great point of such-and-such Rimpoche being the seventh or eighth of his line - so what! If it comes to the number you are in a line, well, what about our Archbishop of Canterbury? He's the one-hundredth-and-second! I mean the one that's just been enthroned - the one-hundredth-and-second Archbishop of Canterbury. Well, that's far more interesting than a mere seventh or eighth incarnate lama! So if you're going to be impressed by that sort of thing, well, there's plenty of it in orthodox Christianity.

: It means nothing!

S: It means nothing! As for the Popes, the present one is the [188] three-hundredth and something! (Chuckling) So that's better than the Zen schools. I don't think they claim to go

more than a hundred generations back - to Shakyamuni - the hundredth in the line of succession. Well, there are so many religious corporations with this sort of tradition, so it really doesn't mean very much!

Ratnaketu: It gives it authority.

S: It reinforces authority! This is all it really is; this is what it basically is! You have to listen to what he says, because he's the umpteenth this, that or the other. (Pause) Anyway, such attitudes, no doubt, carry less weight in a comparatively new country like New Zealand, so that's one of your advantages there, I think. People are not quite so much impressed by tradition and antiquity as they are in the West, because you don't really have any of it. You've hardly got a building over 150 year's old. In some ways that's a great advantage. Somehow I like that about New Zealand - that everywhere you go you don't find buildings hundreds of year's old which have to be preserved, even though they are in ruins, just because they are hundreds of years old.

Ratnaketu: In England they preserve old railway stations - totally useless! (Laughter)

S: Yes! Old trains! It's just old industrial age junk! What do you want to keep it for?

Udaya: It's a bit like what you were saying about TV people being well-known for being well-known!

S: Yes, right. But this is very strong in people in England, this reverence for age and antiquity. It's very strong indeed. (Pause)

I mean in so many of these antique shops, what do you see? You just see old junk! If it's old, junk becomes an antique. Sometimes they use the term 'bye-gones'. Well, sometimes, things are twenty - thirty years old, but they're making them into antiques as fast [189] as they can. You see some old sort of enamelled jug - \$8, or something like that, while it is thirty years old and chipped, it's sort of antique now - it's ridiculous! No aesthetic value, it's merely old. It's something your grandmother might have used. (Laughter)

Anjali: (?)

S: Yes.

Aniketa: And the feeling of something that's well grounded, and well-established and will go on for ever and ever.

S: Yes. Right,

Vijaya: The willow-patterned plate in everyone's household ...

Ratnaketu: If (?) some enamel jugs we'd be all right.

Vijaya: For some people that represented an age, an epoch ...

S: It represented an age when everything was secure and happy and contented. There was law

and order.

Vipula: So they thought!

S: So they thought. Well, everything Victorian is having a tremendous vogue now in Britain. Did you know that? The books on Victorian literature, Victorian painters, Victorian writers - they are all coming back, because people are feeling a bit nostalgic for the solidity of the Victorian age; the apparent security, at least for the upper and middle classes. (Pause)

So, as I said, you don't have much of that sort of thing in New Zealand. You find ... I was, in a way, quite amused on the retreat - I went for a walk and found that house, or vicarage, or whatever, 1860 something or other. Well, that's ancient history in New Zealand, isn't it? The Maori Wars - it commemorated something to do with the Maori Wars of 1862; where, if you go down the road here, and you can look around Battle Abbey - well, England is full of these sort of places - 1066, nearly a thousand years ago. England is littered with history and ruins and stuff.

[190]

Ratnaketu: Statues in parks everywhere ...

S: Anyway let's end on that note, shall we? So, you can have a sort of slogan, saying, 'Buddhism is a young religion for a young country.' (Laughter)

(Concluding conversation re transcription of NZ seminars and Question and Answer sessions.)

THE END

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