

## THE SEVENFOLD PUJA SEMINAR

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Typed by Sue lawson

S: All right, this morning then we come on to the Sevenfold Puja. We are going to go through the verses of the sevenfold puja one by one. I take it everyone knows where these verses come from, the actual verses themselves? Where do they come from, this particular version?

A Voice: The Bodhicaryavatara.

S: Yes, they come from the Bodhicaryavatara and how did we come to have them in this particular form, this particular selection? Does anyone know?

Lokamitra: You and Mrs. Bennett wasn't it .. translated it .. or composed it.

S: That's right, yes ... well ... no, not quite. At present there is in print only one complete English translation of the Bodhicaryavatara and this is of course the one by Marian L. Matics which is of course the one we studied on the B.A. seminar, but there was another English translation made sometime before this but never printed in full. That was made by a friend of mine in London, called Mrs. A. A. T. Bennett, Adrian Bennett, with whom I was in correspond~ce while I was in India. She made the translation at that time, so this was quite a few years ago, this was before the F.W.B.O. was started, I wanted to make a version of the sevenfold puja which I had described in 'The Survey' and knowing that the B.A. was used for this purpose in Tibet and wanting to have just a very short, simple sevenfold puja which I was trying to introduce at the Hampstead Budhist Vihara, I made this salection ... that is to say taking the framework of the sevenfold puja, then taking from Chapter 2 of the Bodhicaryavatara, and from Chapter 3, two or three verses under each of these headings, that is to say the puja, the vandana and so on, and in this way we arrive at our present sevenfold puja, do you get the idea? The sevenfold puja itself being a sequence of seven different, one could say, moods .... devotional moods, very broadly speaking, each of which is illustrated by a few verses from those two chapters of the

Bodhicaryavatara. You could make up your sevenfold puja by selecting, of course, verses

from other texts. In fact I have done this but I haven't yet given it a final shape and published it. I've made a selection of verses from the 'Sutra of Golden light' arranged under these same headings so that we have a slightly different version for perhaps use on other, alternative, perhaps special occasions. Or perhaps it can be interwoven with the Bodhicaryavatara sevenfold puja, we shall have to see about that. Needless to say, in the case of the verses selected from the 'Sutra of Golden light', the section to do with confession is a rather ample one ...

...(Laughter)

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S: (cont.) so perhaps it could be used more in connection with that particular observance, or that particular item. So, since most of you I expect do possess a copy of 'Entering the Path of Enlightenment' as Matics translation of the B.A. is called, I've correlated the verses of Mrs. Bennetts translation with the corresponding verses of Matics translation and as it is sometimes not very easy to tell, because the language of the two translations is rather different ... I can give you the numbers of the verses in Matics translation so that you can compare for yourselves, and in that way, perhaps, arrive at an understanding of the meaning of each verse. Her translation I must say; these last few days I've been going through both of them; is very much better ... in the sense that it certainly, certainly conveys the spirit of Shantideva much better. It may be in some cases Matics translation makes the meaning a little clearer in certain respects but on the whole, her translation is definitely preferable.~ I think we find it quite difficult to use Matic's translation in the course of the Puja and recite it together ... it just doesn't flow very well ... her~a is not much better, not only as regards the spirit of the text, but the English language itself, its quite a bit more poetic and rythmical, so I'm quite glad we stick to her translation. A Voice: Where do the seven headings come from?

S: This I've explained in 'The Survey' in Chapter Four - 'The Bodhisattva Ideal', it is essentially a sort of lead up to the arising of the Bodhicitta and incorporating all the main Buddhist observances, in a sort of progressive sequence, and in that Chapter of 'The Survey' I've described how the whole thing is gradually built up. So you should conanlt that whole chapter as sort of background material. There of course I've spoken of a six-fold puja because puja and vandana are sometimes joined together as one, but later I thought it better to separate them, that there was a difference between them that merited that separation.

So, what I suggest you do, as I shall be refering to the verses of the B.A~, what I suggest you do - as in Matic' 5 translation - what I suggest you do is to mark against each verse before we begin the number of the verse in Matic' 5 translation so that later on at your leisure you can look up and compare. If we do that in the course of the study that might be a bit distracting. So let us start off by doing that. Most of the verses come from Chapter Two of the B0A.; Chapter Two being the confession of evil or papa desana. So for our first verse, the first verse of the seven-fold puja that is to say, "With Mandarava, blue lotus and jasmine" down to "so worthy of veneration" this is verse 15 of Chapter Two - against that - 2:15 you get the itea? So instead of 1'With Mandarava, blue lotus and jasmine" Matics has "With the blossoms of the coral tree, the blue lotus, jasmine and the like" which you can see is slightly different. (Laughter) .. wouldn't be very easy to

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S: (cont.) recite "with the blossoms of the coral tree, the blue lotus, jasmine and the like" - (Laughter) - doesn't so'td quite so good as "With mandarava, blue lotus and jasminet' so that

then, the next verse "I envelop# them in clouds of incense" down to "and pleasing kind5of liquids to drink" this is the next verse, verse 16. And then, ~-I offer them lamps encrusted with jewels" the last verse of the puja, that is verse 17. So here's a block of verses 15, 16 and 17, taken from Chapter Two of the ~.A. Then we come onto the vandana. The first verse here is "As many atoms as there are" down to " and the excellan~t community". This is verse 24 of that same chapter. And then the next verse, "I pay homage to all the shr~n~~~~ down to "arid those to whom respectful salutation is due". The typist has divided those lines, you notice? but that is incorrect, there should not be any gap there, it is all one verse, yes? That is verse 25 of that Chapter Two. And then we come on to the sarana-gamana, the Going for Refuge, which begins "This very day" that' S verse 48 of that same Chapter Two and the next one beginning "wholeheartedly also I take my r~f~~~~ that's verse 49. Then for the Confession of Faults (pause) the first two verses are verses 64 and 65. Sixtyfour beginning "The evil which I have heaped up" and 65 beginning "standing before them" (pause) and then the next one is 66, these are the last verses of that Chapter Two. Then the remaining verses, the punyanum.dan~ come from Chapter Three. These are the first three verses of Chapter Three - Grasping the Thought of Enlightenment. So Chapter Three, verse one, verse two, verse three. Verse 1 beginning "I rejoice with delight" verse 2 beginning ~-I rejoice in the release of beings" and verse 3 beginning "I rejoice in the arising of the will to enlightenment" is that clear? and then the Entreaty and Supplication, the first verse there is verse 4 of that same Chapter Three and the next ~-erse is verse 5. (pause)

The next verses come from Chapter Three. Seven is the parinamana, the Transference of Merit and Self Surrender. The typist here has not divided or separated the verses for some reason or other. There are one, two, three, four verses, so please just separate those. So the first verse "May the merit gained in my acting thus go to the alieviation of the suffering of all beings," this is Chapter Three verse 6 of the B.A. Then the next verse beginning "My personality throughout my existances" is verse 10. The next verse beginning "just as the earth and other elements" is verse 20, and then lastly, the verse beginning "So may I become," that is verse 21. So ... 6, 10, 20 21 ... divide those verses up as the typist should have done. A Voice: It changes the sense of the way we recite it doesn't it? If 21 begins "so may I become'1 we usually treat that as following on from .....

A Voice: Well it does in consecutive verses.

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S: Yes, the sense continues from one verse to the next ... but they are separate verses nonetheless.

Airight, so anyone who wants to study the verses of the seven-fold puja more

carefully, with the help of these numbers, can not only go through the text of Mrs. Bennett's translation but also consult the corresponding verses of Matic's, you might otherwise find it a little difficult to find. (pause)

If anyone wants to make especially close study you will find another version still in Barnet's "The Path of light" which is an incomplete translation of the B.A., in the "Wisdom of the East" series, but that will be a scholarly amusement for those so inclined to that.

So what we'll do is read the verses of the seven-fold puja, one by one, around the circle, one person reading one verse, then discuss in the light of all of the verses puja in general and then examine each verse in particular, so could we start please.

A Voice: "With manadarava, blue lotus and jasmine, with all flowers pleasing and fragrant, and with garlands skillfully woven, I pay honour to the Princes of the Sages, so worthy of veneration." (pause)

"I envelope them in clouds of incense, sweet and penetrating. I make them offerings of food, hard and soft, and pleasing kinds of liquids to drink." (pause)

"I offer them lamps encrusted with jewels, festooned with golden lotus. On the pavings sprinkled with perfume, I scatter handfuls of beautiful flowers."

S: Just let me read what Matic's says to perhaps give you a fuller idea of the meaning. "With the blossoms of the coral tree, the blue lotus, Jasmine and the like; with all perfumed and delightful flowers I praise the most praiseworthy best of sages with beautifully formed garlands. I envelope them with clouds of incense, delighting the mind with dense, expanding aromas, I offer to them an offering of various moist and dry foods and libations. I offer then jewel lamps placed in rows on golden lotuses and on mosaic pavements anointed with perfume I scatter many pleasing flowers."

Alright, so what is the general impression which you get from these verses? I mean, supposing we knew nothing about Buddhism, nothing about the Dharma, nothing about Buddhist devotional practices, nothing about the seven-fold puja. Supposing you've just heard these verses, and if, lets assume, you were an open minded, receptive sort of person, spiritually sensitive, what sort of impression do you think you

would get? What would they convey to you?

A Voice: It sort of sets the scene for something.

S: It sets the scene for something. In what sort of way does it set the scene? or what is that scene do you think?

Sagaramati: Is it a scene of beauty?

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S: Beauty. Yes, that is quite important. If this comes across then in a way that's the most important point, yes? It is beauty. And what kind of beauty?

Sagaramati: It's spiritual.

S: It's spiritual beauty ....? I mean mundane things, sensuous things are mentioned, flowers, lamps, jewels but the overall impression is surely one on spiritual beauty. So if spiritual beauty is, you know, is the ~ct as it were what is the corresponding subjective feeling?

A Voice: Devotion.

S: Devotion or faith and devotion. So this is how you set the scene, this is the way in which you set the scene, this is what you set the scene for .... you set the scene for devotion by creating this rather refined spiritual beauty, so therefore it becomes important that the words of the puja and everything connected with the puja should convey that sort of impression, that sort of mood, that sort of emotion, that sort of atmosphere. So what does this suggest about say, the shrine room, where normally the puja ta)ws place?

A Voice: It should always be beautiful.

S: It should always be beautiful. So what does that suggest?

A Voice: There should always be some sort of contact .... with spiritual beauty . S: ... It also means that, you know, it is necessary to keep the shrine like that, to create a beautiful shrine room, a beautiful shrine and that means, you know, almost down to the last details . What is the most important, the sort of focal point of the shrine?

Lo)camitra: The Image.

S: The image. So it is quite important to select or to choose an image which doesn't merely sort of remind you of the Buddha .... because after all, you know it's the Buddha ... but conveys something of the Buddha nature, as it were, enlightenment by its sheer artistic beauty. I must say, in the past, I was personally quite offended by some really ugly Buddha images that I've seen, and it's not enough just to have a Buddha image that's there just as a sort of means of sparking off some mechanical devotional reflex, that just isn't good enough. It must be a genuine work of art, a genuine thing of beauty, spiritual beauty, a more refined beauty and all the accessories likewise, so this is why, throughout the Buddhist world ... quite a ... I mean ... great importance is attached to the shrine, the shrine room, first of all clean, light, bright, beautiful, and in the midst of that the Buddha image with flowers, lamps .... and so on ... I remember in this connection a little, you know ... not exactly an incident, but maybe a series of incidents, from my own experience in connection with Sarnath.

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S: (cont.) You all know that Sarnath is the place where the Buddha gave his first teaching to his first 5 disciples and Sarnath is 7 or 8 miles out of Benares, Benares of course, being the chief Hindu holy place. And in Benares there are all sorts of Hindu temples to all sorts of Hindu gods, especially Shiva, and Kali (or Thirga) and many Hindu pilgrims come, especially they come to Benares to perform the after-death ceremonies of their relations ... So, many of them after finishing their tour of Benares come to Sarnath to visit the Buddhist temples there and they always used to mention the very different impression that they got from a Buddhist temple from what they got from the Hindu temple, in Benares and they always said the same thing. The Hindu temples were first of all dirty, they were dark, they were untidy, they were noisy and when they came out of Benares, came to Sarnath they found first of all these beautiful park-like prospects, these beautiful rather new Buddhist temples, and inside, everything clean. This was the first thing that struck them. No cow-dung underfoot, you know, in the shrine. No dirty newspapers lying here and there. No mounds of flowers that had been thrown away after offering. No oils spilt here and there, no coconuts lying all over

the place because, you know, that is part of Hindu worship to crack a coconut and offer it, and no plantain leaves lying here and there to say nothing of course of beggars, no cows wandering around and so on. Everything clean to begin with, everything quiet, everything beautiful ... and they were really impressed by this, without anything being said about Buddhism the sheer contrast between the Hindu temple and the Buddhist shrine struck them so forcibly even though they were Hindus and had only come perhaps out of curiosity or just for a picnic, Sarnath being a popular sort of picnic place ... as well as a place of pilgrimage.

So the beauty of the shrine as well as the cleanliness of the shrine, the spiritual beauty of the shrine is very important as setting the scene for the Puja. So this should never be forgotten and it is therefore only natural that the words of the puja, the first item of the seven-fold puja should suggest or should convey that feeling, that mood of spiritual beauty, a more refined kind of beauty, because if you feel beauty, in that sort of way, if you feel spiritual beauty or if you become aware of spiritual beauty in front of you well, you will just feel uplifted, you will feel devotional (pause)

So in the first section of the seven-fold puja the note that is struck one might say, the mood that is conveyed is of, sort of spiritual delight aroused by or awoken by the sight of spiritual beauty or the experience of spiritual beauty. You feel in a calm, happy, delighted sort of state. It's not exactly devotion in the sort of strong, powerful, ardent sense, it's a bit lighter, a bit more ethereal than that perhaps to begin with, that comes later, but this is the key-stone of the first stage,

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S; (cont.) that when you enter the shrine, when you see the image, when you see the flowers, when you see the lamps burning you just think or you feel 'oh how beautiful' ... 'how spiritually beautiful' ... you feel uplifted, you feel refined. So this is very important, but you can't feel this if the shrine is dark or it is untidy or if it is dirty or if not much care, not much trouble has been taken with the place or if people seem a bit dull, a bit indifferent, a bit friendly unfriendly rather ... There was one quite interesting thing which we noticed in New Zealand which was quite interesting which we hadn't observed in England. We noticed that the New Zealand Order Members and Friends dressed up for pujas, by which I mean they didn't only decorate the shrine ... they practically decorated themselves and, you know, of course it was easier in New Zealand, the climate being different but most of them had a special dress that they kept for the pujas, especially festival occasions. At least the white sort of Upasaka dress with the white lungi, the long white shirt but some were not even satisfied with that, some of the younger ones, I remember Udaya in particular, appearing in a long purple kaftan-like garment (laughter) but this added to the general sort of festive air and it was quite beautiful, quite attractive all these bright, beautiful, at least pretty colours. So it did

convey something of that sort of spirit, that is a joyous, sort of festive, beautiful occasion, for which people had dressed up. It wasn't like Mrs. Smith and Mrs. Brown wearing their best hats to church (laughter) you know it didn't convey that sort of thing, it did convey that sort of happy, festive, yes, somewhat devotional kind of atmosphere. So even these things must not be despised, because if you turn up in the shrine, for the puja and the room is beautifully kept, beautifully decorated, the shrine, the altar~, beautifully decorated .. if you're there looking all dirty and scruffy it doesn't really add to (laughter) .. you know the beauty or the devotional atmosphere of the occasion. So one should perhaps bear this in mind too, you know, don't leave oneself out, you also are part of the decorations as it were, so, you~know, just make sure you do look a bit decorative. (pause) (laughter)

In the way you dress at least Bhikshus automatically look decorative because they're in ~autiful yellows and oranges and saffrons ... well Anagarikas too, some (laughter). So usually on Buddhist occasions in south-east Asia you've got the Bhikshus of course in their yellows and oranges and saffrons, the lay men more often than not in white and the ladies in all sorts of beautiful sarees and garments of that kind, in beautiful bright colours. So it is very colourful. I encourage the ladies in the F.W.B.O~ to try to look like offering goddesses and some of them sometimes do on these occasions (laughter). But you get the general idea? about the puja and the sort of mood it's meant to convey, the sort of atmosphere it's meant to create. Alright then, so let's go through the verses individually.

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S: No, we have read them ... I'm just going to go through them.

"With mandarava, blue lotus and jasmine" for some reason or other, Matics renders it "blossoms of the coral tree" ... I'm not quite sure ... I don't have a copy of the Sanskrit text here unfortunately, but as far as I can remember it definitely is 'mandarava' and mandarava, a flower which occurs in various sut~ras, is usually explained as a sort of heavenly flower, it doesn't really grow on earth, its enormous, its as big as a cart wheel and it's bright golden in colour and usually it comes floating down from the heavens when the Buddha happens to give a particularly good discourse (laughter). So when you say 'mandarava' you know, right at the beginning, at once you know you create a sort of archetypal atmosphere, it's not even just earthly flowers, it's a heavenly flower that you're offering, a mandarava, a sort of celestial marigold (laughter) of gigantic size. And then, not content with that, blue lotuses and jasmine. I believe blue lotuses have a special kind of fragrance and jasmine certainly has.

"With all flowers pleasing and fragrant, and with garlands, skillfully woven I pay honour to the Princes of the sages so worthy of veneration."

So ~rst of all you offer flowers, well there are all sorts of things which one can also offer. Perhaps we ought to go into this a little bit, because the offerings which are mentioned here are only ... represent only a selection. I must say I've rather curtailed the offering in a way because Shantideva mentions so many other offerings. He mentions ... let's see ... flowers,

fruits, herbs, jewels, waters, mountains of jewels, forest-places, vines, trees, fragrant incenses, wish-fulfilling trees, trees of jewels, lakes adorned with lotuses, and the endlessly fascinating cry of wild geese, harvests, crops of grain ... He offers all these things, and then he offers ... lets see ... then he prepares a bath for the Buddhas and their sons, songs, many different water-jars encrusted with jewels, filled with flowers, fragrant waters, garments, ornaments - and here he adorns all of them with those, so lots and lots of things are given, its all rather lavish but I've trimmed it down, just a little bit, so as not to confuse the English devotee, the English Buddhist, with too many offerings, and I've more or less cut it down to the flowers and the incenses and the lamps. So why do you think this is apart from the general 5imp~ficatj~n0?

A Voice: Its the three things we have on the shrine.

S; Yes ... not only that~ you know,because one can keep other things on the shrine, but these seem to be the three main offerings from earliest days. You find these in all forms of Buddhism, these three offerings - flowers, incense and light or flowers light and incense, all the others seem to have been added later on. ~lowers seem to have the most common offering or I mean, the most characteristic offering. Why do you think this is? I mean clearly it is easy in a country like India with an abundance of things like lotuses, jasmine and flowering shrubs, it5 very easy just to gather these and offer them but apart from that fact, why do you think the offering of flowers you know, that flowers is the offering par excelJ~tice.

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A Voice: Their alive .

S: Their so beautiful ... No. I think its mainly the fact that they are so beautiful, and, you know, you really do notice, (we don't have it so much) perhaps we don't notice it here in England - perhaps we do on certain occasions - but in the East you really do notice it because the flowers in India are really so beautiful, the lotus flowers, the jasmine, the Tudor roses, not only beautiful but a very sweet scent, so a quite extraordinary atmosphere can be created by all these massed flower offerings, all very fragrant, all very sweet and there is this very, very strong impression of ... sense of ... beauty, of a very, very pure nature. So I think this is the main reason.

So Shantideva mentions the mandarava, the wonderful, heavenly flowers, the blue lotus, the jasmine ... "and all flowers pleasing1, (that is to the eye) 'and fragrant'

(pleasing to the sense of smell) "and with garlands skillfully woven". The Indians are very fond of offering garlands, they offer garlands to distinguished visitors, to guests, and they place garlands around the necks of images ... I mean Hindus do, Buddhists don't usually do this, not, you know, around the neck of the Buddha.

So ... "garlands skillfully woven" Matics says 11beautifully formed garlands" but taking them as "skillfully woven" why do you think 'skillfully woven' or even 'beautifully formed' is especially mentioned? What does it suggest, what does it convey?

A Voice: Care.

S: Care. I mean, someone has spent a lot of time, spent hours perhaps, stringing these garlands, so that suggests care, that suggests devotion. So with all of these, with these flowers - "I pay honour to the princes of the Sages!" Matics says "I praise the most praiseworthy, best of sages" which may be more liberal than Mrs. Bennetts 'princes of the Sages' but it's certainly rather clumsy, so 'Princes of the Sage' really means the very best of the sages ... that is, the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas who are "so worthy of veneration". They deserve, you know, this devotional homage. (pause) Then the next verse reads, "I envelope them in clouds of incense, sweet and penetrating," "I make them offerings of food, hard and soft and pleasing kinds of liquids to drink." Matics renders this:- "I envelope them with clouds of incense, delighting the mind with dense, expanding aromas, and I offer to them an offering of various moist and dry goods and libations." His translation is a little fuller, ... 'delighting the mind' 'I envelope them in clouds of incense delighting the mind' . . . . Mrs. Bennett simply says, "sweet and penetrating" but the "sweetness" of it suggests, you know, delighting the mind though it isn't explicitly mentioned. So what about incense, what has one to say about this, why is incense used, why these fragrant odours? Why are these so widely used in worship, in Thija?

A Voice: It is to involve all the senses.

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B: It is to involve all the senses, yes?

Sagmati: Is it meant to attract positive forces?

S: This is one of the traditional explanations, but do you notice any sort of feeling created, any particular atmosphere created, do you notice this?

A Voice: Sort of calming.

S: Calming, yes.

A Voice: The idea that incense brings life (?) light (?) to the body?

S: But what about the actual smell? What does it do?

Lokamitra: It does help to ... helps one's concentration.

Sagaramati: It affects your mind.

S: It does affect your mind, you know, but how. It affects the mind through the senses, yeah? through the sense of smell, so you know, how does it work, what happens,

I mean, has anyone ever thought about this?

Dhainarati: Its got a floral smell, associated the flowers, because, I suppose . . .

S: I'm a bit doubtful about that, I doubt whether you consciously make an association with flowers, even though the flowers are there. I'm thinking, you know, of incense, not the perfume coming from the flowers. I don't think you necessarily think of flowers. I think its more, what shall I say, physiological (?) but what happens, what sort of impression do you get, what sort of mood do you get into? ... yes, it can be uplifting .. but its perhaps even ...

A Voice: Uplifting ..... you're breathing in, you're breathing in something beautiful .... it has some sort of effect.

S: Yes. Yes.

A Voice: Its as if you're breathing in the beauty of the atmosphere itself.

S: Yes, but perhaps we should first of all just examine smell in general. Its a rather peculiar thing isn't it? I mean, there are certain smells which we find unpleasant, that we find offensive, yes? So what sort of mood, what sort of mental state does that put us into? Supposing we are surrounded by quite powerful, quite unpleasant, even disgusting smells, what sort of mood would that put us into?

Several Voices:       Withdrawal.

S: Withdrawal, yes, we'd want to get away from them, what else... suppose we couldn't, supposing we were stuck with them?

A Voice: Angry.

S: Angry. Its quite odd that isn't it? Why should a smell affect us in that way?

I mean, what is the psychology of smells?

A Voice: Its probably biological, to keep one away from things which would have a bad effect on one.

S: Yes, it probably is. Most bad smells have got some sort of connection I think with decay, with death1 something rotten, something which would not be good to eat, yes? So on the other hand, look at it now positively, supposing we encounter a delightful smell, a pleasant smell, a fragrant smell as we would say, so what sort of mental state would that put you into?

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A Voice: Welcoming and openness.

S: Welcoming ~.. openness ... happiness ... satisfaction ... delight... so its as if you know, the ... the fragrant ~ll is the sort of ... the sort of... what shall I say ... olfactory equivalent of what we call beauty when referring to visual objects. So we are put in a pleased, delighted, receptive frame of mind. Though I think its more than that, I think it goes further than that. When you see a beautiful object you are put into a pleased and happy frame of mind, and when you smell a pleasant scent, yes, you are put into a pleasant fr~ of mind, but the sense of sight is comparatively subtle isn't it, compared with the sense of smell. The sense of smell is a bit gross, its connected with food, with eating, yes? So does that effect the you know, does that produce ally difference between the kind of delight experienced when you see a beautiful visual object and the kind of delight or happiness you experience when you smell a 'beautiful' i.e. fragrant, olfactory object2 Do you feel ally difference between these two experiences of say happiness and delight and satisfaction?

A Voice: Something smells less conscious.

S: Yes. less conscious.

A Voice: Well, unconscious.

S: Yes. In a way more ... what would be the word?

A Voice: A more sort of direct, bodily sensation.

S: More direct, more bodily, more sensuous. You know its somewhat heavier, yes? Its as though the body were participating as well as the mind, do you get the idea? You know, without insisting on it too much.

A Voice: Its like we always react to particular sort of hormonal reaction to odours.

S: Yes, very definitely, right. There is that too. So its as though through the fragrant scent,

its almost as though the grosser senses are involved, you know, the sense of smell being a grosser sense than the sense of sight - less associated with consciousness. So it is as though through that the physical side of things, the body, is brought in, is involved and doesn't act as a sort of distraction so much. But even more than that ... the mental effect, or the mental-come-emotional effect of in~~ence, of these fragrances, especially the artificial ones, you know, those that are made by man - we don't simply exhale from flowers - have you ever noticed that particular incenses produce different effects? Has anyone got anything to say about this from their own experience, any incenses that you don't like for instance?

Sagaramati: Most of the Indian ones....

S: You don't like.

A Voice: Most of the Chinese ones ...

S: Most of the Chinese ones, you don't like (laughter)

So why don't you like the Indian ones?

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Sagaramati: Well its ... their sickly ... their just too gross.

S: Too gross, yes. Not all of them presumably.

Sagaramati: Oh no ... very generally ... I find the Japanese or Chinese soothing.

S: More refined.

Sagaramati: The other ones are a bit more ..... C?)

S: Yes. Anyone else got any

A Voice: I think some of the Tibetan ones are a bit acrid, they're a bit ... contrived.

~hammarati: Sharp musk seems a bit more stimulating than some of the sweet flower smells.

S: Anybody found that, you know, different types of incense are more suitable for different times of day?

Voices: Yes.

S: Such as?

A Voice: Sweeter in the morning.

S: Sweeter in the morning , and in the evening? Then what?

A Voice: Sandlewood.

S: But isn't sandlewood sweet? Or would you say that was less sweet?

Lokamitra: Its not as sickly as some.

S: Yes. When I was in India, when I was in Kalimpong, I used to favour the Tibetan incense in the morning. That seemed very fresh and breezy and, you know, a sort of pine-like scent and the Indian ones, the sweet ones in the evening. But has anyone noticed, if you burn a lot of incense it seems to set up a sort of vibration in the air, in the atmosphere .. after a while.

lokamitra: Well, Mr. Chen says that the gods like sandlewood... (laughter)

S: Yes, but who are the gods?

Lokamitra: Positive

S: I had a friend in Kalimpong, a Burmese friend who would have, .. in fact I stayed with him and his wife for 6 months ... who would probably have been the king of Burma had Burma been a kingdom, a monarchy, and not a republic. His name was Price ? and he was married to the second daughter of the last king of Burma,

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S: (cont.) King ? but when I kn ~w him he was about 60 or 65 and as I stayed with him and his wife for about 6 months, and they had a bungalow a little higher up and I had the second, smaller bungalow a little lower down, and he and his wife were great believers in the devas, and he~old me that his wife could see them. He couldn't see them, but whenever they appeared there was a fragrance distinctly perceptible. This is of course traditional. So he was very keen indeed that I should have some experience of these things, he was a great believer in the psychic and he said that his wife told him that the devas were very tiny in appearance and very bright, almost like sort of fireflies and she used to be able to see these. So he was talking about these things quite excitedly one evening, he was quite an excitable old chap and he said, "I'll get the Princess to send one down to you." (laughter) because he believed that the devas were particularly connected with the Burmese royal family and were at their sort of service as it were and according to him they used to supply himself and the Princess with money. The Princess used to do her puja, according to him, in the m~rning and when they lifted up the Buddha image they would find bank notes underneath (laughter) ... their friends had other explanations, but we will not go into~~ that now (laughter). He firmly

believed that the devas brought them (laughter) and anyway, he was very keen that the devas should pay me a visit, so, it was about 7 o'clock and he said, "Alright, you just wait here, wait ~r~, 'I and was very sort of imperious and he said, 'I wait here, I shall go up and speak to the Princess. I shall ask her ~o send some devas down to you.' (laughter) So I sat there, and he was gone about half an hour, but while he was gone, the strange thing was that I perceived a very strong scent of jasmine, which was quite strange, and I was quite sure of this, there was no uncertainty, it was very marked, very strong, and I was still thinking about it when he came rushing down and said, "Did you see the devas, did you see the devas?" I said, "No, I didn't see any devas but I smelt a very strong jasmine-like scent." So he was very pleased and said, "Yes, the devas have visited you, that's a sure sign." SO there you are, you can make what you please of that but there is this tradition, that the appearance of devas, or you know, the presence of devas at least is associated with scents but as I said, what do you m°~~ by the devas? Taking it in the more psychological-cum- spiritual sense?

A Voice: The highly skillful states of mind.

S: Highly skillful states of mind. We do get the medieval expression 'The odour of sanctity' ... some say that that expression originated in the fact that medieval i.e. Christ-an saints didn't wash ... (laughter) but you can look at it in another way ... that mental states, yes, I mean, I think that one may even say one has some experience of this, that skillful mental states do tend to produce positive physical manifestations, some of which seem to be perceived in the form of fragrant scents.

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&Voice: Isn't the fourth Dhyana sometimes associated with smell?

S: Not that I recollect ..... no ..... so, a fragrant scent seems to be associated with a skillful state, and it does seem as though certain incences, certain fragrances, or combinations of fragrances, can almost - I won't say put you into, but help you into, a sort of meditative state, and this is why, it seems they're used, in connection with puja and meditation. So I suggest therefore that one shouldn't just automatically burn any old joss stick because that's the custom and one has never really thought why you do it. But just try to notice the effect that certain kinds of incense have on you and whether different incenses have different effects and use them accordingly. If you are feeling rather sluggish and a bit dull, well use an incense, when you meditate, that you know~ a stimulating, sort of open-air effect on you. And if you are feeling a bit restless and excitable use one which you know has a calming effect and so on. Be a little more aware of the use of these things. In the use of these devotional accessories.

A Voice: I always find it quite disturbing when cheap incense is used as offering incense, which is quite often done because everybody has to make .... but I find it quite grating.

S: But when you say 'cheap' you mean ..... financially cheap? because financially cheap is

not necessarily poor in quality because in India one of the cheapest is just a plain, straightforward sandalwood incense, which is one of the more refined. But there are some which are made on the basis of just chemicals. I think they use it Benzine (?) .... if you just have a lot of that and not much else, well there is a strong, sweet odour but it isn't very refined, it is as you say, cheap. So one must be a little discriminating in the use of incense. It should definitely be perceptible, it should be marked, you should be able to smell something but it shouldn't be too gross, it should be rather refined, clear and clean, it shouldn't smell sort of oily. I think Rose is one of the very best. A good rose incense, especially in the morning. But you know, the text says "I envelope them in clouds of incense, sweet and penetrating" that might be a bit too much for some people. And then - "I make them offering of food, hard and soft, and pleasing kinds of liquids to drink." Before we go into food, let's get over this 'hard and soft' business. What do you think is meant by that, it sounds a bit outlandish to us doesn't it.

A Voice: Doesn't Matics use 'dry and wet?'

S: Dry and wet, dry and moist .... this is a common Indian classification of food nothing especially Buddhistic. Moist or wet or soft would mean rice and dhal and curries and hard would be baked things. Things like hard chapaties or hard sweets. So it simply means food in general, all kinds of food. "I make them offerings of food, hard and soft and pleasing kinds of liquids to drink." Now what does this suggest? When you offer food and drink to the Buddha, to the image that is to say, what does it suggest?

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A Voice: You're treating it like a guest.

S: You're treating it like a guest, you're treating like a human being, you're treating the image as though it was alive. So what do you think really is the value of this, has one thought about it. Perhaps I ought to say just a bit about the background. I've mentioned this in one of the lectures, in at least one of the lectures, that when you perform puja you offer things, you give things, but culturally speaking, the puja, the Buddhist Puja and the Hindu Puja has its roots in Indian culture and social customs, so in India, traditionally, hospitality is a great virtue and when someone turns up at your house, especially when he turns up unexpectedly you're supposed to really welcome him, so how do you do that. I've explained this as I said, in more than one lecture, first of all you give him water, because he's probably come on foot, he's dusty, his feet are dusty. So you give him first of all, water for washing the feet. Then you give him water to drink, to quench his thirst. Then you greet him with a beautiful garland of flowers, you know, you put it round his neck, to refresh him as it were. You know, the sweet fragrance - and you might also light a lamp if it is dark or in the evening time, sometimes lamps are waved in front of the guest, as a sort of sign of welcome. I've experienced this when I visited some of the ex-untouchable villages in the remote part of Maharashtra. As I entered the village, bands of women came forward and emptied pots of water along the path, to lay the dust and also waved lights, waved lamps, this is a sort of sign of welcome, this waving of lamps occupies quite an important place in Hindu puja, modern Hindu puja, it's called arati. If you go into any Hindu temple in the evening you will see them

doing this. They have a sort of big tree, as its called, of lamps and this is waved or rather rotated in front of the image. The Buddhists don't usually do this, they simply offer lights or offer a lamp but the origin is in the lamp which is lit, especially if it is evening time, when the guests arrive. Maybe normally you don't use the oil in that way, especially if you are poor, but to honour the guests you will light a lamp or you might even wave it sort of ceremonially in front of him and then you might sprinkle him with perfume, and them of course you give him something to eat and if any of the ladies or girls in the house are skilled at music, you call upon them to play, to entertain the guest. In this way you~~get your seven offerings or eight traditional offerings, as set out in the 7 or 8 little bowls of water. The bowls of water representing these offerings. First of all water for washing the feet, then water for drinking, then flowers and incense (yes, I didn't mention, I should have done, that one may light incense when the guest arrives just to keep away the mosquitoes<sup>1</sup> especially while he's eating) and then there's perfume, and then seventh there's the food, and the 8th offering which is not always offered, which is music, represented on the alter by a little pair of symbols. So the offerings which are made to the Buddha, the offerings which are made to the Bodhisattvas, are the offerings which were made originally in the context of Indian culture and social life to any honoured guest. So you are as it were welcoming the Buddha into the world.

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S: (cont.) The Buddha is the guest, the untimely one who comes unexpectedly into the world from some other dimension as it were, the dimension of enlightenninet. So in a way you treat the image as a living person. This might not be very easy for us so therefore I haven't included all the different offerings. In some forms of Buddhism (and this was taken up by Hinduism in a big way) the image is bathed and dressed and decorated and then fed and taken on outings (laughter) taken to meet other images (laughter). The Hindus are very good at this, they take them to meet other gods and goddesses and to pay them visits and return their visits and so on procession through the streets and put to bed at night and woken up with music. You know Hindus almost play with their images like small girls and even small boys play with dolls. But this might not for us strike a very devotional note, might seem even rather absurd<sup>1</sup> so this is why I actually mention or include mention of only the flowers, the lights and then just as its part of the verse the food and drink and then pass on to the jewelled lamps. Anybody got any feelings or thoughts about this? I mean this sort of Buddhist-come-Hindu type worship, treating the image as though it were actually alive?

A Voice: It helps you to relate to it more directly, as a human being, in the sense that you can sort of put it ... as a human being.

S: Yes, right.

Sagaramati: I must say, there is a barrier with me when it comes to food and drink. Incense and flowers, yes.

S: Yes, I must say that in India I personally didn't used to like the food and drink because, at

least, the smells ... you know, in the midst of all the fragrant odours of flowers and incense to have a spicy curry smell (laughter) it seemed quite out of place, I didn't used to like it, so I didn't used to have it myself and didn't encourage it. I think the more etherial senses, to use that expression, you know, perhaps should be encouraged.

A Voice: It seems rather inappropriate in a way for our cultural background.

S: Yes, I mean, offer flowers yes, lights yes, incense yes or you can just think of flowers as the actual offering, lights are to illuminate and the incense is to create a pleasant atmosphere. I should think when it comes to ceremonially bathing the image - the Japanese of course bathe the image of the infant Buddha in warm, weak tea (laughter) - yes, or when it comes to actually putting a plate of bitters in front of the Buddha image, I mean, to us it doesn't strike a devotional note, and I think it isn't just cultural conditioning, its because our grosser senses are stimulated. Well, when you smell, you know, the spic~ curry, well you can't keep your iouth from watering (laughter)so, you know, that isn't desirable. So I think therefore that despite the eastern precidents , these are ~ after all not found in early Buddhism) I think we can leave out offerings of that sort and just have at the most the flowers, the lights and the incense. I think personally that this is quite enough and this is whats usually offered by the Theravadins, though sometimes they do

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S: (cont.) say sometimes in Celon, maybe under Hindu influence, offer cooked food and even Betal Nut, things like that, or glasses of tea, I've seen on the alter. I can't say I feel quite happy about that. Maybe if you do want to give something, a fruit, thats as far as I've ever gone, you know, an apple or a small fruit. In Kaitmpong they used to favour a very small orange or something like that, but not anything cooked, this seems just too gross, I mean, that seems to contradict the whole spirit and feeling and stmosphere of the puja itself.

A Voice: A small bowl of grain sometimes0

S: I mean Nepalese ... yes ... thats ... the Nepalese I'm afraid sometimes offer

meat, rww meat, which seems even less appropriate (laughter).

A Voice: I went to Jam-yang Xhyentse' s comemoration and the Tibetans offered cooked meat there, hams and things (laughter) it was horrible.

S: I think we' ll stick to our flowers, lights and incense. Because one must remember, what is the purpose if it, well of course, if you ... you know, there is this Hindu tradition, and in some Buddhist countries, Mahayana countries - Buddhist tradition too - of eating the offering afterwards (laughter) so if the puja is an indirect way to a feast ... then of course this sort of thing is likely to happen, so I think the eating should be kept strictly separate. Sometimes people say that out" of devotion, they want to offer to the Buddha whatever they're going to eat themselves. I think that this is rather confusing things. Because then ... you know, you put

more and more offerings in front of the Buddha because you get more and more yourself that way, yourself afterwards in the form of what the Hindus call prasad. So I don't think its good to associate these things, they are not really traditionally associated in Buddhism, if one goes back early enough. So one can take the significance of the offerings as symbolical, not to take them in the sense of having their actual value for the image and in the case of food, for you also afterwards. I think probably perfume is the grossest thing that should be allowed into a puja.

Well, we've got through the first part of the puja, and we've come it seems to tea or coff~e time - but any further points before we do break ~ off for a few minutes? On the puja in general.

A Voice: Why light in particular. I was going to ask, in the same way as we ask,

why incense and flowers?

S: Ah. right ... well .. I think there are several reasons. First in the old days, if you had the puja in the evening you'd need lamps anyway. You'd need light, illumination. But light also has this ~ very profound and universal symbolical significance, that light is knowledge, light is wisdom, light is enlightenment. It symbolises that. And not only that, but - maybe we've forgotten the fact, in these days of electricity - but candle light is very beautiful, you know, this is what it usually was, either candle-light or oil-lamp-light. Very soft, beautiful, sort of golden\* It has its own aesthetic value, as part of the beautiful scene~~ the beautiful set up. I think we need look no further than that really, archtypal

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S: (cont.) significance of light to begin with and its intrinsic beauty especially in its more, as it were, natural forms. I really dislike to see modern temples lit up with harsh, electric bulbs and fluorescent lighting and even naked bulbs around the Buddha's halo (laughter) which you can switch on and off at pleasure, I mean, maybe that is an expression of devotion but a devotion of I would Bay, well what the Hindus would call an asuric type or even a tamasic type. A rather vulgar and garish, with no refinement and real ~beauty, perhaps no devotion in the more spiritual sense in it either. I think we must really watch these things, watch the colour of the cloth that we're using, you know, the overall aesthetic feel of the whole ensemble.

A Voice: Are there traditional colours?

S: Well, not any colours are really untraditional, although in the Buddhist countries they tend to use more yellow and red in association with anything Buddhist or anything religious or spiritual. But there' s no hard and fast rule. We have had some odd experiences with shrines in the FOW.BOO. and there have been some quite strong feelings aroused in this connection. I remember one famous shrine at 'pundarika' and another one at 'Aryatara' (laughter).

Sagaramati: The Buddhist group in Dundee, they've got a ... the carpets this

colour and the shrine cloths that colour ... its horrible.

S: Well, its the colour equivalent of the cheap incense (laughter) so we must really watch these things.

Sagaramati: I think the Catholics use that colour for lant.

S: AH... yes ... purple is suffering (laughter) ... well, there are purples and purples, though actually its more violet than purple. If you think that you've got flowers, light and incense, the flowers are the living things ... suggest the whole of nature, the whole of life in a way. Then you' ve got light, which reminds you not only of the light of the sun, the light of the sky, you know, of the light of enlightenment. And then you' ve got the fragrence, the incense, there' s the sweet smell of incense which suggests the sort of intergration of even your grosser physical being into the puja. So in a way the scene of the puja represents a sort of heightened mode of existance, it's almost like a little pure land isn't it? Because the pure land is described almost as if a great puja was going on all the time, because there is the Buddha, not even an image, but the Buddha himself on his real, live lotus throne, and then there is flowers falling all the time, and flowers being offered, people sitting around and incense burning, chants being raised, and the dharma being preached. life is just one long puja, so what could be more delightful than that? So when you are engaged in puja, sitting in the shrine, in front of the image, it should be a sort of foretaste of the pure land itself, of Sukhavity itself, this is the idea.

Alright, maybe its tea and coffee time.

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A Voice: What sort of meter is this in?

S: Wefl, you mean the Bodhicaryavavata? It's the conunon meter which is called

as far as I can remember ? which is the same as is used for most parts of the Bhagavad Gita. A bit like the Greek sonnet. Alright ... there's one thing we haven' t mentioned in connection with the puja which is quite important, which comes into the seven-fold puja in general, and what do you think that is? (laughter) We mentioned the flowers, something visual, something for the olfactory organs, the scents. There's the lamps which are also for the organs of sight.

A Voice: The chanting itself.

S: The chanting itself, which is sound. Not only chanting put possibly music. So, you know, what do you think about those, what could be said in that connection? Clearly, what one has already said about the puja in general. Whatever kind of chanting is employed, whatever kind of music, it should be uplifting, if should convey some sense of very refined, even etherial spiritual beauty. There are certain kinds of music that would just not be suitable

for use in the context of puja. Even certain ways of chanting which would be quite inappropriate, you see what I mean?

Lokamitra: What do you think about musical offerings?

S: What do you mean by that?

Lokamitra: Well, my own experience of them has been, and its only been on one or two occasions, pieces of music played by someone.

S: (pause) So what's your experience? Was this in England or in India?

Lokamitra: Oh ... here ... I was asking you what you felt, but my feeling is, I mean, I personally don't like them because ... well, it seems to me because the peice 0£ music is being composed for some other reason, yes? I mean, it doesn't quite seem to fit in for some reason.

S: What are you thinking of ... I mean

lokarnitra: I don't know ... at Pundarika we had several ... er ... Mahavira, as he was then, occasionally played something. But you mentioned musical offering here, something musical ... so ...

S: So, alright, suppose if ... you say you didn't like it, or you thought you didn't like it, but ~ was that, in what way did it not fit in? Was it simply that it was really created for some other purpose? was it just that?

Lokamitra: It could have been my predujice.

S: Well, was it an instrumental piece, or a song ...?

Lokamitra: Instrumental a

S: Was it, perhaps it wasn't oriented, say towards the Buddha in the way everything else wss~

Lokamitra: Well, I think this goes with what I was saying, It wasn't created for that.

S: Or was the element of performance introduced?

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Several Voices: Ah ... yes ...

S: You see what I mean?

Lokamitra: Ah ... yes ..

S: I mean, you do have music, say in the Christian context, in churches, in cathedrals, so it doesn't detract, it would seem from the overall effect that they wish to produce, because 1) its meant for that purpose and 2) its usually, or almost always, no individual performance. One is, as it were, anonymous, you see what I mean? So there's no element of theatricality. But if it is a smaller gathering, as we would have, where everybody is known, and you know that it's so-and-so performing, even, you know, its enough that so-and-so is going to perform now, in the context of the puja, then it does become a bit of a performance by a particular individual and the puja, by its very nature, it seems to me, let me put it this way, the act of the spiritual community as a whole. This seems to me the main objection to these performances .... also it is orientated, not to the Buddha as it maybe would in India, because the nitwical performance is part, say, of a Hindu temple service, but it is not meant for the audience, it is meant for the god, and its played in front of him, for him to hear as it were. The audience, the congregation only over- hears it. But maybe, if, that not being our tradition, if we have someone performing, he can't genuinely feel, perhaps, that he's doing it for the Buddha, ignoring everybody else. lie's doing it for the audience, for the people there. So in otherwords you've got the rest of the puja going in one direction, that is oriented from everybody present to the Buddha .... well then you've got the performance in the middle oriented from the performer to his audience, going in exactly the opposite direction, yes? so this might be one of the reasons it seems so inappropriate and out of place. Especially if perhaps he or she isn' t all that spiritually aware and is performing quite consciously or quite deliberately for the benefit of the audience. Do you see what I mean? This is quite apart from the actual quality of the music or the feeling imparted by it. You know, when I spoke of music, I was thinking more in terms of a little, almost discrete musical accompax~yment of the chanting. Maybe in the way of an occasional thump on a drum or cymbols, or something of that sort. I was only thinking of it to that extent. On the whole, I would say that the musical item doesn' t seem to fit in. It might be a good idea to have a musical item in the course of a festival, either before or after the puja. And it might fit in very well then, but it would seem to me to strike rather a jarring note in the context of the puja itself, with everybody stopping or suspending the puja to listen to this performance.

A Voice: The Tibetans would seem to have incorporated music into their pujas ... quite S: They really do seem to have done that, yes. Well, it's a quite different kind of music, isn't it?

A Voice: Could you call it music, in terms of Western sound?

S: Well, that entirely depends upon what you mean by 'in the Westernsense' I mean western music also includes the old medieval music , which comes much closer to Tibetan music.

A Voice: But it involves that dimension of sound.

S: Yes .... I was thinking of the way in which the chanting is done sometimes, especially when its very forced and a bit harsh. I noticed this very much, some of you may remember, or heard about it when we have those study retreats at Nash. I was quit. shocked by the chanting and spoke about it quite strongly, and it seemed at that time as though throughout the whole movement practically, the chanting have become really harsh and unpleasant and forced, but there was a great improvement since then. So that's the sort of thing that also we have to watch. You know, you chant in that sort of harsh, forcible way, not simply because

you haven't got a very good voice perhaps, but because you're not in a particularly positive frame of mind and you should be careful to be in that more positive frame of mind, at least if you are leading a puja.

Alright then, let's pass on to the vandana.

Read round the verses. There's only two of them. O.K.

Sagaramati: "As many atoms as there are in the thousand million worlds, so many times I make reverent salutation to all the Buddhas of the Three Eras, to the Saddharma and to the excellent Community. "

Dhamamrati: "I pay homage to all the shrines and places in which the Bodhisattvas

have been. I make profound obeisance to the Teachers and those to whom respectful salutation is due."

S: So what does Matics say? I'With salutations as numerous as the atoms in all Buddha fields, I salute the Buddhas of all three worlds (past, present and future) and the ~harma and the great congregations. likewise I praise all shrines ? and places associated with Bodhisattvas, and I make obeisance to praiseworthy teachers and ascetics." It's just more or less the same isn't it, though the phraseology is rather different.

So first of all it's the Buddha, Dharma and the Sangha that are saluted or rather the Buddhas of the three periods of time, past, present and future, the Dhmma and the Spiritual Community. Here you notice, at the beginning, a bit of Indian exuberance coming in "as many atoms as there are in the thousand, million worlds, so many times I make reverent salutation." You know, what do you think that really means? Is it to be taken literally, or what does it mean?

A Voice: I don't think it would be taken literally (laughter).

S: So how is ~it to be taken?

A Voice: (indistinct)

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S: Yes, I mean, your life should be one continuous salutation, this is what it ~illy means. So you salute the Buddhas of the Three Eras, past, present and future. There are three Buddhas

whogenerally represent the Buddnas of the past, present and future. Do you know who those are:- Dipankara, the past .... Shkkyauuhi, the present a.. and Maitreya, the future ... yes. 50 why do you think Shantideva introduces the salutation to the Buddhas of the three periods of time? Why not aust Shakyamuni, Gautama, the Buddha?

A Voice: It gives the thing a more cosmic scale.

S: Yes, more cosmic perspective. And after all, Shantideva is a Mahayanist and this is one of the distinguishing features perhaps of the Ma~ayana compared with the Hinyana. Its wider perspective, its more universal perspective as Lama Govinda calls it. Govinda speaks of it in terms of the Mahayanas recognition of the plurality of Buddlias throughout the universe as representing the fact that Enlightenment can be obtained whenever circumstances and conditons permit, so it suggests the universality of Enlightenment, and the universality of the Buddhas teaching. A Voice: What's Sadharma

S: Sadharma? Well, that means the true, the real, the good dharma as in 'Sadharniapundarika' - the White Lotus of the Sadharma, the good dharma, the true dharma, the real dhrma. So in this particular verse the object of ones reverent salutation is the Buddha or Buddha' s, the Dharma and the Sangha. In other words, the Three Jewels, who are also objects o~ refuge. So in what way does Vandana differ from going for refuge? Or can it be regarded as a form of going for refuge? Does it resemble anything we were dealing with previously?

Voices: Yes ..... the homage.

S: It seems to correspond to the homage. So is that strictly speaking a 'Going for ~fuge1 or how would one look at at?

A Voice: It's a bit like the provisional Going for Refuge.

S: It's a bit like the provisional going for refuge. So can one say anything about the way in which vandana differs from the 'Worship' which precedes it? and the 'Going for Refuge' which succeeds it~ (pause) Could you not say that the puja represented a homage, could you not say that? In which case what would you describe the vandana as?

A Voice: It seems to be a sort of deepening of feeling ..... while 'refuge' is decision.

S: Yes.

A Voice: It becomes more personal, because .... there's a slight weakening of the subject/object .... no subject making offerings and afl that .... more involve physical.

S: More going towards, approaching, in the case of the salutation, or maybe o~ should say you're recognising, you know ... in the case of the puja you are confronted by the Buddha and you are worshipping the Buddha. These actual verses don't say anything about the Dharma or the Sangha do they? You' r confronted by the spiritual

S: (cont.) ideas and you take delight in the spiritual ideal and you express your delight in that, but you don't, in a sense, do anything about it. The ideal is an ideal which you recognise as an ideal, you delight in it but you haven't really started thinking about your own relationship to it, yes? But in the case of the vandana, you salute, in other words you recognise that that ideal is something very much higher than you are and you recognise yourself as occupying a very lowly position relative to that idea. You see the gulf that exists between you, a gulf which will have to be crossed if you want to be like that ideal or to realise that ideal. And in the case of the 'Going for Refuge' it's as though you actually begin closing the gap. So it's as though in the case of the puja, you delight in the ideal, you recognise the ideal but you haven't started thinking about yourself in relation to it. You're not really conscious of the gap between you and it. In the case of the vandana you become conscious of the gap between yourself and the ideal, you recognise the ideal, the Buddha, as something infinitely higher than yourself so the appropriate attitude on your part is of salutation, of bowing down, and then in the case of the Going for Refuge you are determined to close the gap, to actually tread the path leading from where you are to where the Buddha is. This would seem to be the broad distinction between these three phases. One sort of passing into the other. So there is a sort of attraction as it were, the puja represents the attraction .... the delight in the ideal ..... the vandana represents the recognition of the ideal as something much higher than yourself and the going for refuge represents the actual commitment of oneself to the realization of that ideal. But there is another verse isn't there - "I pay homage to all the shrines and places in which the Bodhisattvas have been. I make profound obeisance to the teachers and those to whom respectful salutation is due."

So, "I pay homage to all the shrines." so the chakyas, the stupas. So why does one pay homage to them, why does one respect them?

A Voice: Because of their association.

S: Yes, because of their associations, their associations, that is to say, with the Buddha, with the life of the Buddha or with the person, the physical body of the Buddha even. "And places in which the Bodhisattvas have been" - in medieval India there were all sorts of stupas and chakyas erected on places which traditionally were identified with the places where the Buddha, as Bodhisattva in his previous lives had committed various noble actions or practiced the paramitas for instance, there was one, I believe, in North Western India, on the spot in which the Buddha as Bodhisattva was supposed to have sacrificed his body to the starving tigress. And then - "I make profound obeisance to the teachers" so why the teachers?

A Voice: Well, their the actual ..... embodiment~

S: Yes, because they help you to practice the dharma, or you know, take the place of the Buddha as it were, as we saw in the lecture.

S: (cont.) "And those to whom respectful salutation is due" .~... any worthy persons, following the spiritual path. You know, your vandana as it were overflows onto all of them. One should observe perhaps that, simple as words, 'puja' and 'vandana' aren't always sharply distinguished from each other in the way that I have distinguished them, sometimes in fact they're interchanged and vandana means something like puja and puja means something like vandana, it depends on the usage. Sometimes vandana just means a distant almost social sort of salutation and puja is the more heartfelt thing but for our own purposes one can distinguish these two attitudes, one annexes the work puja to the first attitude and the work vandana to the second, though one could have made it the other way round.

So the vandana is also expressed in a bowing down. So in the case of the puja, you are offering, you are making gifts .... yes? So you don't necessarily make gifts to someone who is superior to you that is, the fact that you make ~ifts doesn't necessarily mean that you are regarding the person to whom you are making the gifts as superior in wly way .... I mean, ~ifts can be exchanged between equals, but in the case of the vandana, if you salute someone or bow down to someone, you are definitely recognising them as superior~ So we could say that the puja in this context means 'making of offerings' vandana means 'bowing down' yes? Puja can also mean bowing down, but in this case it definitely just means 'making offerings.'

So what about this bowing down .... it says, "I make profound obeisance to the teachers" you may remember that on the convention, that is, those who were there will remember, we actually did have someone making the prostrations, didn't we? at this particular point. And in the East this is very common, the actual prostration before the image or before monks or before teachers, so how does one feel about this, or what has one to say about this? How far can we go with that, do you think in our own cultural context .... the bowing down? I mean, clearly in the context of the puja it isn't really sufficient just to recite the words, you know, there should be some appropriate action at the same time. lokamitra: There's a lot of emotion caught up in that sort of act. When you make offerings, after the puja say, you do also bow down.

S: That's true, yes. So the question is, how far should one take it? I mean there are different sorts. There is the full-length prostration, there is the sort of kneeling prostration, there's the semi-kneeling prostration, there's the anjali salutation.

Lokamitra: I must say, in India, I got used to doing the kneeling salutation, and I much prefer that one ..... its much..... its very simple, yet it seems much more than just the ordinary salutation.

S: So, do you think it does depend on the cultural context. What might seem natural and suitable in India might not seem natural and suitable here.

S: (cont.) the vandana from the puja and to carry the whole process one stage further.

A sort of comparison occurs to me, supposing you're travelling and you see a beautiful mountain peak in the distance and you admire the mountain peak for its beauty and look up to it, and enjoy it and delight in it. This corresponds to puja. But it ~oesn't occur to you that there is any possibility of you actually climbing up that, you don't think in those terms, you just admire the peak, but then you start thinking .... that peak is s0 much higher than I a' .. yes? so .. If I wanted to climb that peak it would be very difficult because there is the peak up there and here am I down here. So when you become very conscious of that then that is the vandana. But you decide, airight nonetheless, I'm going to climb that peak and you start walking, thats the Going for Refuge.

Lokamitra: And when you realise all those bits that are hold you back .... (laughter) weighting you down

S: Well, thats the confession of faults (laughter).

when you start shedding your luggage, all the things you think you need to get to the top, when actually they're preventing you from climbing (laughter)<sup>4</sup> All right then. Well anything more about the vandana?

Voice: When you were talking about bowing down, were talking in general terms, or more specifically in the context of the puja?

S: Talking more specifically in the context of the puja.

Same Voice: You might also have to be quite careful you know .... things like prostrations ... in pujas ... some people can react to that.

S: Yes, especially if you have new people, or people visiting for the first time. They might think it expressed a slavish mentality. It is interesting in this comparison to compare the attitude of the ancient Greeks and the attitude of the ancient Perians. Apparently when ~~~theGreeks and the Persians came into contact with each other for the first time one of the things that really shocked and displeased the Greeks was the fact that the Persians used to prostrate themselves in front of

their Kings, and the Greeks thought this most unbecoming a human being and they thought that hwnan beings should salute only the gods, and the gods, they should only

salute in a quite moderate fashion. Even the gods did not salute in the way that the

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S: (cont.) Persians saluted their kings. And this is one of the things that again, later on, upset some of the followers of Alexander the Great, when he conquered the Persians and became king of Persia, because he started insisting that his courtiers, who were Greeks, paid

him respect in the way that Persians were accustomed to do so, and the bluff, sort of hearty ~facedonians didn't like that at all, and they thought that Alexander was getting a bit beyond himself. ~ So you see, its not just the modern West, it goes right back to the Greeks, this was very much the Greek attitude, based on or connected with their humanism, their respect for every individual, every human being. I mean, beginning with themselves. The Greeks were a very self- respecting people who didn't pay too much respect even to the gods. So one has to bear in mind these sort of susceptibilities if you like, one can call them that. Some people may be quite outraged by what seems to them to be excessive respect paid, not only to images but to other huniwis. I remember when I was in Kalimpong, staying at the . vihara, the first few weeks of my stay in Kalimpong, a Christian Father came up and was staying there for a few days, he was a bit of a runaway, he quarrelled with his church, I think he subsequently found his way back, but anyway he was at that time on the run as it were from the church (laughter) and, he was a very interesting chap in some ways but really shocked and horrified by the respect which the Buddhists were paying to me, doing satsang (2) I think I was only a sra:nanera even. And he was so horrified he said "W~ell, in the Catholic Church we don't even pay that sort of respect to the Pe~~" (laughter) Well not in the 20th Century perhaps, but they had in earlier ages. I was reading an account of the Popes only a few days ago and .... well the few pages which I was reading refered to the last century ... it was still the custom to kiss the pope's toe when one had an audience with him. He put out his toe for the purpose (laughter) so they also had that kind of thin~~ I don't think Pope Paul the 6th does it, but Pope Pious the 9th certainly did, and that's only 100 years ago, so one has to be a little careful and give consideration not only to one's own devotional feelings which may be perfectly valid and legitimate, but also the susceptibilities of others who may be present (pause).

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S: lil right, any other point arising out of the vandana?

All right, first of all making of offerings. The bowing down and then of course we come to the 'Going for Refuge' perhaps we don't need to say so much about these verses because we've already been dealing with the 'Going for ~efuge' in quite a bit of detail, but lets just read the verses and see if there are any special points arising out of them.

Voice: "This very day I go for my Refuge, to the powerful protectors whose purpose is to guard the universe, the mighty conquerors who overcome suffering everywhere."

'okamitra: "Wholeheartedly also I take my Refuge in the Dharma they have ascertained, which is the abode of security against the rounds of rebirth. likewise in the host of Bodhisattvas I take my Refuge."

S: let me read what Matics verse is, or he translates them .

"Therefore I go now for refuge to the ~rds of the earth, the ones labouring for the sake of the earth's protection. The conquerors who dispell all fear and likewise I go for refuge to the ~Tharma that is mastered by them which consumes the f~ar of rebirth, and I go to the

company of Bodhisattvas."

Now, in connection with that first verse, especially if someone says it for the first time, there is a possibility of misunderstanding, what do you think that is?

Voice: The powerful protectors.

S: The powerful protectors, whose purpose is to guard the universe. So what might be the point of misunderstanding?

Voice: Misunderstanding receptivity to a higher being .... to a higher way of being to ... authority.

Lokamitra: Well a creator.

S: A creator, yes. So in what sense in the Buddha, or are the Buddhas said to be 'protectors' and 'guard the universe.'

Voice: To keep the way open to Enlightenment.

S: Yes, yes. This is really what it consist in, but you see how this could be misunderstood? By people perhaps hearing it for the first time, think that the Buddhas guard the universe in the way that God is supposed to. Or that the Buddhas

protect one from worldly disasters in the same way that God might, if he wished to do so. - 28

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S: (cont.) Well the clue is perhaps to be found in the fact that the Buddhas are called 'conquerors', jinnas, so in what sense are they said to be conquerors or jinnas?

Voice: They overcome all unskillful states.

S: They overcome all unskillful states, well in themselves and indirectly in other people by showing, by teaching them how to overcome unskillful states in their own minds, by their own efforts. That 'Conquerors' should have a capital 'C' really. So this is the misunderstanding to be guarded against here. So one doesn't go for refuge to the Buddhas for protection from worldly calamities .... the Buddha isn't a sort of God. The Hindus often call Buddadeva (?) - don't know if you came across this - especially the Bengalis -

Lokamitra: ~ven Buddhists would call it that would they?

S: Err ... they might, even Bengali Buddhists, yes.

Lokamitra: Mind you, many of them worship as though he was that.

S: Yes, right. I remember once I was on tour on Asam and staying with some Bengali Buddhists for a while, they entertained me and gave me dana and before the dana there is always a little puja or something so they put a Buddha image on the table then next to that put

an image of the Hindu goddess Luktsee, yes, I was quite surprised to find them worshipping that. So they were expecting me to do some Buddha puja and some Luktsee puja before I had my meal, so I wasn't quite sure what to do so, I hadn't experienced this situation before, so I quietly put the Luktsee to one side so as she wasn't in the way of the puja as it were, I didn't say anything so they probably understood.

With regard to the Dharma Refuge, you notice that the        lets see        49,

Matics translates -

"I go for refuge to the Dharma that is mastered by them" whereas Mrs. Bennett translates - "In the Dharma they have ascertained." Matics is probably more liberal, but why do you think Mrs. Bennett has translated it as 'ascertained' rather than 'mastered'.

Voice: Because if there is no Buddhas around, there is no Dharma, they as it were create the Dharma

S: Yes        I wasn't quite thinking in that way. What's the difference of course, you master something or you ascertain something?

Voice: You master something, you sort of imply that you became more powerful than it.

S:        Yes, there's a suggestion of power and control which is in a way a bit inappropriate. So ascertain, which means 'to find out' 'to assure oneself of', I mean, by experiencing it. So in what way is the Dharma "the abode of security against the rounds of rebirth"?

Voice: It is like you were saying before, it's the process of transformation, or rather the means of        s: Well, as the Dharma represents essentially the transcendental Dharma, the transcendental path, you know the transcendental state of Nirvana, so once one is on the path, or once one has reached that state, one is secure against the rounds of rebirth, one cannot fall into them anymore, or at least, not more than a certain number of times. One is secure. And you notice, in the case of the third refuge, the refuge that is taken is in 'the host of Bodhisattvas', Here, in the wider sense, the Bodhisattvas would be understood to include the stream entrant and so on, the Arahant. These are sometimes called 'Hinayana Bodhisattvas', we could say 'insipient Bodhisattvas' that is to say, they could become Bodhisattvas if they woke up to that possibility.

Voice: I suppose it's just like a collectivity.

S:        A collectivity, yes, what does Matics say .... 'company' I think the term is gane, g, a, n, e, which is something like Sangha.

Sagaramati: In the case of those two are these definitely two        one for the Bodhisattva, one for the Arahant?

S:        Well, there is a difference of opinion about this, I mean some - there was a difference among Buddhists themselves in Medieval times, some would say that once one is on the Hinayana path there is no retracing one's steps, one goes along on that, as it were, to the bitter

end, you have to, having become a stream entrant, well the only way which you can go forward is to become a one-returner, a non-returner, and and Arahant. But other authorities I think, perhaps later would say that one can change, if one is following the Hinayana path, even though one has come onto the transcendental path and is perhaps, for instance, a stream entrant, you could, having

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S: (cont.) become aware of the greater Mahayana ideal decide then to follow the Bodhisattva path. It seems to me that the root of the whole trouble is that the Hinayana path or the Arahant path has been defined too narrowly and rigidly and literally, and the Bodhisattva path having been defined perhaps also too narrowly, rigidly and literally. I mean, in contradistinction to that, it then becomes rather difficult to bring the two together. But I think the mistake lay, if one can speak in those terms, in separating them in that sort of mutually exclusive way in the beginning, rather than recognising that the so-called Arahant path, the so-called Bodhisattva path represented different dimensions of what was essentially 'one-and-the-same path' so that historically speaking, it is quite incorrect to represent the Buddha as teaching the Hinayana path - you know, in the later Mahayana sense' the Buddha just taught the path or the way. That was rather narrowed down by some of his followers into what became the Hinayana path more specifically, the Arahant path, and the Mahayana. Mahaynists had to broaden it up, but unfortunately the broadened version remained in contradistinction to the earlier, narrow version and therefore had a certain limitation. So I don't feel happy about speaking in terms of a really different Arahant path and a really different Bodhisattva path at all. Even though a lot of the surviving Buddhist literature, canonical literature, does just that. It doesn't really seem to be borne out by the .. well, spiritual facts of the situation. It may well be that at certain stages of your spiritual career you are more aware of the individual aspect of spiritual life, at other times you are more aware of the altruistic aspect, and act accordingly, but eventually you have to get to a state in which subject and object, self and others, you know, equally, in that mutually exclusive sense, lose their significance and in which one can no longer really distinguish between Arahant ideal and Bodhisattva ideal. So in this sense, one could say adopt the position of the Saaharmapandarika Sutra and say that all three yanas merge into one yana, not only the Sravakayana and Pratyekabuddhayana and Bodhisattva yana merging into the Buddhayana but even Hinayana, Mahayana, Vajrayana- all merging into one yana, one path, one way, one Dharma. So I think the question of whether you become an Arahant, whether after that, if you wake up to the Bodhisattva ideal you could switch over and become a Bodhisattva, then a Buddha, I think these are quite artificial questions arising out of a quite artificial situation. I don't think

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S: (cont.) that they are really questions from a spiritual point of view at all, it's just a question of reconciling different scholastic formulations. Sometimes one can't because sometimes the formulations themselves are too one-sided, too mutually exclusive.

Voice: Do you think the movement itself is

S: The Path, of being a Buddhist - not that one is either on the Arahant path, or on the Bodhisattva path, one is on the path to Enlightenment, to Euddhahood. And the teachings which are found under the label of the Hinayana certainly help. So do those found under the label of the Ma~yana, they also help, in other ways. We can't afford to neglect either of them and they are not mutually exclusive paths between which you have to make a choice. At best they represent different emphases on different aspects of the spiritual life and those emphasese may be more relevant to your particular needs at one time in your spiritual career than at another. So, you know, you have to recourse to them accordingly. (pause)

Got anything more about Going for Refuge? Well, I just noticed that on sheet three, as you see there are the five Precepts, the fifth precept is in fact missed out, have you noticed? While we're on the subject, why do you think that that particular precept is included in the five and not in the ten? This is the spiritual reason and not the historical reason.

Voice: If with your Refuges in the provisional sense, you're more likely to be in circles ... around drinkers

S; Yes

Lokamitra: Sorry, what was that?

Sagramati: Well, if you had just sort of been interested, just come along to the 'Friends' then your social life is likely to include aspects of drink and drugs and the rest of it.

Voice: In a way, if you follow the rest of the precepts there's no need for that one .... they sort of deal with all its negative aspects.

S: Yes .. because, you know, in the case of the .... abstention from, well let us say alcohol .. its a little more complex than that ... What is the corresponding positive quality?

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lokamitra: Awareness.

S: Awareness, Yes. So, you could say that the state of say, intoxication, partial or complete, repreaents a very gross form of unawareness. In the case of the Abhijja, Byapada, Michadasana, they represent the more subtle, inner, mental forms, or spiritual forms .... you know that it becomes much more important to overcome. In the case of the ordinary person as it were who is just, not particularly inter~sted, but he's just beginning to be a bit interested, a bit involved, well if he can avoid the grosser forms of, well, of Moha, lets say , mental intoxication, well fair enough but a person who is really on the path has to avoid the subtle mental intoxications, as represented by the Abhijja, Byapada and Michadassana, so if he's avoiding those, its very unlikely that he' 5 going to be ~etting dnir.k~ or using alcohol in an unmindful way, so really that one is included in those three.

So, to look at the two sets of precepts more broadly, what is the big difference really between the five precepts and the ten, you know, given?

Voice: A greater degree of self consciousness.

S: A greater degree of self consciousness, yes.

Sagramati: Its the positive emotions.

S: The positive emotions, yes. But look at this word Michadassana 'to give up michadassana' well, what does that really involve, if you really give it up.

Voice: Enlightenment.

S: Well, at least stream entry doesn't it' and Abhijja and Byapada .... so michadassana really suggests a committment to the Path of Vision and Abhijja and Byapada a committment to, you know, that is abstention from them, a committment to the Path of Transformation. So these three~ecepts have, you know, they're not precepts in the ethical sense, like the others, they have a transcendental significance, they are oriented in the direction if insight and wisdom. So their significane goea far beyond the social and the cultural, where as, in the case of the five precepts, you could say that their significance is purely social and cultural, but in the case of the ten precepts, the orientation is definitely the direction of the transcendental, and this is why they are taken by the Upasaka. So you could say that to go tr~y for refuge in the full ~ense, that is to go for effective refuge you must intend, consciously

S: (cont.) and deliberately to aim at the transcendental, and this fact is brought up by those last three precepts of the ten. If you observe, just the five precepts, they will only get you as far as a good rebirth. But the mere fact that you're Going for Refuge means that you want something much more than a good rebirth, you want Enlightenment. So this is what is indicated by these last three. They indicate purification of mind, its not enough to purify your actions. Its not enough to purify your speech. You've got to purify your mind, purify your mind of ignorance because you're aiming at Enlightenment and you can only gain Enlightenment by the complete elimination of ignorance. So though its traditional in Buddhist countries to take the three refuges and five precepts, and to consider oneself a Buddhist because one does so, that isn't really enough, it doesn't bring out the full significance of the Going for Refuge .... in terms of one' 5 personal life and personal practice and experience.

Lokamitra: £5 this the kusala dharma, are they the list traditionally taken by Upasakas?

S: No, they are not normally taken by Ilpasakas in Buddhist countries, today, in that ceremonial way as it were, no. The ten precepts are, well, those of the samanera, which are quite different from these.

Isokamitra: But these, as far as you know aren' t used for any ceremonial purpose?

S: As far as I know, they're not, no.

No, they are found repeated in the scriptures, and people are refered to as repeating and as practising them but, at least the modern Buddhist practise is never to administer or never to take them, as it were, ceremonially. So from that point of view, though rooted in tradition,

they represent a new departure, the kind of new departure that we saw in the           ?...  
apparently           looking around for. So, just a general point. What do you think that the  
precept of musavada is expended into four precepts? What do you think the significance of  
this is? Because you could just as well have expanded some of the other precepts perhaps in  
that way, but why just speech?

Sagramati: Communication.

S:       Communication, it emphasises the importance of communication.

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Voice: Like, we saw, we were talking about the actual speech aspect of taking Refuge ... to  
just say it, its kind of bringing into being, by speech.

S:       Yes, what you re actually concerned with or inteding to do

Same Voice: And the way that you speak actually brings the state of being about.

S:       Yes, yes. You're not just speaking about it, but you~ actual speech is it  
when you observe those particular precepts. The medium is the message. (pause)

Any further, general point arising out of the Going for Refuge? I think in that  
case we'll leave it there for this morning . I don't want to start on the

'Confession of Faults' because I want to do that with the 'Rejoicing in Merits'  
for obvious reasons.

Voice: Bhante, just one thing on the chanting of the positive precepts. I notice  
there's bits in plural - 'we purify', there's been a bit of confusion, well sometimes it is ... done  
as 'I purify. Which do you think is the best

S:       Well, on the occasion of the private ordination it is always 'I purify my  
body, I think that when it's done in unison it should be in the plural, because everything else  
is, yes? So that is, not as if it were a collective plural, we

don't really have any proper gramatical form, perhaps we ought to have a distinct  
form, it should really be the plural of 'individuals' or the plural of 'individuality' not all

collectively, in a lump, all stacked together, but all in unison, in harmony.

Remaining individuals but at the same time in complete sympathy with one another.

Well, we have to use the same old plural to cover that.

Lokamitra: But the rest of the puja is in the singular. 'I go for Refuge I pay homage to all the shrines.'

S: That's true. I think there's something in the plural isn't there?

Lokamitra: In the public ordinations, when there are more than one person being

ordained you do make us say 'we purify our bodies' which is where the question for this comes from.

S~ati: Doesn't it come about through being associated with the .... small puja.

Because in the small puja its 'we' isn't it.

Voices: Yes.

S: Anyhow, I don't think there was any conscious association in my mind, as far as I remember. Maybe I should think about it. The Pali, of course is in the case of

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S: (cont.) the precepts, singular - samadiyami - 'I observe' or 'I practise'. Perhaps it would be a good idea to have it in the plural just to balance, just as the singular is not the singular of individualism. So the plural is not the plural of the collective, I mean, maybe we should sort of co~interact that (laughter) but I will think about it. But I think, as far as I remember, I had originally written "We purify our body" not bodies, I think that my original version was

Lokamitra: Yes, that was ....

S: That I purify 'my' or 'our' body.

Lokamitra: 'We purify our body' yes, I like that. Mind as well.

S: Yes. 'We purify our mind'. I think there's been some alteration which hasn't been consistent (laughter) yes, my original version was "we purify our body" - singular, "We purify our speech" and "We purify our mind" - singular. But in this copy~ body has been changed to bodies but mind has not been changed to minds. (laughter) There really will have to be a standard, thoroughly revised puja book. There's a provisional one on its way, but slightly amended, but after that there's going to be a thoroughly revised one, more complete. I think "we" ~oun~ better, I don't quite know why, but I think it sounds better than "I".

Voice: What about things being singular, you know "our body or our bodies. '

S: I think 'body' is better actually, like 'mind'. Like "We purify our mind". Yes. But, you know, the more you progress, the more, you, as it were, come into contact with the one mi~, the more your mind's harmonised so, you know, the particularity is looked after by the si~ularity of 'body' or 'mind' and the fact that you are, in your own e~~:perience separate individuals, is looked after by the plural pronoun, so you've got a combination of plural pronoun and (laughter) singular noun (laughter) so doesn't that strike you as quite a nice balance?~(laughter) "We purify our body, we purify our mind, we purify our speech" You wouldn't say "We purify our speeches"?

Lokamitra: No. (laughter)

S: That's not quite fair because its not quite the same gramatically. (laughter)

Voice: "We purify our body" c~n ~ound as though its one great lump.

S: Yes.

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S: Well, if you say 'our bodies' it soulds as if there's hundreds of great lumps (laughter) but 'mind' is perhaps a sort of borderline case isn't it? -'we purfiv our mind.'

Kularatna: It sou~nds a bit group orientated to me you know.... it's one big mind that we are all part of.

S: Well, that wouldn't be a group, would it (laughter) not if it was Mind with a capital M. Oh well, let's think about it then, certainly have to think about it in time for the final revised corrected edition of the puja.

Kularatna: Sometimes people have done in pu~as~ where its not all order members there, a version of the positive precepts with just the first four and then "With mindfulness and awareness we purify our mi~d5~~~

S: Ah, that's an innovation I hadn't heard of before. One must really watch these things. I don't mind things being added to or changed, but I would at least like to know what is happening so that if things develop too much in different directions, in different places, I can at least do something to bring them all together again. Otherwise one could have a centre going off quite wildly in one part~cular direction, and another centre going off equally wildly in a different direction. (laughter)

Kularatna: That's been around for quite some time.

S: ~ ~: Has it. I didn't know about it.

Lokamitra: I've only heard it since I came back from India.

S: The place where they've kept most faithfully to what exactly I had has been Helsinki, everywhere else there seems to be little innovations attempted from time to time. (laughter) There's been some quite dreadful ones. Oh yes, in New Zealand they had all the women doing the puja and the men sitting and just listening (laughter)

T~ which didn't seem at all right.

Kularatna: Why did they do that, what reason?

S: I think it was due to some sort of feminist ..(laughter) the women usually played so little part in things, so rarely took a leading role that, you know, they ought to be given the chance to do this, so they had a woman Order Member leading the puja and all the woman present making the responses and the men not saying anything at all. lokamitra: It was also to help the men ~t in touch with their more ... ..... feminine side. (laughter) by listening to

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S: But if it was a question of listening, and being receptive to something, to be more feminine, presumably you have to be more receptive to the masculine, not the feminine. Anyway, if we start talking about those things we could go on and on indefinitely, so anyway, I wrote and pointed out that the puja was essentially an expression of the devotion of the whole community, everybody present, and therefore it was almost part of a definition of puja that everybody joined in. I mean, if new people didn't want to join in, well, they need not, they could just remain at the back or on the fringes, but in the case of those who consider themselves Buddhists or who consider themselves 'Friends' and certainly Mitras, well everybody should join in. Otherwise it creates a sort of division within the spiritual community itself, you know, those who are participating and those who are not. They did admit subsequently that it was a rather odd idea but that is how they felt at the time. As far as I could see, the women in New Zealand were particularly equal and you know, not at all subordinate as far as I could see it seems quite unnecessary that they should have done that, even for the reasons stated.

Voice: (inaudible)

S: I'm not against it, no. I just like to know what is happening, or what is being done. Sometimes people may come up with quite good ideas, or particular centres might come up with quite good ideas. But it would be better if, in such cases, they just consulted me before they decided to go ahead with it. If I thought it was a particularly good idea, well, I might put a little note in 'Shabda' that, you know, from now on those who wish can do things in this way as well, so that the practices of different centres doesn't diverge too much. So that when you go to different centres you just join in smoothly, you're not suddenly jolted by a particular way of~ng things that you've never encountered before.

Voice: .... (inaudible)

S: (laughter) Well almost, almost (laughter)

Lokamitra: It would be different in India.

S: Well, you'd be very stric.~ there.

Lokamitra: What do you mean?

S: Beca~~e there are all these pulls from different Buddhist traditions and groups, to say nothing of Hinduism, we must have them doing things very strictly as we do them.

Lokamitra: Well, we won't be able to do the puja.

S: We won't be able to do the sevenfold puja, I mean not among Well, in a I sometimes think that we use it too generally. You know, in Helsinki they don't use the sevenfold puja for, you know, for new people, but only for Order Members and Mitras now, and very regular Friends, because they found that some people reacted very strongly to it, and this is why I composed the Basic Puja, at their request, so that there was something that they could use and which would not create offense. For instance, some Finns objected very strongly to the words 'I offer them lamps encrusted with jewels' because they said the lamps on the alter didn't have any jewels on them, (laughter) and they considered that this was a breach of the precept not to use false speech. They couldn't understand, or were quite unable to understand that it was an imaginative offering, an offering in spirit as it were, they were quite unable to understand this and kept coming back again and again to this. That you're speaking a lie in the puja, and they were quite unable to recite the words. They even went 'there' 5 no p~~ng sprinkled wiih perfume and we're not scattering handfuls of beautiful flowers' so .. it's all a lie ... so they wouldn't recite it (laughter)

Voice: It is ... the puja is very much rooted in Indian tradition rather than the Chinese or Japanese tradition and it can take quite a long time to get a feel for it.

S: Yes, we did have a friend some years ago trying to make an English version, that is to say, an English equivalent. He totally failed. It was quite suprising that people felt far less comfortable with it, it was really odd, like, I think he tried to bring in roses and daffo~dils and make it a bit more poetic in the English way, but it was a total t~ailure. I mean, I'm not suggesting that it could never be done, but he certainly wasn't able to do it.

Voice: But had you thought of doing one, in the same sort of way as you've done the Basic Puja, but having verses for the seven...

S: I have thought of it, but I haven't yet found my self in either a mood to do it or, in a way, able to do it.... able to see how it could be done. I'm really quite open to the idea that it should be done. (pause) Anyway, it is one o'clock now....

S: So, the papa-desana, Confession of Faults" and the three verses here are the last three verses of Chapter Two of the B.A. Just one little point before we start reading .... the last line of what appears, in the typescript of the first verse is really the first line of the second verse. That is to say "All that I acknowledge to the Protectors" belongs to the following verse, it is the first line of the following verse.

Voice: It should be a full stop.

S: Yes, it should be, yes. Er.... the sense is carried on.

Don't forget the division is there in verse.

Allright, let's read round the circle then.

Voice: "Confession of F~ul~5~ "The evil which I have heaped up Through my ignorance and foolisbness Evil in the world of everyday experience As well as evil in understanding and intelligence." lokamitra:

"All that I acknowledge to the Protectors

Standing before them

With hands raised in reverence

And terrified of suffering

I pay sa~~ations again and again."

Voice:

"May the teachers receive this kindly Just as it is, with its many faults What is not geod, 0 Protectors I shall not do again."

S: So what does the papa-desana, or Confession of Faults, essentially represent, especially in context of the sevenfold puja. To understand that properly we just have to recall the sequence of devotional states or devotional moods as represented by the three previous sections. In the case of the puja, you just rejoice, take delight in the beauty of the spiritual ideal and then in the Salutation you salute

S: (cont.) that, you bow down before that, thereby recognising the great distance that separates you, as you at present are, from that. You recognise that that is infinitely superior to you, but when you come to the third stage, the Going for Refuge, you take courage as it were, and you determine to close the gap that separates you as you are now from the spiritual ideal ... you go for refgge, you start actively progressing in the direction of the apiritual ideal.. So the, when you come to ... by the time you come on to the papa-desana, the Confession of Faults, you've started making that effort, you've Gone for Re~fuge, so you find that there are all sorts of things holding you back, all sorts of bad habits that you've formed, results of unskilful actions which you1 ve committed, and you find or you discover that you're in

generally a bad way in certain respects. So you acknowledge that, you recognise that, you confess that, not only in the depths of your own heart but also in front of the spiritual community, and this is what we mean by confession.

You may remember that there's a lecture in the 'Golden Light' series on the 'Spiritual Significance of Confession.'

So, "The evil which I have heaped up, through my ignorance and foolishness."

Let me read the translation of these three verses by Matics. "Whatever the evil that has been accumulated by my foolishness and ignorance;

and whatever of my speaking and teaching is objectionable; and whatever is evil by nature I confess it all, standing in the presence of the Lords, fearing sorrow, with folded hands prostrating myself again and again. Nay the leaders accept my sin and transgression, that which was not good lords, will not be done again by me." So.... "The evil which I have heaped up" - first of all, 'evil' or 'faults', papa, what do you think that essentially is? What is this 'evil' which you are confessing.

Voice: Unskilful states of mind.

S: Unskilful states of mind ..... Why are they evil, what sort of states of mind, S

how are they character~d?

Voice: They are destructive.

S: They are destructive of what?

Voice: Of Going for Refuge, they don't help you

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S: Yes, they don't help you. They inhibit your Going for Refuge. It's everything that holds you back. But what is it, more specifically which holds you back, apart from saying in general that they're unskilful states of mind. What are these unskilful states of mind.

Voice: Greed, hatred and delusion.

S: Basically, greed, hatred and delusion. All that belongs to the lower evolution, and sometimes of course, they can take very subtle forms. So "The evil which I have heaped up" - you notice that Mrs. Bennetts translation says 'heaped up' whereas Matics says accuuulated. I think 'heaped up' is much better. Accumulation suggests something passive like, you know, your dividends accuuulating in the bank, you don't have to do anything about it, but heaping up suggests an active part played by you, like you 'heap up' earth or 'heap up' sand or heap up anything else.

So "The evil which I have heaped up" So what does this suggest, what sort of picture does it paint as it were?

Voice: Blind ignorance in the past.

S: Yes, but what sort of picture.

Voice: like a dung heap. (laughter)

S: Yes ...

Sagaramati: A sort of heaviness ..... you've actively done it.

S: A sort of heaviness, yes ... you've actively done it, yes. The picture that is painted is of someone, sort of actively heaping up evil. Well, surely that is the most ridiculous sort of thing to do but actually that is what we're doing much of the time, in the course of our various activities, we're heaping up evil. We might think we're doing all sorts of things, when actually it amounts to a heaping up of evil, we're strengthening those halts which are holding us back, holding us back on the spiritual path, from going more effectively for refuge. So this is how we are passing our time, busily heaping up evil. So "The evil which I have heaped up through my ignorance and foolishness" - the 'ignorance and foolishness' suggests the basic cause as it were. Matics also translates foolishness and ignorance. What do you think is the difference between ignorance and foolishness, taking these words at their face value more or less.

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Voice: Ignorance means you're not aware and foolishness you're aware to some extent, but you're going against it.

S: I'd say that 'ignorance' referred more to fundamental principles and 'foolishness' to the carrying out of those principles, you know, the application of them. When you get your basic principles wrong, that's ignorance, and you're unaware of basic principles but even though you've some awareness, you don't manage to apply them properly in every day life, that's foolishness. Ignorance is more theoretical. Foolishness is more practical. There's some difference in the translations here. Mrs. Bennett speaks of 'evil in the world of everyday experience' and Matics says 'whatever of my speaking and teaching is objectionable' - it's in the course of everyday experience that actually one is talking. If one is a monk, well one is teaching, so one confesses 'whatever of my speaking and even teaching is objectionable' And Matics translates, 'and whatever is evil by nature' and Mrs. Bennett translates 'as well as evil in understanding and intelligence' (pause) 'All that I acknowledge to the protectors.' The operative word is all, you confess all, do you think that is very easy?

Voices: No.

S: What usually happens?

Sagaramati: You hold back

S: You hold back, but why do you hold back?

~i: Because you're not prepared to give them up.

S: Yes, there is that point.

lokamitra: But if you're ignorant ....

Voice: Rationalisation.

S: Rationalisation, yes.

Lokamitra: ..... but sometimes you don't even ..... if you're ignorant of something you can't know what it is exactly that you have to confess.

S: But presuming that you do know it what holds you back?

Voice: Fear.

S: Fear, yes. Basically fear of change, fear that you have to give up that thing which you confess, but very often we notice that when people confess things it's as

though they don't really believe or feel that it's anything to confess. They are

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S: (cont.) willing to confess very often, those things they don't care about very much, or don't really think are sins or offences. Or in other words, they may even confess things of which, in fact, they are secretly rather proud. Their confession may become in a way almost boasting, do you see what I'm getting at? But the things of which they're really and truly ashamed, things which they really do think are wrong or evil they find very difficult to confess. So when people come and confess very often one finds that there are a number of ..... what they confess in their heart of hearts they very often don't think needs confessing, they are not bothered by it, they don't mind other people knowing because they don't feel it very much. The things they don't confess and don't dare hardly look at even are the things that they really are ashamed of and really to think are evil. So one should always look at this, in oneself of course, as well as in others and see what you really are confessing and what you're holding back and try to see whether what you're confessing is really being confessed. There is a difference between telling people about something and confessing something, do you see that? I mean you might tell somebody that you committed a burglary last night, but that wouldn't necessarily be a confession. So one has to be quite sure that you are in fact confessing and not just telling - much less so, boasting or bragging - sometimes it's rather difficult to distinguish between the two, even oneself, and to know in fact what one is doing.

Voice: The difference being that when you're confessing, you're acknowledging . that being evil.

S: Yes, yes, you really do acknowledge that as evil. You feel a certain amount of shame on

account of having done that particular thing. You're also aware that those to whom you're confessing will regard it as evil, that you share that belief that it is evil, that they will not brush it aside as something insignificant or something that doesn't matter. Of course, there are some things which are conventionally considered evil, and about which you might feel quite bad and quite sincerely and honestly confess those things only to find that, well, they are not in fact what you thought them, they aren't evil in that sort of way, you know, missing church isn't really evil, so then you feel, well that is the other mistake

as it were. -44-

S: (cont0) The first mistake is not to really appreciate that what is evil, is evil. The second is to consider to be evil something which is in fact not so or perhaps not as evil as you thought it was.

Voice: So, is that the hallmark of confession, that one should feel shame?

S: Yes, perhaps we don't have a proper word for it, even shame is not the word for it, guilt is certainly not the word, at least intense regret, especially if it has involved harm to another person. Supposing that you realise that you've committed a really foolish action, an evil action and that that wrongful action has actually harmed someone of whom you are genuinely fond and that it cannot be undone, perhaps that harm is irreparable, you certainly will feel strong regret. You'll really wish you had not done that action, this is perhaps the hallmark of the regret or the shame one might say, that you really wish you had not done it. You really do see that you have done something evil. Perhaps we see it most clearly of all when it does involve some innocent other person, that we've involved in some suffering through our evil or foolish actions. So for confession to be possible there must be recognition of what is confessing as evil. It mustn't be a sort of cool, objective recognition, a sort of ticking off what you've done against the precepts, but really feel it, it must be an emotional experience too. I suppose most people have had that sort of experience at some time or other in their lives, of realising that they've done something wrong something evil, which has affected other people in a very negative way, has resulted in pain, suffering, inconvenience~ for other people, and have therefore felt very sorry on that account, deeply regretful on that account, especially when you realise that not only can you not undo it you cannot even make it up to that person or persons, you can't make up for what you've done. It's not only irreparable but irredeemable, you might say. Actions are like that, once done, they are done, they cannot be altered.

Voice: What about situations you get in where you could do an action but you don't do it?

S: That's true, sometimes that too you can bitterly regret, that as far as you see you could have done good, you could have helped, but you didn't. That's you know .... an act of omission ... rather than commission .... the evil consi~d

in not doing the good act at the right time, when you could have done it and could have helped as far as you can see. That also can be a source of regret, so that is also something to be confessed, that you didn't help or didn't do some sort of skilful action when you could have done it. So what does all this imply in a broader sense? Well, it implies responsibility, that you are responsible for your actions, that you committed that action whether skilful or unskilful, good or evil. You were responsible, it's your responsibility. You are the heir of your own actions as the Buddha says.

Lokamitra: What is the best way, do you think, to make a confession Bhante?

S: When you say 'the best way' what do you mean, the best sort of situation in which ....? I think the great thing to be avoided is merely formal confession or general confession. One does have this in religious traditions. One does have this say, in the Christian, which is, say, in the Church of England - a sort of general confession . "we have erred and strayed from they ways like lost sheep and there is no help in us" etc. etc., which everyone recites together on a Sunday morning, without, I assume, usually ever thinking of any specific offence which you've committed. There's a general awareness of yourself as a miserable sinner and that's that (laughter). We do have the same sort of thing unfortunately in Buddhism, where, for instance in the case of the monastic order. I must say I was quite shocked and horrified the first time I encountered confession. Perhaps I should back-track a little bit and tell you about this. You know when we heard the tape the other evening I spoke of some of my experiences of Going for Refuge but this is a similar experience with regards to confession. As the original practice seems to have been in the Buddha's day, that whenever a monk or whenever a Bhikkhu felt he had not lived up to the teaching he confessed it to the Buddha or to other monks at the first opportunity offered but eventually it so happened that there was a fortnightly meeting or rather, it was already being held, and

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S: (cont.) the fortnightly meeting started being turned into, or at least made to include a recitation of all the rules for Bhikshus which has by that time been accumulated and these were recited or announced, and anyone who felt he had infringed any of the rules had at that time to declare himself and be dealt with by the whole chapter of the monastic order accordingly. But later on it seems (these changes might have taken hundreds of years) later on it seems, another development took place. Before that particular meeting the monks would get together in twos and confess to each other so that by the time the full meeting was held they were all, technically, pure. So they listened to the recitation of the rules and remained silent. But eventually the getting together in twos became a formality and that was my experience. What happened was, I was in Nepal, this was in 1952, and after my Bhikshu ordination, this was the first time I had been together with large numbers of Bhikshus. So

someone was going to be ordained that was to be an Upasampava, that is to say a Bhikshu ordination ceremony. And all the monks from Ceylon who were visiting and from India, also those from Nepal were going to be present and confer the ordination. So we split up into twos beforehand for the confession so that we should all be technically pure as it were to carry out the Upasampava ceremony. And I found myself together with a very worthy Nepalese monk who was deeply engaged in setting up a Buddhist school, he'd been trained in Ceylon. So what happened was, I hadn't undergone this particular ceremony before so he was explaining or showing me how to do it, and it consisted in him gabbling some words in Pali to me and I gabbled some back to him, and then he gabbled a few more to me and that was that, and he quite clearly had absolutely no interest in the meaning of what he had recited, none whatever, it was just a formula which he had to recite, a formula which I had to recite and that was that. It was a bit of magic as it were, and we were purified and you know there was absolutely no conception whatever of opening ourselves up to each other and going into anything in any real~ sort of way, it was an absolute formality, not to say fiasco. And this is what it had come to, and I've never, within the context of the Sangha in India, which means Bhikshus from Ceylon, Burma and so on, Nepal, I've never encountered any other way

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S: (cont.) of doing it - which seems terrible, but, when there's a degeneration in the Going for Refuge correspondingly there will be a degeneration in this sort of practise too. So this is what it must not become, it must not become something formal or something that is done on stated occasions. I think what must happen is that when somebody feels that, rightly or wrongly, they've committed some sort of offence or they've been backsliding, that they're not very happy with themselves or happy with their progress or not happy about something they've done, or failed to do, then they must just get together, informally if they like with two or three other Order Members, four or five other Order Members, if they themselves happen to be Order Members and just say - no question of formal confession - you know

"This is what I've done, I really feel upset about it, I shouldn't have done it,

please give me your advice or please at least hear my confession and help me to do better in future." If you feel like bringing it up in the context of a puja or in the context of an Order Meeting, do that, but let it not be a sort of hard and fast rule that as part of the proceedings we shall devote five minutes to confession, I mean, it isn't like that. The essence of the thing is it must be spontaneous and natural and because you feel that you've got something that is burdening you and that you want to get off your chest - not exactly share with others, it's not the sort of thing which one would really like .... or one would wish to share, but at least just to open up to others so that they can help you purify that, do you see what I mean?

-The other day, after we had been talking about the Going for Refuge and what it had degenerated into in the ~ast, I couldn't help feeling that everyone who is in contact with the F.W.B.O. is really in a fortunate position to have it spelled out to them, right from the very beginning, exactly what it is all about. This certainly wasn't my experience as I made clear nor was it my experience, as I've just said, with regard to the nature of confession. I think I can say that the whole of the time I was in India I don't remember any Bhikshu taking this question of confession seriously, and that's quite a serious sort of thing to say. The only time when anyone ever came to me to confess anything was, I remember, in London when a

Tibetan monk that I had known in India, came to see me in a state of great distress, he was

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S: (cont.) over here to help out the Tibetan studies somewhere but he came to me in a state of great distress just to confess that he'd formed a relationship with a woman and was going to leave the Order and get married, and he really was upset and he really did confess that but by that time there was nothing which he could do to retrieve the situation, but he did leave the Order, did get married, but he really did feel he'd made a terrible mistake and he did confess that in a quite natural, spontaneous sort of way, a very sincere and genuine way. But that was my only experience in that sort of connection, before the F.W.B.O. was founded. So it's quite a weighty reflection that this quite psychologically and spiritually important practice of confession has either been completely institutionalised out of existence or forgotten all together - in the Buddhist East.

Lokamitra: It's quite hard to listen to someone ..... I mean I know that when I talk about things even to Order Members, some Order Members, you know, quite personal then I have to be a bit careful sometimes.

S: Yes ..... What do you mean ..... that ?

Lokamitra: Well, that ..... if I say something that means a lot to me, or some experience, if people don't open themselves to it then you begin to regret that you said something.

S: Yes, this raises a quite important point which is not only how one should make one's confession, but how one should receive, or how one should listen to people. You know, who are really opening up to you. But I know what you mean, it's as though the fact that you are being open and saying what you really feel about yourself and your own behaviour, your own actions, makes people almost quite uncomfortable and they resent being made uncomfortable, or at least they're not very happy about it, so why do you think that is? You know, you might think 'Well after all, you're not confessing,' making the confession is, as it were, in the humble position but why is it that you're unable to accept that or accept his confession or really give ear to that. What makes one uneasy or uncomfortable?

Voice: Perhaps because you see similar things in yourself which you are, as it were, holding back yourself.

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S: Yes, it could be that. I mean, even if you don't see similar things, you might not have the same things to confess, at least you are made aware of your own relative lack of openness. Do you think there's anything more than that?

Sagaramati: I think also perhaps, you don't feel worthy or receiving someone's confession.

S: It could be that. It also could be sometimes that you've got enough negativity of your own to cope with (laughter). So what should be one's attitude, when somebody opens up in that sort of way? One should certainly listen very carefully be very receptive; but it's receptive in a certain kind of way, you're not receptive to the evil as such, you're certainly receptive to that person's openness in confessing the evil. You know, when you're confessing, you're not spewing something up or spewing something out as you might on the psychoanalyst's couch, it's a rather different thing - it all takes place within a spiritual context, you know, not being self-indulgent as I think sometimes happens in, say, psychoanalytically oriented groups, where people talk about their experiences and maybe tell all the dreadful things that they have done. I think that that can be often something a bit like boasting or exhibitionism.

Io~amitra: Sometimes, when you're doing this, you're not actually asking for advice because, in a way you're aware of the whole situation .... people still

S: Yes it's blindingly obvious what you should do

Lokamitra: but then they should give you advice immediately as it were .... and I'm always a bit suspicious there because it sort of it sometimes means that they haven't really listened at all.

S: Yes .

Sagaramati: What it seems to mean is that you have to be very, very careful who you confess to ....

S: Yes.

Sagaramati: If you're confessing because you feel you're backsliding, you make sure that the person you're confessing to is quite confident in the fact that they're going forward.

S: Right .!~. yes ~~~.~ yes 0000 otherwise you might be confessing to someone who had a great deal of faith in you and was looking up to you for guidance and support and when he hears you making your confession you're undermining all that confidence! So you need to confess to ..... well a small..... let's not say 'group' a mini spiritual community or a mini chapter of the Order where there is a certain amount of strength and ability to hear and to bear your confession. That those people are not depending on you in that sort of way. They are not depending on you for moral support or spiritual inspiration or guidance. And the more serious the matter you have to confess, the more careful you have to be about that sort of thing.

Voice: Do you believe that there has to be more than one person . (not clear)

S: I think one has to be very careful about confessing to one's best friend, as it were, you know, who might let you off a little bit lightly, I think one has to watch that, and also it may be that you should consider whether, when you're confessing just to one person, perhaps with whom you get on rather well, if it is a confession at all~ yes? I think there should be several

people, you know, without laying down a hard and fast rule. Do you see what I mean?

Voice: There's a difference between confession and confidence.

S: Yes, yes, yes. It's a bit like the puja .... that if you're just doing it with one other person, you're not exactly a spiritual community, in a sense it's not a puja - in the sense of an act of the spiritual community. You really need more people to fill it out and make it a spiritual community so that what is done can be an act of the whole spiritual community. I think it's much the same with confession.

Voice: Does that mean the puja can't really be done on one's own?

S: No, I'm not saying that, but I'm saying it's a very different experience you know, when you have the whole spiritual community doing it. It's not just individual, it's certainly not a group thing, it's a third kind of thing, which we can only designate as pertaining to the spiritual community. It's that sort

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S: (cont.) of element, or that sort of factor I'm referring to as being needed in the context of confession. I mean, if you confess within the context of the spiritual community that's quite different to confiding to a friend or opening up to your analyst or anything of that sort.

Sagaramati: When you say ..... you don't do it with somebody whose a good friend because they might let you off so the people who receive the confession it's not just a passive thing. it's not just S: No. It isn't just a passive thing. They may .... it may be, as lokamitra said, that you don't need any advice, you know perfectly well what you've got to do, you're just admitting what you've done and also promising amendment in future, this also is an essential part of confession, that you're not going to do it again, as the verse says but on the other hand, you might have got yourself into such a mess, or such a muddle, you need a bit of straightening out, it might you know, you might be confessing the same thing for the umpteenth time, the spiritual community might, as it were, get a bit fed up with you and might find it necessary to speak with you rather sharply and say, well do you realise what you're doing? Or they might think that you've not made a full confession. It would be open for them to say so, so you've not really plumbed the evil sufficiently, you're just confessing surface things, there's much more to it than that, that you don't seem to have seen or realised. So the spiritual community might well, in the course of the confession or afterwards, think it necessary to adopt that sort of attitude. They may have to play quite an active role, though even the listening is, in a way, is active, it isn't just passive in the ordinary sense, it's receptive, which is in a way active, but they may find it necessary to speak to the person. They might even say, "Well look, you're making a mountain out of a mole hill," they might have to say that too sometimes. Or they might say, "Well even though you have confessed it, you don't really seem to realise it is in fact more serious even than you think.

(End of Tape 2 Side 3)

S: (cont.) .. or, as I've said, they may point out, ~'Well look you've done this so many times before, each time you confess it, well, what is the meaning of this? You're supposed to promise amendment but you haven't amended, you've just done it again and again confessed, this is not good enough." Or they might feel the need to go into, "Well, why did you do it, it wasn't really necessary, what lead you to do it, what were the circumstances? Did you get yourself into a situation that you should not have allowed yourself to get into in the first place? And what was that due to, was it over confidence, was it unmindfulness, rashness of judgement and so on." They might consider it helpful to go into things in that sort of way. They might even find it necessary to give that person a shaking up, and the person making the confession should be prepared for that. There might even be the question of certain action to be taken, if the evil confessed m~be involves a particular centre, involves perhaps the Order, other individuals not present. I mean, supposing someone confessed that they'd co=itted an offence which places them within the reach of the law, then that may have to be considered in various ways. Supposing someone confesses a criminal offence, well, you being ? of that criminal offence, could be considered legally as accessory after the fact. So, I don't want to go into them too much, but there are these other aspects of ? but the general principle is clear and so obvious, but perhaps we could take a slightly different tack which perhaps we haven' t taken before, although I just touched on it a few minutes ago. It is as much a funtion of the spiritual community to point out that an evil is not as evil as you think it is as to point out that an evil may be greater than you think it is. You see what I'm ~etting at? Because, in our present society we are con- ditioned in a certain way, and it's the duty of the .... or the responsibility of the spiritual community to help decondition it's individual members because, despite your own awareness and own conviction you may not sometimes be able to help feeling that sometimes things are~evil even when you know that they are not. And it then becomes the function of the spiritual community to reinforce your feeling that they are not in fact evil, as perhaps society says. For instance, work. Supposing you have been brought up to believe it's almost sinful not to work, not to have a regular job. So you may still actually be feeling this, and someone might come along and say .....

S: (cont.) "Well, look, I really want to confess something, that I've not worked for a year, and I feel really bad about it." And then it ls the duty of the Spiritual community to say t?Well, that is not necessarily an evil, you ought not necessarily to be confessing it, you're just subject to certain social pressures and a certain kind of social conditioning." I mean, if your motives are unskilful well, yes, fine, but were they? You've been devoting your time to meditation, you've been helping out at the centre °... and then you may discover that some friend of their's in the world, or some relation have made some disparaging remarks to this person about, he's not working, about, you know, him being a parasite and all that sort of thing. He' 5 started feeling bad, and that he' s done something wrong and therefore he was confessing it. So then it would be the function of the spiritual community to convince him and make him feel that what he had been made to feel was evil was not in fact that. So maybe, (we haven' t ~,ix gone into this systematically before) but maybe that is just as much the function of the spiritual community, not only in inculcate a befitting sense of what is unkkilful but also to remove that unbecfitting sense of what is unakilful. Do you see what I mean?

So that however bad certain things may be considered outside, well, you know that within the context of the spiritual community they're not considered such, and that helps you to get things into perspective and to feel unskillful things as unskillful and skillful things as skillful, regardless of what society at large thinks, and this is I very important indeed, in other words, to reinforce the individual against society at large. This is one of the main functions of the spiritual community, especially with regard to what is truly evil, and what is truly not evil. So .... do you see what I'm getting at here?

Voice: The hallmark of someone confessing that sort of thing would be guilt wouldn't

it? They would be guilty rather than anything.

S: Yes, yes and I have said, even in that lecture that I referred to, that one of the signs of true confession is that there's no sense of guilt. Guilt is the sense of having offended a greater power on which you are emotionally dependant. So, you do not feel guilty, and I mentioned a little while ago that I was avoiding using the word 'guilty' in this connection .... with confession. You should not feel guilty

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S: (cont.) when you confess, in the Western, Christian sense which still lingers on in our society. You feel ashamed yes, I think one can use that word, you feel intensely regretful, you wish you hadn't done it, you really do, but you don't feel guilty, you don't feel you've offended some higher power which may punish you, and upon whose affection and love you depend, and whom you do not want to offend for that reason.

Lokamitra: You can't confess if you're in that state, can you?

S: You can't really no. In any case, there may be nothing to confess in fact, from the Buddhist point of view.

Voice: You could confess you're feeling guilty.

S: Yes, right. If you get into a feeling of guilt and you are sufficiently aware to know that, yes, you can go and say "Well look, I confess that I am feeling guilty about something that really I know quite well that there's no need to feel guilty about ..... please help me." Yes? One could certainly do that. Because, even though we are individuals, we do have to move about in society at large, you know, in the group, and group values are usually, very often, wrong values and while we're in the midst of the group we can't help being affected, if not sharing, at least reflecting or being influenced to some extent, so it's a function of the spiritual community as such to reinforce our individuality against the group pressures, especially with regards to the evaluation of good and evil, skillful and unskillful. Can you think of other things, or what sort of things would the group outside consider evil but which were not necessarily evil from the standpoint of the evil of the individual and about which he might feel guilty when he was in a group situation, but not guilty if he were surrounded and supported by the members of the spiritual community.

Voice: Well, like leaving your wife, something like that. (laughter)

S: Like leaving your wife, yes. Well, it's almost a criminal activity in the eyes of the world, or a criminal act. Or not fighting when called upon to do so, being a conscientious objector in time of war for instance. Not going to see your parents every weekend (laughter) - there are all sorts of things ... having no visible means of support. So, I think it's necessary to be aware of the extent to

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S: (cont.) which the values of the spiritual community are in conflict virtually with the values usually accepted by society, and to realise that one is being affected by those social values all of the time, because after all, one is born and brought up in the group and even though one is now a member of the spiritual community one is still, very often in the midst of the group, on one's own as an individual, apart from the other members of the spiritual community and you need, as an individual, constant reinforcement. So that it's individual values that really dominate your life, the values of the spiritual community not the values of the group. So this is one aspect of confession.

This is why it seems to me so extraordinary when Christmas Humphreys told me, perhaps I shouldn't say confessed, but he told me that .... this was after I came back from India .... that it had been his aim and object during 40 years of work for Buddhism in Britain, to try to make Buddhism respectable. So what does this involve, what does this imply?

Voice: Conforming with the group.

S: Conforming to group values, yes? and this was why it was so interesting when I

last met him . he was rather full of the fact that in connection with the Queen's Silver Jubilee Celebrations, he had been invited to St. Pauls Cathedral as the representative of British Buddhists on that occasion, along with representatives of other religious denominations and he clearly felt, this is what he conveyed to me, that this was the sign that Buddhism had at last really arrived - the seal of official, formal Royal approval had been put on Buddhism in Britain. (laughter) He described how he had got the invitation from the Lord Chamberlain on the proper embossed note paper with the appropriate, I think it was royal, arms (laughter) and how he checked up carefully that it was an invitation to him as President of the Society not just as him for, he's just .... a high court judge and so on but no it was to him as head of the society, as representative of British Buddhists, and he sat there in the nave of St. Pauls Cathedral, with ecclesiastical dignitaries of every kind all around him on that noteworthy occasion. So, I said well,.... (laughter) "Don't you think that possibly that there's some danger in all this?" So he turned round rather sharply and said "What do you mean?" I said "Well don't you think there's

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S: (cont.) some danger of Buddhism becoming part of the establishment?" and he looked really puzzled, and I wondered well, why is he puzzled? and then of course it dawned on me, he's never thought of being part of the establishment as being a danger, yes? and the fact that I thought of it as a danger really puzzled him, was new to him; he had to make a mental adjustment to the fact that British Buddhism being part of the establishment could be a danger from the spiritual point of view. Clearly he had never thought of that before and that idea had never occurred to him you see what I mean? This, though I know him quite well, and though he had, some years before, when I arrived in England and was staying at the Hampstead Buddhist Vihara, though he had told me I should consider myself the Buddhist equivalent of a vigilante (laughter) even so I was quite surprised that he seemed completely oblivious to the fact, had never considered the possibility even that British Buddhism being part of the establishment could constitute a danger. So, we talked about it a bit, and then, he did begin to see, and I said, "Well, don't you think if British Buddhism became part of the establishment it could just lead to its spiritual decay, degeneration?" So he just thought for a minute, shrugged his shoulders and said, "Well, that's inevitable isn't it?" (laughter) but, clearly what he thought of as a triumph, an achievement and the culmination of 1 by this time, 50 years work, I was seeing in exactly opposite terms, and this is the message of his autobiography, he shows Christmas Humphreys the barrister and judge very much part of the British establishment and trying with might and main to haul Buddhism in after him, and make it part of the establishment, and in the end, at least as far as the Buddhist Society is concerned, he sort of succeeds. But this represents, this story represents the pressures to which we are subjected all of the time. So I used to say, some time ago, that if it was his object to make Buddhism in Britain respectable it was mine to make it (laughter) unrespectable.

Lokamitra: (laughter) .... you're doing quite well ... (laughter)

S: Not nearly well enough, not nearly the danger is when you become successful, especially when you have a bit of money, a bit of property, people start considering you respectable, even society starts considering you respectable, you know, as I mentioned the other day, talking about my experience when I acquired the Kalimpong

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S: (cont.) Vihara and, insensibly you start accepting, insensibly you start being a bit pleased that you're acceptable to people, whereas it would probably be much better if you continued to be rude and standoffish and almost quarrelling with them. I think that would be a safer sort of position to be in. When you start becoming friendly with the powers-that-be, that is the time to look out for danger .... I mean from a spiritual point of view. You may seem to be doing very well, but actually the rot has already set in. So sometimes one might find it necessary, well we haven't got to this stage yet, but we might one day; one might find it necessary to actually do quite outrageous things, which are really going to upset everybody and really upset the apple cart and make them dislike you and reject you all over again, because that is what you really want, to be driven out into the wilderness, not settle down cosily in the village with everybody else, like everybody else. So I think we do have to watch this, especially when we become more successful in the worldly sense. I sometimes, as I

watch Order Members even, going from 25 to 26, 27, 28 and even 30, and you can see them getting just a little bit more staid (laughter) and I start wondering, well where is it going to end? Whereas actually, as you get older (laughter) what will they be like when they're 40 or 50? Well, actually what should happen is, the older you get, the more revolutionary you should get, yes? Actually, the more extreme, but with all the cunning and resource (laughter) of old age. That is why it is sometimes said and I repeat this - 'there is no revolutionary like an old revolutionary.' The young revolutionary is just hot blooded, just impulsive, that's not being revolutionary at all, and usually he gets over it and settles down and conforms, but the real revolutionary is one who, the older he gets he gets more and more revolutionary. That's the real revolutionary. He is the really dangerous one, who lies low, bides his time, studies the situation, does everything cool, calculating, undermining everything (laughter) holds his fire-power as it were (laughter) does the maximum amount of damage with the minimum resources. So this is what one must bear in mind, not the young hot-head who does everything prematurely and collapses in the middle of it and is rescued by someone else (laughter) or the young bull who runs his head against the brick wall and just gets knocked out for the remainder of the battle. But, you see what I'm getting at? Because society numerically speaking

S: (cont.) is so much bigger than we are. At the moment, in terms of Order Members, in Britain there are about 1 to every ~ million of British taxpayers (laughter). So it's one of the functions therefore of the spiritual community to reinforce in the individuals, individual values and when they even, as sometimes might happen, succumb to group values, to help them get over that. Especially when they confess it or bring it out into the open, or ask to be helped in that particular way. There's also a sort of class of cases, i.e. one's going into this, things which are considered wrong by the group, which some people who profess to be individuals do not consider wrong and certain things that they might be doing under the impression that they were thereby being all the more individuals etc., etc., but actually they're just being selfish, just being individualists. Can you think of any instances of this? I mean, I can but let's see if you can. Voice: . (not clear)

S: That could be alright, it depends on what you want to do. I was thinking of something quite concrete like 'ripping off' as a radical revolutionary activity, you know what I mean? That someone, well ..... goes around the supermarket and just steals. He says, "Well, yes, this is what the group considers it to be but I don't consider it that, you know, this is a rotten capitalist society, I've got the right to take whatever I need and I'm just doing it by stealth because you know, they've got all the force, got all the power, I can't compete with that, I've got every right to do this, it belongs as much to me as to the capitalists who own the supermarket, so I'm just taking what's mine, what's due to me." So how do you feel about this, don't you think that's a borderline case? Or do you think it is genuinely revolutionary activity, or is someone doing it just out of bloody mindedness, unwillingness to work in a quite negative sense, lack of care for other people and their rights and their feelings?

Voice: Often resentment too.

S: Often resentment too, but you see what I'm getting at. It's as though you might have to point out to such a person that you're not being an individual, you're just being an individualist, you're reacting to the group rather than rising above it, and to the extent that you're merely reacting, you're just a member of it,

~: (cont.) you care just as much about possessions, property and so on as they do. !£ht' thing is, they've got them, you haven't and you're not very happy with that situation. Do you think there ever is anybody who does this sort of thing or indulges in this sort of thing out of genuinely skillful motive, do you think that is possible? Indulges in what would be considered by the group illegal and criminal activities? I mean, you might find this question put to you, what do

you think?

Voice: It's obviously a case similar to South Africa, you indulge in all manner of illegal activities, but .

S: Ah, but 'illegal' which coincides with unskillful in the Buddhist sense? For instance if, you know, you are 'ripping off' in a supermarket, you are, from a Buddhist point of view, infringing the Second Precept, yes? but if ..... let's say, a white South African, you sit down on a seat marked 'blacks only' to protest against race laws, well, you're not infringing any Buddhist precept, you are merely brea~ng man-made laws which do not coincide with what Buddhists would regard as natural ethics. But could it ever be that you broke or appeared to break precepts in a skillful way, do you think that is a possibility, as in the sort of instance I mentioned?

Kulananda: There' S the story of the lama and the girl who used to bring him food and the other lamas being reborn as a donkey ..... do you know ....?

S: Yes ...(laughter) but he was a very lucky lama, he knew what was happening at a distance, could read peoples thoughts etc., etc., so, I don't think you can quite compare him with the political radicals of this sort. (Pause) I'm sure Kulananda will be only too pleased to tell you afterwards (laughter). You ought to know it anyway, I'm sure you do, you must have heard it.

but you see the sort of£ situation that I'm getting at? I mean, I don't suggest this is a problem for anyone within the Order for instance, but you may get asked this by people of some radical political involvement. So what would be your reply?

Lokamitra: Is it really a constructive act?

S: Is it really a constructive act, yes, does it really help, and is it skillful in that sense.

Lokamitra: Or does it just sort of make the situation worse.

S: Yes . Well, of course, they niight argue, well they want to make the conflict worse, want to make it clear that there is a conflict.

Lokawitra: But even so, those sort of acts are so petty

S: Yes, and also, if you do it secretly ..... I mean, if you really believe that, you should do it openly and suffer the consequences perhaps .... If you do it in a sneaking sort of way it's clear that in fact you don't want to have any, you don't want to have a showdown over it, as it were, but if you really believed in the principle presumably you would just sort of go in and help yourself and walk out without paying, you know, wanting to get caught, and then make your point when you were brought to court and go to prison still making your point, but not doing it say, day after day, week after week avoiding arrest or observation all the time.

Lokamitra: I was reading 'The World Turned Upside Down' - you notice the people.... this is about the revolutionary period in the 1640's and 1630's and so on. In fact you notice that many of the common people then are quite open about their feelings towards the church, they will say when they're taken to court "I don't care a damn about the Archbishop or I don't care about

S: Yes, there are even quite illiterate women saying this, yes, quite that is quite extraordinary because these sort of people, these sort of sentiments don't usually get into literature or into print, at a time when literature is more or less monopolised by the upper classes. You don't hear these sort of voices in literature usually.

Lokamitra: So what they were doing, you know, refusing to pay tariffs or whatever it might have been, they were quite sincere about.

S: Yes ..... the borderline cases come when one is infringing or appears to infringe not only a law but also a Buddhist precept, as in the case of taking what is not given, so I think one has to be very careful about that, if one did decide that one did, in a way have the moral right to decide, to engage in any such activity it should only be out of very careful thought, examination of one's motives and consultation with spiritual friends, you're not doing it off one's own bat, which might possibly, indirectly lead to involve them as you, and that would not

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S: (cont.) be fair if they did not want to be involved. But what one must beware of is eventually coming to arrive at some sort of modus vivendi with the existing system, whereby they let you live, as it were enough~, but you also let them live. (laughter) you see what I mean? So that in the end you come to accept the status quo on condition ~rtually that you are just allowed to live your own little life within it, you forget that your ultimate aim, or one of your ultimate aims is to change society, so it can be better for everybody.

All right, any other point about Confession of Faults?

.... a bit more about what I was saying. I think that in a sort of reasonable way, one must make it clear that one is different from everybody else, you see what I mean? Not in an aggressive or brash sort of way, or in a crude or clumsy sort of way (though even they may be

better than nothing) I remember that when I came back to Britain from India, not only were many Buddhists (so-called) obsessed with this idea of respectability, but they were obsessed with not being thought different from anyone else. So even though you were a Buddhist you were exactly the same as everybody else and you wanted to make that clear. So I think it is also necessary to make it clear that one is not the same as everybody else, that one is different, and it might be necessary to make that clear in ~ external way, just as in India it's made clear in the case of the Sadhus, the monks, by the fact that they wear a separate dress. That probably would be counter-productive here, they would think you were really eccentric, but without doing it in such a way that you arouse more hostility and resentment than you can cope with, one should make it clear that one is different and that one believes in something different and stands for something different, that should be very obvious.

Sagaramati: I think one of the dangers with the establishment is that these days we're dealing a lot more with the establishment, you know, through the co-operatives and stuff like that. It's almost as if you have to present an image to them that is going to be accepted as ZR-respectable.

S: Yes .... . . . yes

Sagaramati: Mi Otherwise there won't be any communication, but the danger seems to be in sort of believing yourself to be ..... like that.

S: Yes.

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Sagaramati: Would it be skillful well in that case you actually have to lie, yes? We found this in Manchester with the housing corporation, you had to

lie in order to get what we want.

S: Well ~lie is unskillful, obviously, isn't it

Sagaramati: ..... otherwise there's no ....

S: I think one should investigate other alternatives very thoroughly before resorting to an unskillful action, even in the best Bodhisattva spirit.

Sagaramati: Well, in a sense you could twist it round and say we weren't really lying (laughter) you know, it's to do with the housing corporation, They said, 'You're only going to allow Buddhists in your housing corporation,' which is quite true, but in a sense ....

S: Well, no, I would say it isn't. I would say no because they say 'Buddhist' thinking that Buddhist means a buddhist equivalent of Christian but actually that is not .....

Sagaramati: Well, I mean, that's the way I would look at it

S: .... because you cannot explain to them what you really mean, so you cannot even tell

a lie. When you can't tell the truth you can't even tell a lie (laughter), there's no communication you see what I mean? You're in a situation where you cannot tell the truth and also cannot tell a lie, not because you are unable to speak certain words, but because there isn't enough communication even to tell a lie, because to tell a lie, =° one assumes the possibility of telling the truth, but you do not tell the truth, you hold it back, but in this situation you cannot tell the truth, so how can you tell a lie? You could only use a form of words which is acceptable, it is not the truth, it is not a lie, neither truth or lie is really possible. You can only really tell a lie in that sense to a fellow Buddhist because there will always be the possibility of his understanding

(gap due to da-ged tape)

so you should feel terrified when you've committed real evil actions, because you will suffer.

~kamitra: I think that what people who react to that are saying that they don't like to admit that they've committed evil actions.

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S: Yes, because they wouldn't like to think that they were going to suffer, and therefore yes, they were terrified of suffering.

Voice: There's just a technical point which is the difference between Mrs. Bennetts translation and Matics', in 266 Matics says "May the leaders accept this transgression (not clear .....)"

S: t'May the leaders accept my sin and transgression . May the leaders receive this kindly, just as it is with its many faults."

Voice: As if this is the confession ....

S: Yes I think Mrs - I mean, in the absence of the text I can't refer to the actual wording, but Mrs. Bennett seems to reflect the Buddhist spirit better.

Voice: This Matics doesn't really seem to make sense, except the transcription.

S: No ... because "That which is not good lord, will not be done again by me." So clearly is the confession which you are asking the Buddha to accept. But here of course, one is confessing, to the Buddhas, what does one think or feel about that? I mean ideally yes, ultimately perhaps one is confessing to the Buddhas but more immediately one confesses in the presence of the spiritual community. I don't think it would be very satisfactory simply to go into the shrine and, as it were, address the Buddha. You might feel that you were, quite sincerely, but I don't think that would be enough, it would be in a way too easy, not sufficiently concrete, not sufficiently vivid, not sufficiently an experience, that it might be occasionally, for some people but I think as a general rule as it were, the confession should be within the spiritual community. And the Buddha can't actually say anything, unless you

are on a very high level of spiritual development indeed, you've got it all your own way as it were.

Sagaramati: There is the impression that there should be a definite step with this one, I mean into progression from Worship to Going for Refuge, and you go for refuge, you come across things in yourself that you've got to get over; and in the end, when (S: Yes, yes) we say "What is not good I shall not do again." is as if you're gone beyond them.

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S: Yes, yes, because you're freed from it, this is a very important point which I've touched on before, you know, once you've recognised something as evil, once you've confessed it, once the members of the spiritual community have accepted that confession, with perhaps advice to you, and once you've really made up your mind not to do that thing again you should put it behind you, forget all about it in a sense, and then you'll feel a freedom and lightness which will lead one quite naturally to the Rejoicing in Merits. It's much easier to rejoice in other people's merits when you can rejoice in your own. So there's a natural transition here, via this last line of the Confession of Faults to the Rejoicing in Merit which is the next section. Anyway, that gives us a little transition doesn't it, because it's tea time.

(pause)

All right, let's read the verses of the punyanumadana, the Rejoicing in Merit.

Voice: "I rejoice with delight

In the good done by all beings Through which they obtain rest With the end of suffering.  
~May those who have suffered be happyL

Voice: "I rejoice in the release of beings From the sufferings of the rounds of existence; I rejoice in the nature of the Bodhisattva And the Buddha

Who are protectors.

Voice: " I rejoice in the arising of the Will to Enlightenment

And the Teaching

Those Oceans which bring happiness to all beings And are the abode of welfare of all beings."

S: So how does Matics translate that? Those two verses? "I rejoice in the exhalation

of the goodness and at the cessation and destruction of sorrow wrought by all beings. May those who sorrow achieve joy. I rejoice at the release of embodied beings from

the sorrowful Wheel of rebirth. I rejoice at the Bodhisattvahood and at the Buddhahood of those who have attained salvation. I rejoice at the oceans of

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S: (cont0) determination and bearers of happiness to all beings. The vehicles of advantage for all beings and those who teach."

Lokamitra: That's quite different.

S: The third verse is different ..... just a minute ..... maybe it's another one yes, verse two corresponds doesn't it? But verse three doesn't no ... rejoice at the arising .... (?) .... that corresponds ..... just a minute .. it is actually that verse, although it doesn't sound like it. "The abode of welfare of all beings." : ~"The vehicle of advantage for all beings." That does translate the same line.

Voice: Sounds so different.

S: Yes .... because, Sanskrit is quite difficult language, very complex grammar and you can arrange the clauses, especially very often, especially in the case of poetry, in different ways, so you can see:- "And those who teach," in Matics corresponds to Mrs. Bennetts "And the teachers." "The vehicle of advantage of all beings" in Matics corresponds to "and are the abode of welfare of all beings," and ~~~h~~~e oceans which bring happiness to all beings" in Mrs. Bennetts ciii corresponds to "The bearers of happiness to all beings," in Matics.

Mrs. Bennett's seems clearer and more straightforward doesn't it, and both are probably justified. All right, punjanumodana in general, in the context of the Sevenfold Puja clearly it represents, in a way the converse of the Confession of Faults, the confession of Evil. You've freed yourself from faults, you've confessed them1 you're free from them. So you feel happy and delighted, and being ~ happy and delighted in yourself, you can feel happy and delighted in others, and I think this is a quite important psychological fact - you can't be happy with \$ others unless you're fir~t of all happy with yourself 0 Do you notice this in your own experience?

Voices: Yes.

S: Just as, you can't really feel metta towards others unless you feel metta for your self~ In the same way you can't really rejoice in the merits of others unless you are free from feelings of remorse on account of your own unskillful actions.

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S: (cont.) ..... we do actually find, we have found in the course of our own experience in the movement that people who have been involved in the movement who

get out of touch and who tend to backslide in their own practice and who start feeling guilty, literally guilty, because of that, find it very difficult to appreciate what the rest of the movement is doing, and even sometimes adopt a sort of resentful or very highly critical, negative attitude towards it, this is what we find happening. Because they feel, not just remorse but feel guilty in a negative, group kind of way about themselves, they find it quite impossible to

rejoice in the merits of the movement, find it impossible to have a very positive your attitude towards it. So feeling about yourself and your feeling about

in

others, these two are very intimately connected. So if you see someone genuinely

rejoicing and freely rejoicing and regularly rejoicing in the merits of others,

however displayed, it means that that is a person, you know, very much at peace with himself, happy with himself, with nothing to reproach himself about, but someone is, say, in the midst of the movement or even on the fringes of the movement it means he is unable to appreciate that and rejoice in the merits of the movement, it means that he or she is conscious in a sense of not keeping up and of not doing what they ought to be doing.

Voice: Sometimes you can be doing what you ought to be doing and still not feel

merits.

S: Well, then you are only doing it in an external sense, you're going through the motions, but without the corresponding, appropriate mental and emotional attitude, you're just being a 'good boy' and sometimes that can make you all the more resentful because you think, "Well, here am I being a good boy but I don't seem to be getting any results from it, I'm not even feeling good." (laughter) but sometimes it may be necessary to adopt that approach, you know, as we were discussing the other day, sometimes it does happen that if you do it consciously and mindfully that going through the motions does help you to develop the corresponding mental and emotional attitude, probably there must be an element of that, what I call disciplinary approach, in the case of most people at least in certain situations or for a certain time, you can't always have the skillful mental states first and

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S: (cont.) then the skillful actions as the natural expression of the skillful mental states, you know, sometimes the unskillful mental states are so powerful that you just have to perform the corresponding or what would be the corresponding skillful action just sort of

well, notwithstanding, and gradually bring your mental state into line with the actions so that the actions do become in fact an expression of a mental state, not something you just superimpose upon it. lokamitra: Isn't this an aspect of ritual .... you know, that you perform the actions and that helps to get in touch with .

S: .... or even of ethical observance ..... but, you know, you must understand what you are doing and why you are doing it.

Voice: It's a very dangerous area because you can end up getting alienated and so losing touch with what you are doing.

S: It's all right if you're a person whose naturally in touch with his own feelings, then you're in a much safer situation, acting like this, but let's say you're a person with a natural tendency to be a good boy, and almost naturally out of touch with ones feelings, then one should have recourse to this sort of approach only with extreme caution.

Voice: Is that not (?) hypocrisy?

S: Well, what is hypocrisy?

Voice: I mean it isn't actually (?)

S: Ah, but I say what is hypocrisy, what is a definition supposing you feel like murdering somebody but you don't actually do it? I mean you're not being a hypocrite in not murdering them (laughter) you'd only be a hypocrite say if someone had asked you what was your mental state, your emotion, attitude towards that person and you said "Oh I really love them" yes? Hypocrisy is consciously and deliberately trying to give people an impression that your mental state or your behaviour is other than it is, for purely selfish reasons. You might feel like I say, murdering someone but you don't; Somebody asks you well, how do you feel about that person, you say "Well frankly I feel like murdering them" yes? But the fact that you don't doesn't constitute hypocrisy. It probably wouldn't be hypocrisy

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S: (cont.) .... even if you denied your feelings, but if you actually were to try to give the impression that you really loved that person and acted in such a way as to make people think that, that would be hypocrisy. But within the context of the spiritual community you should be able to own up to all your unskillful thoughts and feelings. One could say that most people are not as good as they appear to be because there are all sorts of unskillful thoughts and emotions which are held in check, and rightly held in check and not expressed, but that doesn't make them hypocrites, not in itself.

Sagar-ati: I find this is really important in ta}~ing classes, when you are doing the metta bhavana because you have to really emphasise that people must keep in touch with how

they're feeling. I find this a lot, people coming back, and there is this dichotomy between ..... in the end they don't feel anything because they are trying to feel something which is completely foreign to them. Instead of saying, "Well, keep in touch with how you feel and in the end something will happen naturally,~~

S: Yes, right. Kepp in touch with how you feel because even if what you feel is crude and negative, if you're in touch with that, you actually feel it consciously then you can begin to work on it and gradually you refine it and sublimate it and make it more positive. But if you're out of touch with the way you feel to be~n with, what can you possibly do? You can't do anything at ~. But do you find this, that, you know, for instance in taking classes, that people come to be out of touch with their own feelings?

Sagaramati: Ah well if they're not, usually something makes it obvious, it's made obvious usually in the more negative sense, like this .....(?) . that's fair enough, because that's what he feels, T mean sometimes you feel people are going along with it, you just feel that they're not really there, they're not really feeling ~nything, and I've noticed this quite a lot at Pundarika and since being at Manchester.

S: Ah ... yes .... well this is why I was so suprised, not to say shocked .... 2 years ago I suppose ... was it 3 years ago? When I took ~ all the .... those study retreats, those seminars at Nash, and the people on them I think were mostly from Pundarika, from the Archway area and then I found that the chanting was so harsh and so forced and in many cases, in the case of several persons and several persons in particular, seemed to contain what I can only describe as a sort of black energy, it wasn't negative, it was black, but they seemed not to realise that, but this sort of black energy showed through and it was this that they were really operating on. So clearly they were not in touch with their feelings, they didn't know how they were feeling. They weren't aware that there were no positive feelings, no positive emotions behind their recitation of the puja. In the case of 2 persons, 2 Order Members, this was very, very extreme, they were in a quite blackly negative state emotionally and were not aware of that, they thought that they were leading the puja, leading the chanting quite O.K.

Sagaramati: If I remember they were from pddarika, I won' t mention any names.

S: Mmmi..... yes ..... the majority I think were from Pundarika area .... So, it is really very, very important to be in touch with one's feelings, with ones emotions, this must be emphasised again and a~~a.n. But why are people not in touch with their emotions? I mean, what has happened, emotion is there isn't it?

Voice: Sometimes a front can be put up .....

S: Oh yes, but why?

Voice: Because of fear ..... can't accept your emotion .....

S: But why not?

Voice: I suppose its the environment you' re in as a group and trying to live up to group expectations.

S: But that is inevitable to some extent because a certain amount of, you know, what we call socialization is necessary isn't it? You can't express in human society you know in civilised society, ~o~ crude, group feelings and emotions, can you - just as ... it isn't possible, you might feel like murdering someone, but you can't. You might feel like raping somebody but you can't, you might feel like stealing

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S: (cont.) .... something, but you can't. So a certain amount of socialisation, therefore of, well ... .supression if not repression of the crude emotions is necessary but that is part of the process of civilization itself. But it seems that it often does go to extremes and, I mean goes to extremes to such an extent, that the greater part of your emotional life is stifled and this perhaps all the more so if your emotions are normally rather crude and unrefined so that there's nothing which is allowed to get through as it were. I mean, if you think of the behaviour of a football crowd, those emotions just need to be suppressed in society, but I think the situation I think is made worse by the fact that there aren't very many positive channels of expression, but I think one ~tn' t sort of romanticise because quite a lot of people would probably find it difficult to take advantage of those positive channels because their emotional life is on quite a low and crude level.

Voice: But instead of starting from that base and trying to refine those emotions the normal practice is to deny them and so become alienated from the emotions.

S: I think, probably in the case of many people there is no alternative, from the point of view of society and from the point of view of socialization of the child.

Voice: We, you can channel those emotions into less harmful things although quite gross things.

S: I think x you can, at least in some cases but I think it's quite difficult in some cases to do that.

Sagaranti: There's a woman in ....? ... she mentioned something to me which I thought was rather good .... well, she said where she was brought up, to show emotion was to be weak, especially to lose your temper or show any of what you might call cruder, to be angry anything like that was a sign of weakness.

S: Ah, where was she brought up?

Sagaramati: At ~.....?.... in Leeds .... mind you, a middle class ....

S: Well it is a sign of weakness, weakness of what? Weakness of self-control and the emphasis is placed on self-control.

Sagaramati: Would be over self-control, must lead to alienation.

S: Yes, indeed. It's as though society makes so many demands upon you of self-control perhaps rightly, but so many, that you get into the habit of self-control.

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Voice: It ceases to become control ....

S: It ceases to become control because it's just an automatic process, you can't let go, even when society permits you almost, occasionally to let go, or when you feel you're perfectly justified in letting go, or when letting go would be a positive thing to do, you find you're unable to do it.

Voice: This is just an extension of the sort of tension between the group and individuals. It's in societies interests to have people

S: No, I don't think it's as simple as that because also the tension between the group and the group member who is not yet an individual and who needs to be controlled from the standpoint of the group, yes? The person who has yet to learn to be a group member, not to speak of an ~ individual. I mean, a rampaging group member is not a proto-individual (laughter) you ~e what I mean? That's why I said we must beware of romanticising the situation, yes? I mean the football hooligan is not necessarily someone who is trying to be an individual. ~t's as though you need the socialization, the discipline of the group, to some extent before you can begin to be an tk individual.

Voice: But isn't the football hooligan just blindly reacting against the whole proces which you know, has lead him to have such gross emotions which he can't e~ress any other way than just to be blindly destructive?

8: No, I don't think so. I think very often it is just simply .... the group member, from an animal point of view quite healthy, just sort of rejecting almost the control even of the positive group, and almost wanting to relapse back into a state of animal anarchy and almost barbarism, you know, this is what I see, not someone who, if the restrictions of society were renioved would be revealed as a healthy individual, no, I mean individual in our 1 sense of the word, no, that is a Roussean sort of view, you know, that society is wicked, the organisation of society is wicked, oppressing the individual. no, there is oppression but what is being oppressed is not the individual. So a certain amount of socialization, a certain amount of group control is ncessary for the development of the animal into a human being but what happens only too often iS that the insipient human being is crushed by too much control, it's not an individual who is being crushed in most cues, individuality is really not yet there, they may be

S: (cont.) ..... need to be positive group members first in most cases. In a way

it's almost as though there's a double standard needed, one for individuals and the other for group members, (There are certain freedoms which can be allowed individuals) I know we are getting on very dangerous ground here, but there are certain freedoms which can be allowed individuals, or individuals can allow themselves which can not be allowed ordinary group members.

Voice: But do you think becoming a group member is the way for somebody whose emotions are so very crude and unruly to start refining them and

S: I think it probably is, as usual that the society, the group is relatively what I would call a positive group.

Voice: Do you think our society is?

S: I think in certain respects, in certain ways it can be. I think it is very much the luck of the draw, where you are born, what sort of family you're born into, what sort of school you go to. I think you can emerge a healthy group member and a potential individual in some areas, if you're just lucky enough with your family, lucky enough with your school, I think it just boils down to that. You can emerge, as I have said, as... healthy, happy and human, and ready for the next step. But so many are just maimed animals, not even maimed human beings, they're maimed animals.

Voice: But when is the first instance of emotionally being refined in an individual's life, does it happen in childhood?

S: Well ..... it can begin in childhood ..... you mean what sort of situation it occurs in? That isn't easy to say, that can vary. I think sometimes in connection with nature maybe more often in connection with the arts, you know, when you experience something more refined, you start enjoying music or literature.

Voice: Some very young children enjoy music.

S: Yes. I think also it depends upon the kind of music, I mean some music is clearly more refined than others. I remember, you know, shortly after I returned from India, quite by chance I happened to see a television program for a few minutes, I don't know what it was, but it was 10 or 11 year old boys and girls as some kind of - I don't know if there was rock in those days, was there? Was there rock music all those

years ago? - 73 -

Voices: Yea.

S: They were 11 or 12 and they were dancing around and clearly very much 'into it', they were moving and wiggling and all that sort of thing (laughing) but what was interesting to me was the expression on their faces, they were in a state of daze, yes? They were not conscious, they were almost like robots, though they were certainly into that music, so I wouldn't regard that sort of thing as indicating any sort of refinement of emotional experience. They were just blank, their faces were just blank, they'd been sort of taken over. So it depends very much on the nature of the music that they are enjoying, and the kind of emotional experience which it gives you. Clearly here it was quite crude, physical experience of movement and rhythm and so on. (Maybe there wasn't any element of feeling much involved in it at all.

Voice: I wonder if that's the music or their .... ? ..... (not clear).

S: Well you could say that it represents in relation to chaotic energy some kind of advance, in as much as it is rhythmic, I mean rhythm itself suggests or implies some sort of control, you know what I mean? and if you, say get into a certain rhythm, to that extent you are controlling your energy, so in relation to lack of control or chaotic energy it is some kind of progressive step .... rather than .... it's better say to be involved in that way at say, a rock concert than to be throwing beer bottles around and smashing windows. It may be the same kind of energy but in as much as it's being subjected to rhythm at least, it is more under control and to that extent progress has taken place.

Ickamitra: What about towns Bhante? large towns see this ..... very difficult to remain in touch with their emotions, as compared with .... ? ..... and also they stimulate quite obviously the more crude and negative emotions .... much more violence, well, among young people. To name but one example the most violent football team supporters come from the large towns.

S: Well, it's only the large towns which could provide hoards of people to that extent.

Ickamitra: Well, you get quite a few people in other towns but, sometimes, thinking about towns, they must seem like an evil, large ones.

S: You're speaking of big cities? rather than towns in the old fashioned sense.

Ickamitra: Yes.

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S: So why, what happens?

Ickamitra: I think they are constrictive and that's why there's a lot of repression.

S: But there's also a lot a freedom.

lokamitra: They come together on the basis of their neuroses.

S: Any more than people do in villages?

Lokamitra: Well, maybe the sort of situation is pressurised and maybe the fact that they're out of touch with nature makes it even .....

S: You say, "out of touch with nature" but I think 'n have to be a little bit careful there, you are after all still breathing air, you see the sky, there are some trees around. I mean, does the average villager really bother much about nature? I remember a remark of some lepch's, up from the forest, passing my gate in Kalimpong~ They looked up at the mountains and said, "Can't understand why these foreigners and visitors keep looking at these mountains, what is there to see, just some mountains." (laughter) They would have preferred Calcutta any day. So I think although there may be much in what you say we must be very careful of romanticism or cliché approach, you see what I mean?

lokamitra: Oh, I agree, yes. Perhaps it's more that ...

S: Some people regard the city as a place of liberation and freedom, away from the restrictions and narrowness and pettiness and dogmatism of the village. lokamitra: But to some extent it is but so quickly it seems to go over the other way.

Voice: Because one's contacts are not ~ basic contacts with people, you know.

S: Ah .... I think this is the major point .... the absence of face to face contacts, yes? or the absence of personal communication. I mean it's all right in the city if within the city you've got your own little group and this is what usually happens, either the people in the same village or the same countryside or sharing certain interests or certain pursuits or even certain work, then it's all right, yes? To some extent at least, it's all right if you can find your own group within the city, I mean in fact the city gives you wonderful opportunities of finding the milieu that suits you, if you're interested in painting, well you can find hundreds of other painters where as if you came from a village there might not be one in your village that you can talk to and so on. But it's a question of, of course, if you're living in a city and

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S: (cont.) .... you haven't been able to find a community even, not to speak of a spiritual community, even ordinary community then it's pretty terrible, then you really do get alienated. Maybe lots of people are in that situation within the city, they don't belong to a community. In that way, say the Cypriots are lucky, living in London, the Greeks are lucky, you know, the West Africans are lucky, anyone with a community on any sort of basis, yes? But if you've just got your nuclear family with possibly a distant relation, in some other distant quarter of London, if you're lucky, and a job to go to, you haven't got a community and you know, the sort of contact you have with people is not at all satisfactory and then there's this vast anonymous mass

of people all around you, exerting a sort of, at least psychic pressure, this is not a healthy situation.

lok-itra: It seems more likely that in towns your creative or skillful energies are likely to be blocked, more ..... but there are endless possibilities for expression of unskillful actions ....

S: But also endless possibilities for, skillful actions one could say. lokamitra: No .... this is why I said first of all that it seems more likely that these will be blocked from ones upbringing with lots of people, sometimes with no trees around, but a few maybe ..... I'm not trying to -Mise the ...

S: I think some of the most healthy people I know have been brought up in cities, yes?

Voice: I think maybe you get extremes in cities more, things go to extremes and you get good things and bad things.

S: Where as villages and small towns are simply ~diocre.

lokamitra: But, you know, the extremes are quite horrific at times

S: Yes ....

Voice: It seems to me that most people in the movement who are really into living in the country were usually brought up in the cities and you know ... appreciate it.

S: Yes ... but probably in the city is the possibility at ~ least of more intensive human contact than you would be likely to get in a small town or village. I've seen everywhere one finds, this is very true in India, that people, especially young people, especially young men, regard the city as the place of opportunity and freedom, not the village, they can't get away from that quick enough.

Voice: The cities more likely to produce individuals because of the conflict of absolutes.

S: Yes, that's true. But perhaps the cities are less likely to produce the healthy positive group member, though again it's not impossible. But it would seem that, to get back to what we were talking about, that negative emotion is more likely to be blocked, the unblocked emotions even are more likely to be negative if there isn't satisfactory communication with other human beings, that is the basic criterion. I mean you can have that, whether brought up in a village or brought up in a city. lokamitra: With a lot of people, would you say, it's more likely to be stimulated by positive communication or inhibited?

S: Where?

lok-itra: Well, anywhere, you have lots of people in the town, you have not so many in the country.

S: I don't think it's more likely to be stimulated in the city, partly because as Kulananda said there is this clash of absolutes and you're very much more aware of different kinds of

people, different ways of living and so on, and I was going to say, if you come to the city as a stranger that's a more positive situation than if you'd just been born and brought up there, maybe in a not very positive situation. I think you must be very careful ~out generalising about cities and countryside as if to say the city is completely evil, the best thing you can do is to get away from it. It's very easy to stagnate in the country. Maybe there are opposite dangers in the city the dangers of over distraction, which is a danger, but there are dangers in the country, the dangers of stagnation.

I think that the .... what is a city? You know, a city is not necessarily sort of homogeneous, London is not a city, in say, the sense 'unwEl Norwich is or that .... Athens was or that Florence was, in it's best days. It's an agglomeration of villages really .... it's two cities, with an agglomeration of suburbs which have developed from villages, the two cities being London and Westminster. And for practical purposes, there is no such thing as 'London' for most people, they don't live in London, they live in Haringey, or they live in Chelsea or they live in Tooting or Brixton. You don't effectively live in London usually, what is your effective unit, that is what counts, you see what I mean? I mean most Londoners haven't seen

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S: (cont.) ..... much of London except for the actual district they live in and the district where they go to work. So what does one mean by 'living in a city'? This is not as clear as it might sound. If you live on the outskirts say, of Waltham Forest and you work in Wanstead, well technically you're living in London, yes. But that's a rather different situation say from someone who maybe is living in Stretham and going into the city to work every day. Both are supposedly living in London but it's not the same sort of situation, the a- sort of experience. I think what matters is the community you live in or whether you live in a community at all, and whether that community provides opportunities for the development of individuality. They're not necessarily not there because you live in a city, technically speaking, probably they're more likely to be there. I think what is important, in the course of your growth as a human being, I'm not saying an individual, but a human being, you need a positive group at some stage or other, it's as though, it may be marginally that you're more likely to get the ;ii~xtx positive group in the country than in the city but the positive group in the countryside seems not to be able to give access to the possibilities of individual development beyond that. Maybe in the city there are more possibilities of individual development but what is lacking in some areas is the positive group, which is the stepping stone to the actual utilisation of those possibilities of being more of an individual, you see what I mean? Probably we can't really say very much more than that. I think we must be careful of a sort of romantic Rousseauism on a broad front, you get this even in coin~sm, of ia:~y being really good and hap~~ and healthy and positive, and friendly, if you only removed the social restrictions, you only change the political system, you only take him out of the big evil cities, you know, settle him down in some utopia or some eden everything would be all right, because he is basically all right. I think this view is not justified.

Voice: But isn't that fairly Buddhist in that if you've got the right conditions then people

win develop in a more positive way?

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B: Not necessarily, not necessarily, you can meet some very negative people in what seems to be very positive surroundings ... because, you know, biologically speaking, you know, what is our ancestry, it's an animal ancestry, we have these animal instincts which are still very strong and which are still stronger than anything else in us, in most cases.

lokamitra: But you can see the sort of .... greed, hatred and delusion, the sometimes sort of negative spiral or sort of bottomless pit, and certain conditions do stimulate .... there's a sort of endless possibilities for unskillful states of mind .... and this is all I'm saying really, or most of what I'm saying, that towns do seem to ... not that these don't happen in the countryside but it's quite limited where as in towns there seems to be much greater scope for this.

S: Well .... I think this is the price that you pay for the development of individuality

B.cause to with the individuality is iwisne, which means it can act skillfully or can act unskillfully b'it I think what we shouldn't forget is that, you know, there is this sort of, very frail structure of civilization and culture superimposed upon what is virtuuuy barbarism, yes? and we should be very careful that in our attack upon what is wrong in society, that we don't sort of, almost want to wipe out civilization and culture altogether, under the impression that there is a sort of primitive innocence underneath, and all that sort of thing no, no. So you see what I'm getting at? In other words, the importance of the positive group should not be underestimated how ever highly we value the spiritual community and however much the group in which we live, the social group, fails to Uve up to the ideals of a positive group. A positive group is necessary, you can't go straight from sort of primitive savagery into a spiritual community, you need that positive group.

lokamitra: And that positive group I IUSt be stimulating and

S: Well, it must be positive, if it's not it's not a positive group. It must socialize peoples energies positively and constructively not merely repress them

50 as they break out at intervals, though there may be -xiy who cannot, you know, sublinte, cannot structure their energies poaitvely and wno may just have to be suppressed. You know those who are as it were criminal types, one might say, in the

strict sense. - 79 -

Voice: But do you think that people are actnally born with these tendencies?

S: I do. You just look at small children, most of them, just look at them.

Voice: Yes, but not all children, I mean .... given the right positive group these children can grow up into potential individuals.

S: ..... yes ..... but provided you have that positive group to put them through, yes. But I think there are still nonetheless, children or people, as they will be when they grow up, who are not happy to be members of a positive group, whose instincts are still as it were anarchic and who almost have to be dealt with by force, by the community. I do not believe that everything negative and unskillful is entirely a manifestation of wrong arrangements in society, in view of our general anilani ancestry.

Voice: Yeah, but the way in which, you know, would that background .... things develop ... that is dependant upon the environment to a large degree .... umm.. well given that we have got this animal ancestry, subsequent from that the extent to which we're becoming civilized does depend en awful lot on the environment....

S: Yes ....

Ba- Voice: and whether we have access to a positive group.

S: -ii~. ... for instance you can find little monsters, you know, appearing in the midst of very positive and friendly ~smilies, you can actualay see them. I mean, sadistic, destructive, cruel children brought up by really kindly parents. Voices: (agreement)

B: So I do not believe that all the negativity that is around is simply a reaction to negative or unfavourable circumstances or conditions or lack of opportunity, no.

SMaramati: That's too much, you know, we ssid yesterday that science is objective, that view is far too scientific in a way, it's leaving outside the forces primal subject.

S: er .... yes ..... yes .... I sean, greed, hatred and delusion are very powerful, yes.

Sagaramati: This is one of the arguents of the womens movement . ....

s: What's that?

Spgar~ti: Well they say that if the structure of society was changed so that men and women were equal, then they would be actually equal, in a psychological sense ..

which, I don't know, I can't believe.

S: No .... I don't think that is so ..

In other words, what I am saying is, supposing that for the sake of arguement, the society in which we live was completely positive, was a positive group, yes? And supposing, you know, you were so organised that everything was really positive. That you would stift have, being born to families within that positive group, or whatever the structure might be that had taken over from the family, children, human beings, members of that society who were

negative to such an extent that the positive group, though positive, despite its positivity, could not assimilate them, but would have to do something about them, that would mean, in a sense, suppressing them. I think there would be, I'm convinced there would be people who could not be assimilated. There are people who cannot be assimilated even by a completely positive community. That their negativity is inherent, you could say inherited, maybe inherited karaiically, negativity is such, or unskillfulness is such or crudity is such.

Voice: Does that mean that a positive group on a large scale actually, that a change in the culture towards the positive group is impossible, but there's always going to have to be the group .....

S: I think you're always going to have to be on your toes, I don't think you will ever attain a state of complete equilibrium. I think individuals, or people say, will be appearing within your positive group all the time who threaten to disturb the harmony of that positive group even when you succeed in establishing it, or even if you succeed in establishing it.

Sp~aramati: What form will the repression of those people take? I mean, would it have to be prisons.

S: There might have to be prisons, you might have to restrain them as it were, by force, what else could you do?

Voice: Wouldn't you say from a Buddhist point of view that their intolerance ultimately stems from their ignorance ... ~0

B: Yes

Same Voice: ..... so in a positive society, tending towards, you know, educating and enlightening people, wouldn't that tend to lessen that ignorance?

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S: It could certainly lessen it, but it might not be able to lessen it sufficiently there is the possibility of someone not responding .... yes? People can be very bloody minded and very difficult and apparently with no cause, it is to their advantage, in their interest to be positive, but they can't or won't be sometimes, so what are you to do? You could have almost a society of Bodhisattvas but they wouldn't be able to help certain people, if they didn't want to be helped.

So therefore there's not ever going to be any stability, I mean the Bodhisattvas'

always going to be busy, isn't? (laughter) There's not a finite number of people to be led to enlightenment because you can lead all the existing ones to enlightenment but there's still be coming up from the depths of Samsara, you know, very unenlightened people, yes?

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Voice: I think with regard to children you have to be quite discriminating between the idea of the kind of situation which you mentioned where you might still in an ideal society get children coming up who are .... er ..... full of unskillful emotion and so on and the fact that with most children, most children if not all children at some point of their development, especially early on, are almost like animals. They behave almost like animals and they have to sort of develop beyond that and there at that point is very important that they have the right kind of upbringing, the right kinds of relationship.

S: The important thing is to follow a middle way. Right? I mean it is easy to say that but very difficult in practice. On the one hand you can curb, to use that term, the animal nature sufficiently to make the emergence of a positive group or continuance of a positive group possible. On the other hand you don't over socialise to such an extent that those persons become emotionally crippled and energies become completely negative and destructive.

Voice: Now I have found when I was working with children that those children who were the loudest, perhaps the most aggressive also had the most potential quite honestly, I mean they became more, part of them were children who were intelligent but repressed, this is not always but quite often.

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S: mm .... yes .....

Anyway, all this discussion has arisen out of how people become negative, yes? and how their emotions become repressed and how they become unable to rejoice in the

merits of others. But clearly it is something that goes very deep indeed, but I've said in the past and I say it again that without a well developed, a strongly developed positive emotion or experience of positive emotion you can't really have much ( ? ) individual development, it's almost a sort of crucial issue, to be emotionally positive, that has two aspects, you know, your feeling of happiness with yourself and your feeling of happiness with others, rejoicing in their merits. So:- "I rejoice with delight in the good done by all beings through which they obtain rest" - 'rest' here in the sense of Nirvana "With the end of suffering. May those who have suffered be happy. I rejoice in the release of beings from the sufferings of the rounds of existence" .... even though this is a Mahayana work, this is in a way very much from the standpoint of the doctrine follower isn't it? Except that, further - "I rejoice in the nature of the Bodhisattva and the Buddha" You rejoice in their nature. It's almost as though you say 'Even apart from their functions as teaching, helping and guiding you, you rejoice in their nature, their very nature as Buddhas, as Bodhisattvas as enlightened ones or as compassionate ones is intrinsically delightful, you rejoice in that quite disinterestedly. It's like the puja raised to a much higher level, because your understanding has deepened meantime, ~?

And similarly, It1 rejoice in the arising of the will to SnlightenmentI' in ones 'self'

and in 'others1 "and the Teaching, Those oceans which bring happiness to all beings." 'Oceans' in the sense that the7 are unlimited. The ocean is supposed to bet at least poetically. ~and are the abode and welfare of all beings." 'Abode' being more stati~, 'bearers' being more active and dynamic as it were. There's this I attitude of rejoicing in whatever is good, past, present and future, rejoicing in the good deeds that people do, their skillful actions, the practice of the precepts, their going for refuge, the practice of the paramitas, and rejoicing in the transcendental nature of the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas and the will to Snlightennmt.

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S: (cont.) So far there's this attitude of rejoicing, then one is in a very positive, you know, mental and emotional state indeed. You could say that if you delight in say, the ~uddha and the bodhisattvas, you know, your delight in peoples good deeds, peoples meritorious actions, in their merit is a sort of .... is a delight is a way in the reflection in them of the Buddha nature or the Bodhisattva nature, -n? If you rejoice in the Buddha, you cannot but rejoice in the good deeds, the meritorious actions even of an unenlightened being, because in those good deeds is some reflection or some anticipation, however faint and distant of ~i~lighte~nt itself, you can't claim to be a devout Buddnist or a devoted Buddhist or a Buddhist who worships the Buddha and at the same time not rejoice in the merits of all beings, do you see what I mean? The one follows naturally from the other. If you really do, you know, delight in the Buddha you also delight in the Buddhist ....

Any general points? ..... in connection with this 'Rejoicing in M.rit'. ~ Is it's position in the sequence of the sevenfold puja clear? (pause)

Voice: It's like an opening up for the forthcoming Sntreaty and Supplication'.

S: That's true, yes, yes.

Spgar~ti: b~at would be the, the near enemy to this state, to rejoicing in merit? I i-an would necessarily rejoicing be in the fact that what you're rejoicing ...? ... S: .... well, just a sort of sentimental attitude, "Oh, aren't they sweet, isn't that a lovely action." (laughter) or that sort of things, yes?

But going back to a bit that I was saying before, I think it isn' t sufficiently realised in a way, how precarious the whole structure is, I talked about the precarious- ness of civilisation and culture but superimposed upon that is the spiritual community so in a way, from a p- purely human point of view, how precarious that as, yes?

I mean, you've got in the first place, a society which is somewhat precarious and superimposed upon that society a structure of civilisation and culture which is quite precarious and upon that a spiritual community which is very precarious indeed. So it isn' t easy to sort of refine the energy progressively in such a way that a person is sufficiently refined, in his energies, to be able to assend to the next level, but not so much refind that his

energies have been refined out of existence or crushed so

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S: Ah ... yes .... well this is why I was so surprised, not to say shocked .... 2 years ago I suppose .... was it 3 years ago? When I took ~ all the those study retreats, those seminars at Nash, and the people on them I think were mostly from Ptm~ika, from the Archway area and then I found that the chanting was so harsh and so forced and in many cases, in the case of several persons and several persons in particular, seemed to contain what I can only describe as a sort of black energy, it wasn't negative, it was black, but they seemed not to realise that, but this sort of black energy showed through and it was this that they were really operating on. So clearly they were not in touch with their feelings, they didn't know how they were feeling. They weren't aware that there were no positive feelings, no positive emotions behind their recitation of the puja. In the case of 2 persons, 2 Order Members, this was very, very extreme, they were in a quite blackly negative state emotionally and were not aware of that, they thought that they were leading the puja, leading the chanting quite O.K.

S~aramati: If I remember they were from Pwldarika, I won't mention any names.

S: Mmmi..... yes ..... the majority I think were from Pundarika area .... So, it is really very, very important to be in touch with one's feelings, with one's emotions, this must be emphasised again and a~~a.n. But why are people not in touch with their emotions? I mean, what has happened, emotion is there isn't it?

Voice: Sometimes a front can be put up ...

B: Oh yes, but why?

Voice: Because of fear ..... can't accept your emotion .....

S: But why not?

Voice: I suppose it's the environment you're in as a group and trying to live up to group expectations.

S: But that is inevitable to some extent because a certain amount of, you know, what we call socialization is necessary isn't it? You can't express it in a free society you know in a free society, your crude, group feelings and emotions, can you - just as ... ~t isn't possible, you might feel like murdering someone, but you can't.

You might feel like raping somebody but you can't, you might feel like stealing

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S: (cont.) .... something, but you can't. So a certain amount of socialisation, therefore of, well ... ..supression if not repression of the crude emotions is necessary but that is part of the process of civilization itself. But it seems that it often does go to extremes and, I mean goes to extremes to such an extent, that the greater part of your emotional life is stifled and this perhaps all the more so if your emotions are normally rather crude and unrefined so that there' 5 nothing which is allowed to get through as it were. I i-an, if you think of the behaviour of a football crowd, those emotions just need to be supressed in society, but I think the situation I ii made worse by the fact that there aren' t very many positive channels of expression, but I think one ~tn' t sort of remantisise because quite a lot of people would probably find it difficult to take advantage of those positive channels because their emotional life is on quite a low and crude level.

Voice: But instead of starting from that base and trying to refine those emotions the normal practice is to deny them and so become alienated from the emotions.

S: I think, probably in the case of many people there is no alternative, from the point of view of society and from the point of view of socialization of the child.

Voice: We, you can channel those emotions into less harmful things although quite gross things.

S: I think x you can, at least in some cases but I think it's quite difficult in some cases to do that.

Sagaramati: There' 5 a woman in ....? ... she mentioned something to me which I thought was rather good .... well, she said where she was brought up, to show emotion was to be weak, especially to lose your ten~per or show any of what you might call cruder, to be angry anything like that was a sign of weakness.

S: Ah, where was she brought up?

Sagaramati: At ~.....?.... in leeds .... mind you, a middle class ....

S: Well it is a sign of weakness, weakness of what? Weakness of self-control and the emphasis is placed on self-control.

Sagaramati: Would be over self-control, must lead to alienation.

S: Yes, indeed. It's as though society m~s so many demands upon you of self-control perhaps rightly, but so many, that you get into the habit of self-control.

Voice: It ceases to become control ....

S: It ceases to become control because it's just an automatic process, you can't let go, even when society permits you almost, occasionally to let go, or when you feel you're perfectly justified in letting go, or when letting go would be a positive thing to do, you find you're unable to do it.

Voice: This is just an extension of the sort of tension between the group and individuals. It's in societies interests to have people

S: No, I don't think it's as simple as that because also the tension between the group and the group member who is not yet an individual and who needs to be controlled from the standpoint of the group, yes? The person who has yet to learn to be a group member, not to speak of an ~ individual. I mean, a raepagng group member is not a proto-individual (laughter) you ~e what I mean? That's why I said we must beware of romanticising the situation, yes? I mean the football hooligan is not necessarily someone who is trying to be an individual. It's as though you need the socialization, the discipline of the group, to some extent before you can begin to be an tk individual.

Voice: But isn't the football hooligan just blindly reacting against the whole proces ~~hich you know, has lead him to have such gross emotions which he can't e~ress any other way than just to be blindly destructive?

8: No, I don't think so. I think very often it is just simply .... the group member, from an animal point of view quite healthy, just sort of rejecting almost the control even of the positive group, and almost wanting to relapse back into a state of animal anarchy and almost barbarism, you know, this is what I see, not someone who, if the restrictions of society were renioved would be revealed as a healthy individual, no, I mean individual in our 1 sense of the word, no, that is a Roussean sort of view, you know, that society is wicked, the organisation of society is wicked, opresaing the individual. no, there is oppression but what is being oppressed is not the individual. So a certain amount of socialization, a certain ~unt of group control is necessary for the development of the animal into a human being but what happens only too often is that the insipient human being is crushed by too much control, it's not an individual who is being crushed in moat cases, individuality is really not yet there, they may be

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S: (cont.) ..... need to be positive group members first in most cases. In a way

it's almost as though there' a a double standard needed, one for individuals and the other for group me~bers, There are certain freedoms which can be allowed individuals) I know we are getting on very dangerous ground here, but there are certain freedoms which can be allowed

individuals, or individuals can allow themselves which can not be allowed ordinary group members.

Voice: But do you think becoming a group member is the way for somebody whose emotions are so very crude and unruly to start refining them and

S: I think it probably is, -'ming that the society, the group is relatively what I would call a positive group.

Voice: Do you think our society is?

S: I think in certain respects, in certain ways it can be. I think it is very much the luck of the draw, where you are born, what sort of family you're born into, what sort of school you go to. I think you can emerge a healthy group member and a potential individual in some areas, if you're just lucky enough with your family, lucky enough with your school, I think it just boils down to that. You can emerge, as I have said, a... healthy, happy and human, and ready for the next step. But so many are just maimed animals, not even maimed human beings, they're maimed animals.

Voice: But when is the first instance of emotionally being refined in an individual's life, does it happen in childhood?

S: Well ..... it can begin in childhood ..... you mean what sort of situation it occurs in? That isn't easy to say, that can vary. I think sometimes in connection with nature maybe more often in connection with the arts, you know, when you experience something more refined, you start enjoying music or literature.

Voice: Some very young children enjoy music.

S: Yes. I think also it depends upon the kind of music, I mean some music is clearly more refined than others. I remember, you know, shortly after I returned from India, quite by chance I happened to see a television program for a few minutes, I don't know what it was, but it was 10 or 11 year old boys and girls as some kind of - I don't know if there was rock in those days, was there? Was there rock music all those

years ago? - 73 -

Voices: Yes.

S: They were 11 or 12 and they were dancing around and clearly very much 'into it', they were moving and wiggling and all that sort of thing (laughter) but what was interesting to me was the expression on their faces, they were in a state of daze, yes? They were not conscious, they were almost like robots, though they were certainly into that music, so I wouldn't regard that sort of thing as indicating any sort of refinement of emotional experience. They were just blank, their faces were just blank, they'd been sort of taken over. So it depends very much on the nature of the music that they are enjoying, and the kind of emotional experience which it gives you. Clearly here it was quite crude, physical experience of movement and rhythm and

so on. )(aybe there wa°n' t any element of feeling much involved in it at all.

Voice: I wonder if that's the music or their .... ? ..... (not clear).

S: Well you could say that it represents in relation to chaotic energy some kind of advance, in as much as it is rythmical, I mean rythe itself ~ggests or implies some sort of control, you see what I mean? and if you, say get into a certain rythm, to that extent you are controlling your energy, so in relation to lack of control or chaotic energy it is some kind of progressive step .... rather than .... it's better say to be involved in that way at say, a rock concert than to be throwing beer bottles around and smashing windows. It may be the same kind of energy but in as much as it's being subjected to rythm at least, it is more under control and to that extent progress has taken place.

lokamitra: What about towns Bhante? large towns see this ..... very difficult to remain in touch with their emotions, as compared with .... ? ..... and also they stimulate quite obviously the more crude and negative emotions .... much more violence, well, among young people. To name but one example the most violent football team supporters come from the large towns.

S: Well, it's only the large towns which could provide hoards of people to that extent.

Icka"itra: Well, you get quite a few people in other towns but, sometimes, thinking about towns, they just seem like an evil, large ones.

S: You're speaking of big cities? rather than towns in the old fashioned sense.

Ickamitra: Yes.

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S: So why, what happens?

~kamitra: I think they are constrictive and that's why there's a lot of repression.

S: But there's also a lot of freedom.

lokamitra: They come together on the basis of their neuroses.

S: Any more than people do in villages?

Lokaaitra: Well, maybe the sort of situation is pressurised and maybe the fact that they're out of touch with nature makes it even .....

S: You say, "out of touch with nature" but I think we have to be a little bit careful there, you are after all still breathing air, you see the sky, there are some trees around. I mean, does the average villager really bother much about nature? I remember a remark of some lepch's up from the forest, passing my gate in Kalimpong~ They looked up at the mountains and said, "Can't understand why these foreigners and visitors keep looking at these mountains, what is there to see, just some mountains." (laughter) They would have preferred Calcutta any day. So I think although there may be much in what you say we must be very careful of romanticism or cliché approach, you see what I mean?

lokamitra: Oh, I agree, yes. Perhaps it's more that ...

S: Some people regard the city as a place of liberation and freedom, away from the restrictions and narrowness and pettyness and dogmatism of the village. lokamitra: But to some extent it is but so quickly it seems to go over the other way.

Voice: Because one's contacts are not ~ basic contacts with people, you know.

S: Ah .... I think this is the major point .... the absence of face to face contacts, yes? or the absence of personal communication. I mean it's all right in the city if within the city you've got your own little group and this is what usually happens, either the people in the same village or the same countryside or sharing certain interests or certain pursuits or even certain work, then it's all right, yes? To some extent at least, it's all right if you can find your own group within the city, I mean in fact the city gives you wonderful opportunities of finding the milieu that suits you, if you're interested in painting, well you can find hundreds of other painters where as if you came from a village there might not be one in your village that you can talk to and so on. But it's a question of, of course, if you're living in a city and

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S: (cont.) .... you haven't been able to find a community even, not to speak of a spiritual community, even ordinary community then it's pretty terrible, then you really do get alienated. Maybe lots of people are in that situation within the city, they don't belong to a community. In that way, say the Cypriots are lucky, living in London, the Greeks are lucky, you know, the West Africans are lucky, anyone with a community on any sort of basis, yes? But if you've just got your nuclear family with possibly a distant relation, in some other distant quarter of London, if you're lucky, and a job to go to, you haven't got a community and you know, the sort of contact you have with people is not at all satisfactory and then there's this vast anonymous mass of people all around you, exerting a sort of, at least psychic pressure, this is not a healthy situation.

lokamitra: It seems more likely that in towns your creative or skillful energies are likely to be blocked, more .... but there are endless possibilities for expression of unskillful actions ....

S: But also endless possibilities for, skillful actions one could say. lokamitra: No .... this is why I said first of all that it seems more likely that these will be blocked from one's upbringing with lots of people, sometimes with no trees around, but a few maybe .... I'm not

trying to -Mise the ...

S: I think some of the most healthy people I know have been brought up in cities, yes?

Voice: I think maybe you get extremes in cities more, things go to extremes and you get good things and bad things.

S: Where as villages and small towns are simply ~diocre.

lokamitra: But, you know, the extre~s are quite horrific at times

S: Yes ....

Voice: It seems to me that most people in tin movement who are really into living in the country were usually brought up in the cities and you know ... appreciate it.

S: Yes ... but probably in the city is the possibility at ~ least of more intensive human contact than you would be likely to get in a small town or village.

I 'sean everywhere one finds, this is very true in India, that people, especially young people, especially young men, regard the city as the place of opport~ity and freedom, not the village, they can' t get away from that quick enough.

Voice: The cities more likely to produce individuals because the conflict of absolutes.

S: Yes, that's true. But perhaps the cities are less likely to produce the healthy positive group member, though again it's not impossible. But it would seem that, to get back to what we were talking about, that negative emotion is more likely to be blocked, the unblocked emotions even are more likely to be negative if there isn't satisfactory communication with other human beings, that is the basic criterion. I mean you can have that, whether brought up in a village or brought up in a city. lokamitra: With iota of people, would you say, it's more likely to be stimulated by positive communication br inhibited?

S: Where?

lok-itra: Well, anywhere, you have lots of people in the town, you have not so many in the country.

S: I don' t think it's more likely to be stimulated in the city, partly because as Kudnanda said there is this clash of absolutes and you' re very much more aware of different kinds of people, different ways of living and so on, and I was going to say, if you cone to the city as a stranger that's a more positive situation than if you'd just been born and brought up there, maybe in a not very positive situation. I think you must be very careful ~out generalising about cities and countryside as if to say the city is completely evil, the best thing you can do is to get away from it. It's very easy to stagnate in the country. Maybe there are opposite dangers in the city the dangers of over distraction, which is a danger, but there are dangers in the country, the dangers of stagnation.

I think that the .... what is a city? You know, a city is not necessarily sort of homogeneous, london is not a city, in say, the sense 'unwEl Norwich is or that .... Athens was or that Florence was, in it's best days. It's an agglomeration of villages really .... it's two cities, with an agglomeration of suburbs which have developed from villages, the two cities being london and Westminster. And for practical purposes, there is no such thing as 'london' for most people, they don't live in london, they live in Haringey, or they live in Chelsea or they live in Tooting or Betnal Green. You don't effectively live in london -ally, what is your effective unit, that is what counts, you see what I mean? I mean most londoners haven't seen

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S: (cont.) ..... much of london except for the actual district they live in and the district where they go to work. So what does one mean by 'living in a city'? This is not as clear as it might sound. If you live on the outskirts say, of Barking Forest and you work in Wanstead, well technically you're living in london, yes. But that's a rather different situation say from someone who maybe is living in Stretham and going into the city to work every day. Both are supposedly living in london but it's not the -- sort of situation, the as- sort of experience. I think what matters is the community you live in or whether you live in a community at all, and whether that community provides opportunities for the development of individuality. They're not necessarily not there because you live in a city, technically speaking, probably they're more likely to be there. I think what is important, in the course of your growth as a human being, I'm not saying an individual, but a human being, you need a positive group at some stage or other, it's as though, it may be marginally that you're more likely to get the ;ii~~ positive group in the country than in the city but the positive group in the countryside seems not to be able to give access to the possibilities of individual development beyond that. Maybe in the city there are more possibilities of individual development but what is lacking in some areas is the positive group, which is the stepping stone to the actual utilisation of those possibilities of being more of an individual, you see what I mean? Probably we can't really say very much more than that. I think we must be careful of a sort of romantic Rousseauism on a broad front, you get this even in communism, of :na~ being really good and happy and healthy and positive, and friendly, if you only removed the social restrictions, you only change the political system, you only take him out of the big evil cities, you know, settle him down in some utopia or some eden everything would be all right, because he is basically all right. I think this view is not justified.

Voice: But isn't that fairly Buddhist in that if you've got the right conditions then people will develop in a more positive way?

S: Not necessarily, not necessarily, you can meet some very negative people in what seems to be very positive surroundings ... because, you know, biologically speaking, you know, what is our ancestry, it's an animal ancestry, we have these animal instincts which are still very strong and which are still stronger than anything else in us, in most cases.

lokamitra: But you can see the sort of .... greed, hatred and delusion, the sometimes sort of negative spiral or sort of bottomless pit, and certain conditions do stii~~te .... there' 5 sort of endless possibilities for unskillful states of mind .... and this is all I'm saying really, or most of what I'm saying, that to~~ do seem to ... not that these don' t happen in the countryside but it's quite limited where as in towns there seems to be much greater scope for this.

S: Well .... I think this is the price that you psy for the development of individuality

B.cause to with the individuality is m'~e, which means it can act skillfully or can act unskillfully but I think what we shouldn' t forget is that, you know, there is this sort of, very frail structure of civilization and culture superimposed upon what is virtuluy barbarism, yes? and we should be very careful that in our attack upon what is wrong in society, that we don't sort of, almost want to wipe out civilization and culture altogether, under the impression that there is a sort of primitive innocence underneath, and all that sort of thing no, no. So you see what I'm getting at? In other words, the importance of the positive group should not be underestimated how ever highly we value the spiritual community and however much the group in which we live, the social group, fails to Uve up to the ideals of a positive group. A positive group is necessary, you can't go straight from sort of primitive savagery into a spiritusI community, you need that positive group.

Iokaaitra: And that positive group I must be stimulating and

S: Well, it must be positve, if it's not it's not a positive group. It must socialize peoples energies positively and constructively not merely repress them so as they break out at intervals, though there may be many who cannot, you know, sublinte, cannot structure their energies positively and who may just have to be suppressed. You know those who are as it were criminal types, one might say, in the

strict sense. - 79 -

Voice: But do you think that people are actnally born with these tendencies?

S: I do. You just look at small children, most of them, just look at them.

Voice: Yes, but not all children, I mean .... given the right positive group these children can grow up into potential individuals.

S: ..... yes ..... but provided you have that positive group to put them through, yes. But I think there are still nonetheless, children or people, as they will be when they grow up, who are not happy to be members of a positive group, whose instincts are still as it were anarchic

and who almost have to be dealt with by force, by the co-unity. I do not believe that everything negative and unskillful is entirely a manifestation of wrong arrangements in society, in view of our general anilenl ancestry.

Voice: Yeah, but the way in which, you know, would that background .... things develop ... that is dependant upon the invironment to a large degree .... umm.. well given that we have got this anunal ancestry, subsiquent from that the extent to which we're becoming civilized does depend en awful lot on the environment....

S: Yes ....

Sa- Voice: and whether we have access to a positive group.

S: -ii~. ... for instance you can find little monsters, you know, appearing in the midst of very positive and friendly ~amilies, you can actually see them. I mean, sadistic, destructive, cruel children brought up by really kindly parents. Voices: (agreement)

S: So I do not believe that all the negativity that is around is simply a reaction to negative or unfavourable circumstances or conditions or lack of opportunity, no.

SMaramati: That's too much, you know, we said yesterday that science is objective, that view is far too scientific in a way, it's leaving outside the forces primal subject.

S: er .... yes ..... yes .... I mean, greed, hatred and delusion are very powerful, yes.

Sagaramati: This is one of the arguents of the womens movement . .....

S: What's that?

Spgar~ti: Well they say that if the structure of society was changed so that men and women were equal, then they would be actually equal, in a psychological sense ..

which, I don't know, I can't believe. -.0-

S: No .... I don't think that is so ..

In other words, what I am saying is, supposing that for the sake of arguement, the society in which we live was completely positive, was a positive group, yes? And supposing, you know, you were so organised that everything was really positive. But you would still have, being born to families within that positive group, or whatever the structure might be that had taken over from the family, children, human beings, members of that society who were negative to such an extent that the positive group, though positive, despite its positivity, could not as,,mmilate them, but would have to do something about them, that would mean, in a sense, suppressing them. I think there would be, I'm convinced there would be people who could not be assimilated0 There are people who cannot be assimilated even by a completely positive commnity. That their negativity is inherant, you could say inherited, maybe

inherited karmically, negativity is such, or unskillfulness is such or crudity is such.

Voice: Does that mean that a positive group on a large scale actually, that a change in the culture towards the positive group is impossible, but there's always going to have to be the group .....

S: I think you're always going to have to be on your toes, I don't think you will ever attain a state of complete equilibrium. I think individuals, or people say, will be appearing within your positive group all the time who threaten to disturb the harmony of that positive group even when you succeed in establishing it, or even if you succeed in establishing it.

Sp~aramati: What form will the repression of those people take? I mean, would it have to be prisons.

S: There might have to be prisons, you might have to restrain them as it were, by force, what else could you do?

Voice: Wouldn't you say from a Buddhist point of view that their in~tence ultimately stems from their ignorance ... ~0

B: Yes

Same Voice: ..... so in a positive society, tending towards, you know, educating and enlightening people, wouldn't that tend to lessen that ignorance?

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S: It could certainly lessen it, but it might not be able to lessen it sufficiently there is the possibility of someone not responding .... yes? People can be very bloody minded and very difficult and a~par~ntly with no cause, it is to their advantage, in their interest to be positive, but they can't or won't be sometimes, so what are you to do? You could have almost a society of Bodhisattvas but they wouldn't be able to help certain people, if they didn't want to be helped.

So therefore there's not ever going to be any stability, I mean the Bodhisattvas'

always going to be busy, mm? (laughter) There's not a finite number of people to be led to enlighten because you can lead all the existing ones to enlightenment but there's still be coming up from the depths of Samsara, you know, very unenlightened people, yes?

End of tape 3 B ----- Start tape 4 ~e A

Voice: I think with regard to children you have to be quite discriminating between the idea of the kind of situation which you mentioned where you might still in an ideal society get children coming up who are .... er ..... full of unskillful emotion and so on and the fact that with most children, most children if not all children at some point of their development,

especially early on, are almost like ~el5. They behave almost like animals and they have to sort of develop beyond that and there at that point is very important that they have the right kind of upbringing, the right kinds of relationship.

S: The important thing is to follow a middle way. hm? I mean it is easy to say that but very difficult in practice. On the one hand you can curb, to use that term, the animal nature sufficiently to make the emergence of a positive group or continuance of a positive group possible. On the other hand you don't over socialise to such an extent that those persons become emotionally crippled and energies become completely negative and destructive.

Voice: Now I have found when I was working with children that those children who were the loudest, perhaps the most aggressive also had the most potential quite honestly, I mean they became more, part of them were children who were intelligent but repressed, this is not always but quite often.

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S: mm .... yes .....

Anyway, all this discussion has arisen out of how people become negative, yes? and how their emotions become repressed and how they become unable to rejoice in the

merits of others. But clearly it is something that goes very deep indeed, but I've said in the past and I say it again that without a well developed, a strongly developed positive emotion or experience of positive emotion you can't really have much ( ? ) individual development, it's almost a sort of crucial issue, to be emotionally positive, that has two aspects, you know, your feeling of happiness with yourself and your feeling of happiness with others, rejoicing in their merits. So:- "I rejoice with delight in the good done by all beings through which they obtain rest" - 'rest' here in the sense of Nirvana "With the end of suffering. Nay those who have suffered be happy. I rejoice in the release of beings from the sufferings of the rounds of existence" .... even though this is a Mahayana work, this is in a way very much from the standpoint of the doctrine follower isn't it? Except that, further - "I rejoice in the nature of the Bodhisattva and the Buddha" You rejoice in their nature. It's almost as though you say 'Even apart from their functions as teaching, helping and guiding you, you rejoice in their nature, their very nature as Buddhas, as Bodhisattvas as Enlightened ones or as Compassionate ones is intrinsically delightful, you rejoice in that quite disinterestedly. It's like the puja raised to a much higher level, because your understanding has deepened meantime, ~-?

And similarly, "I rejoice in the arising of the will to Enlightenment" in ones 'self' and in ~other5~ "and the Teaching, Those oceans which bring happiness to all beings." 'Oceans' in the sense that they are unlimited. The ocean is supposed to be, at least poetically. "and are the abode and welfare of all beings." 'Abode' being more static, 'bearers' being more active and dynamic as it were. There's this 1 attitude of rejoicing in whatever is good, past, present and future, rejoicing in the good deeds that people do, their skillful actions, the practice of the

precepts, their going for refuge, the practice of the paramitas, and rejoicing in the transcendental nature of the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas and the will to Enlightenment.

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S: (cont.) So far there's this attitude of rejoicing, then one is in a very positive, you know, mental and emotional state indeed. You could say that if you delight in say, the Buddha and the Bodhisattvas, you know, your delight in peoples good deeds, peoples meritorious actions, in their merit is a sort of .... is a delight is a way in the reflection in them of the Buddha nature or the Bodhisattva nature, mm? If you rejoice in the Buddha, you cannot but rejoice in the good deeds, the meritorious actions even of an unenlightened being, because in those good deeds is some reflection or some anticipation, however faint and distant of enlightenment itself, you can't claim to be a devout Buddhist or a devoted Buddhist or a Buddhist who worships the Buddha and at the same time not rejoice in the merits of all beings, do you see what I mean? The one follows naturally from the other. If you really do, you know, delight in the Buddha you also delight in the Buddhist .... ?

Any general points? .... in connection with this 'Rejoicing in Merit'. ~ Is its position in the sequence of the sevenfold puja clear? (pause)

Voice: It's like an opening up for the forthcoming Sutra and Supplication'.

S: That's true, yes, yes.

Sparshita: What would be the, the near enemy to this state, to rejoicing in merit? I mean would necessarily rejoicing be in the fact that what you're rejoicing ...? ... S: .... well, just a sort of sentimental attitude, "Oh, aren't they sweet, isn't that a lovely action." (laughter) or that sort of things, yes?

But going back to a bit that I was saying before, I think it isn't sufficiently realised in a way, how precarious the whole structure is, I talked about the precariousness of civilisation and culture but superimposed upon that is the spiritual community so in a way, from a purely human point of view, how precarious that is, yes?

I mean, you've got in the first place, a society which is somewhat precarious and superimposed upon that society a structure of civilisation and culture which is quite precarious and upon that a spiritual community which is very precarious indeed. So it isn't easy to sort of refine the energy progressively in such a way that a person is sufficiently refined, in his energies, to be able to ascend to the next level, but not so much refined that his energies have been refined out of existence or crushed so

S: (cont.) that he can't rise to the next level anyway. It would be quite easy for somebody who wanted to do so to wipe out the entire Western Buddhist Order. In some states this could be done without anyone knowing or noticing that those 100 people had been rounded up and eliminated, yes? So that's quite a thought isn't it. It's not very difficult to dispose of a hundred people, and their supporters and sympathisers, you can eliminate, in a

certain area at least, a spiritual community with a stroke. It's not all that difficult to wipe out civilization and culture, well think of the whole libraries that have been burned, monuments that have been destroyed, scholars who have been killed. Look at the religions that have been wiped

out, look at ? look at what has happened in South East Asia now, in China, Tibet. I'm classifying them rather as cultures than spiritual communities perhaps, but wiping out of cultures is bad enough, perhaps in some areas like Tibet, a spiritual community has been wiped out to some extent, in fact to a great extent. I think the events of this century have really shattered western political optimism, this Rousseauistic attitude for most thinking people, I mean, the events of the last world war and especially the extermination of the Jews, this really shocked anybody who could seriously think, because what does it really mean? It means that civilization and culture were so fragile, think of the Germans, the Germans were, in a sense, one of the most civilized and cultured peoples in Europe, maybe not so much on mass but they have produced the greatest philosophers, the greatest musicians, yes ? Maybe not so many great artists, but great scientists, great statesmen and had made a major contribution to Western culture for centuries, but apparently virtually the whole German population connived, I cannot but use that word, connived, if not participated in the murder, as one can only call it, of so many millions of Jews. So for most people, most people saw a sort of revelation of the barbarism that underlies, you know, our civilization and our culture, and it isn't that that could never happen in any other country, it could happen in other countries too, but we like to think it couldn't happen in dear old Britain, but given certain circumstances, certain conditions, perhaps it could, yes? So I think this, this sort of event, this sort of happening destroyed that sort of naive, political optimism, or what

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S: (cont.) there is a technical term for this isn't it, that things can be permanently improved and changed almost by act of Parliament, this sort of naive approach was permanently shattered. No one thinks like that anymore, I think, not any really thinking person surely? That society is evil but human nature is good and that you've only got to change social institutions, and then you'll have heaven on earth. The events of the last war showed that that was not so.

Voice: (not clear)

S; Well, who is more alienated than the academic? Alienated from the emotion of any kind, really? But, how old is civilisation, you know, it's only 10, 12 thousand years old, civilization as we know it. How old are the great religions? How long a time have they had to influence us, even assuming that they were positive to begin with, about 2000, 2500 years. And how long has humanity been around, well at least a million years we're now told, possibly 2 million, well he wasn't completely uncivilized during that period because even ~ tribal organization represents a degree of culture, but what about our semi human ancestry, you know, going back millions of years before that? According to some anthropologists we're

descended from killer apes. Someone did work it out, that if the human race has been in existence for, you know, 24 hours, we've been civilised and cultured for about a second (laughter) the last second, something like that. So we mustn't be too complacent, we mustn't think the upward movement is an easy task, an easy business, it isn't. There can be a breakdown of nfi civilization, there can be a decline and fall. This is the Buddhist view, you know, that civilization and culture go through cycles. You climb up to civilization and culture, then you sink down to barbarism, and this goes on happening. You know, it's still a legacy maybe for the last century that progress is indefinite. You know, the word 'progress' itself is used in a very ambiguous sort of way, virtually indentified with material progress, certainly idealised. But no, progress is not necessarily indefinite, there's only one, you know, context in which progress is indefinite and that's the spiral, the transcendental part of the spiral that is. So for all mundane things, you know, they're governed by cyclical movement, I mean, human society is a mundane phenomenon, it's governed by the law of the cycle, it goes up and it comes down, or it can degenerate, we can sink back into a condition of savagery, barbarism and so on, and have to re-emerge.

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Sagaramati: Therefore it seems that an enlightened humanity is an absolute impossibility.

S: An enlightened humanity is a contradiction in terms, yes? But you can have enlightened individuals emerging all the time.

Sagaramati: Then, there doesn't seem to be any end to it.

S; But you know er ~..... no because things don't remain static. If you could sort of arrest things and only deal with the individuals you have and gradually have them all enlightened, well all right, you'd end up with enlightened society, but no, new ones are constantly coming in (laughter) do you see what I mean?

Sagaramati: One would hope there'd be some .... feedback, the new ones coming in wouldn't be quite so bad (laughter).

S: Well, possibly, possibly, we don't even, in a cosmic, in a karmic sense, you don't even know where the new ones come from karmically speaking, do you? They might have come straight out of some hell, you wouldn't come out of that in a very positive frame of mine (laughter) and certain individuals, even certain children it seems as if they've come from some hell, the way they behave little devilsL (laughter).

Voice: What do you mean by there's (not clear)

S: MMi 2 ah because the factors that are required to keep humanity,

in the ordinary sense of the word, going ..... yes?

are the opposite of the

factors that constitute Enlightenment. Would you even, to take a very ordinary example, propagate the race? Yes? It may be that if you were all enlightened propagation would slow down, or stop even. It certainly wouldn't go on, you know, in the way it goes on at present (laughter) you might not even want to have a physical body, you know, if you had the possibility of having a spiritual body instead. Can you imagine say, an enlightened humanity with wars, and shops and supermarkets and armaments, all sorts of things just wouldn't be possible, it would be incompatible and then you could hardly call it enlightened humanity, it would be something so different, it would be' you know, if in human form at all a spiritual community. But what about if you did have children, what about you would be admitting these sometimes, little devils to your spiritual community and they would surely change things, when they grew up anyway.

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Sagaramati: That way you can't see .... but see your actions, it means just like a model, you know, you build up the dam a bit, then you die and disappear, the thing is going to collapse, but it's always going to go on and on.

S: Yes, you just have to make sure that you produce people who are going to continue your work under them, but it isn't just like a dam, it's rather like, you know, you have a dam, that's already part of it, but in the midst of the area that's protected by the dam you're building up something else. But if the dam gives way that something else is destroyed, or at least in its external manifestations.

Sagaramati; There must be a point as it were where you lose contact with what is on the other side of the dam.

S: I think it's important not to lose contact because also that's where your energies come from. So you mustn't lose contact but you must also not allow those energies to get out of control, that's the difficult thing. And it seems to me the most positive sort of community in the broadest sense is that community which allows scope for all those cruder energies and forces, but at the same time is open ended with regard to the possibility of higher development. If you clamp down on energies too much, however crude they may be, well, you know, there will just be a violent reaction after a while, or meanwhile there will be no energy available for your higher development. So that's why I say, in the case of the F.W.B.O. yes, let there be a spiritual community and let it be as pure and spiritual as you like but it needs to be in contact with a positive group which we hope is provided by the movement at large. Otherwise, where are our new members going to come from if the spiritual community is so much out of touch? You just die off after a while. So there's a question of a sort of hierarchy, a sort of gradation, we need those intermediate steps, those intermediate levels.

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Voice: Of course as well as your 'little devils' you're also going to get 'little angels' being born aren't you, in a way counterbalance it.

S: No, I don't think so (laughter) well, even if you get, let's assume for the sake of argument, you get one devil to every 12 angels1 one devil can spoil it for all the angels, yes?

Voice: mmm? ..... how?

S: Well, Just by making such a nuisance of himself or herself, ~ behaving just like a little devil. If one person shouts during the meditation that can spoil it for a hundred people, yes?

Voice: (agreement)... so they haven't even to equal you. Even one of them can spoil

things. You know, one country that wants to fight upsets the peace of the whole

world. This in a way is the tragedy of it all, that one person can spoil things for so many others.

Voice; Which is counterbalanced by the fact that one person accepts his responsibility and works, can improve things so much.

S: Yes, right, but not ..... why should he have to work to improve things instead of say, in a way working on himself to rise to a higher level? You are tied down by other people's negativity and being difficult, yes? You see what I mean? I mean you ... even if the little devil is brought under control, well someone's got to spend their time looking after him, yes? even supposing you put all the people who can't be improved into prisons, well someone's got to spend his life as a prison warden, is that a very pleasant, very creative way of spending your life, or working? So it isn't very easy, this is what it really boils down to, yes? One must be quite realistic about these things and not idealistic in a ? .... sort of fashion. Voice: (not clear)

S: Yes, in later traditions. I'd say it was always a Dark Age in some sense (laughter) I don't take that very seriously, it Hx isn't really a Buddhist teaching anyway. There are certainly ups and downs, yes? according to Buddhism, well about this in particular being a

dark age. I mean, looking back over history I don't see any better age, in fact some ways it's a very good age, yes? I mean, it has been pointed out, well since the last wa'~there hasn't really been a big or serious way anywhere in the world,

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S: (cont.) .... not a really disasterous one in modern terms, like for instance the

first two World Wars. We have kept pretty p=i peacable over the last 20, 25 years. The last century was pretty peaceful, probably it wasn't such a peaceful century in

Europe, since the age of the ? ..... which means, what, 200, 300 A.D. after we had the Dark Ages, look at all the wars during the Middle Ages1 terrible, all the time. The Wars of the Reformation, then the various revolutions, last century was pre.~y peaceful, and this century, you know, since the 2nd World War, has not been too bad. And look at the way most people are living now compared with how they were living before, what comfort?

Lokamitra: There's a tendency to look back to past golden ages

S: I mean, there is this terrible overall factor of the possibility of an atomic war, but apart from that the human race has never lived, materially speaking, so comfortably or happily as at present. The standard of living has never been so high for so many people. The things that we enjoy, you know, just now, were enjoyed in the past only by members of aristocracies and not always even by them. You read European history, how did members of the aristocracy even live with regard to the basic necessities of life, they might have had a bit of brocade or a few jewels or a few books, but what about the things that we consider as essential, like fresh vegetables in winter, they didn't even have those, what about diseases, things that we've more or less managed to bring under control now, Cholera, the Plague, smallpox leprosy?

Sagarainati: This means that there is no end to suffering .....

S: There's no end to suffering there is, or there may be, certainly the end of suffering for certain individuals but so long as samsara exists, and so far as we know sainsara always has existed and always will mmm? er suffering is inherant in that samsara, yes?

Voice: What about the cosmic Going for Refuge?

S: Well? .... that is a cosmic going for refuge .... so that is a going.

Voice: So isn't there an upward tendency in the universe?

S: Yes, it has an upward tendency but in the last analysis, I mean the upward tendency is an upward tendency of individuals, yes? But however great the number of individuals, you know, gaining enlightenment, the samsara is beginningless and is continually producing, as it were unenlightened individuals, yes?

Lokamitra: Does that mean the Bodhisattva

S: The Bodhisattvas work is never done (laughter).

Voice: It also means that if the Bodhisattva stops working we're in for trouble.

S: It also means that certainly, yes, this is why it's a continual struggle, this is why I say the precariousness, that unless you're making a constant effort to keep civilization even, I mean, needless to say other things, to keep culture in existence,

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they will die out because peoples inherent tendencies are great 15 not in favour  
of cultural civilization.

Voice: It's dualism isn't it .... it's almost like a dualism, what we're talking about?

S.~ Mmm .... it is in a way. Yes, in practical terms, I mean leaving aside metaphysics one does experience it like that, it does work like that, work out like thatq (pause) Dr. Conze would be pleased wouldn't he, this morning .... out of the

second volume of his memoirs, which are entitled '~emoire~ of a modern gnostic'.

Voice: The gnostic view 9

S: On the whole, yes, on the whole. At least there is a sort of provisional, practical dualism, regardless of how things may stand metaphysically, in terms of ones life and action, well, as it were operates on a dualistic basis. There is a dualism between skilful and unskilful.

Sagaramati: But I mean .... you hope that (laughter) that there's a resolution of all that .... I mean like the Buddha .. about enlightenment 9 but obviously it's not because he's not here?

S: That brings in metaphysics. But as far as we are concerned and for our lifetimes, it's a constant struggle, yes? You know the struggle may be over for us individually but if we look at society there 5 still a lot we have to do, even after our own enlightenment as it were, yes? ~ven if you've finished your own task as it were, you still have an infinite number of tasks to do for society, for those around you.

S: (cont.) So you'll never be able to just settle down and rest nor would you want to. I mean, if you're a Bodhisattva it's your inherent nature to function, yes? Because you're inherently compassionate, you would not want, or would not be able in a sense to function in any other way. I mean, light cannot help being light anymore than darkness can help being darkness. But I think there is quite a bit of what I would regard as shallow optimism around in sort of social and political circles .... it may be that in throwing away Christianity or in throwing away the Christian doctrine of original sin we've gone to the other extreme and adopted a rather naive pessimism.

Voice: It's certainly very strong in Universities when I was there.

S: Is it? Well I think that's very dangerous because it disguises the real problem. Then it gives people an excuse for not working on themselves. I mean, I don't necessarily subscribe to the .... the .... 'killer ape' theory but you can see that the people, I won't say individuals, people whose instincts and desires are uncontrolled and unsublimated must inevitably come into conflict, because they will be wanting only too often the same things, or things that they can't all possess at the same time, so conflict is inevitable. Anyway, let's .... well, it's well over lunch time so let's leave the seventh section of the Puja until tomorrow.

(Pause)

On to the sixth section of the Sevenfold Puja, adhyesana and yacana, entreaty and supplication. let's read round, there are only 2 verses in this section.

Voice: "Entreaty and Supplication"

"Saluting them with folded hands,

I entreat the Buddhas in all the quarters

May they make shine the lamp of the Dharma

For those wandering the suffering of delusion.~

Voice: "With hands folded in reverence

I implore the Conquerors Desiring to enter Nirvana May they remain here for endless ages

So that life in this world does not grow dark.

S: How does Matic render these 2 verses? He says:- "With folded hands I beseech the perfect Buddhas in all places. May they cause the light of the Dharmna to shine upon those who because of confusion have fallen into sorrow. With folded hands I beseech the conquerors who are desirous of experiencing cessation may they pause for countless aeons, lest this world become blind."

So there is no real difference between the 2 translations, you see. All right, well first of all 'Entreaty and Supplication' in general, and its place in the Sevenfold Puja. So what essentially is happening, what essentially is one doing in this section, what is one's mood, or what is one feeling? What do entreaty and supplication really represent?

Voice: It's a bit like an invocation.

S: An invocation, yes? In what way?

Voice: It's sort of being courteous with reverence at the same time.

S: Mmm.

Sagaramati: It's as though you want something.

S: As though you want something, yes.

Voice: Developing receptivity.

S: Developing receptivity, yes, that's the essential point, yes? You're developing receptivity, yes? So how does that connect with what has gone before?

Lokamitra: (laughter) .. well you ought to be in a receptive state by now.' (laughter)

S: Yes ... but more precisely than that? Well, what does the punyanulodana consist in?

Voice: Well .... you've been rejoicing in the good qualities of Buddhas and Bodhisattvas, and now you're making yourself receptive to these ...

S: Yes, exactly, yes. First of all you're rejoicing in the good deeds done by all beings. Then in particular you rejoice in the very nature, not just in the activities, but in the very nature of the Bodhisattva and the Buddha and in the arising of the Will to Enlightenment, and the teaching. So now in the Entreaty and Supplication you're making yourself receptive as it were to all those things, and especially of course to the Buddha and the Dharma. So those things in which you formally rejoice, you're now making yourself receptive to. So this raises as well as introduces the whole question of receptivity, but before we go into that, let's just see what the antecedents of this particular section of the Sevenfold Puja are:-

S: (cont.) "Saluting them with folded hands, I entreat the Buddhas in all the quarters, may they make shine the lamp of the Dharma for those wandering in the suffering of delusion."

So which particular episode in the scriptures, in the Pali and Sanskrit texts does this recall.

Voice: The request by Brahma Sahampatti.

S: The request by Brahma Sahampatti, yes. It's as though here, you are adopting the role or the attitude of Brahma Sahampatti of respectful entreaty and are requesting the Buddha to teach or to preach. You are making yourself receptive, so this means, or does this suggest that the Buddha doesn't teach unless he's asked to? Or the Buddha's don't teach unless they're asked to, why should it be necessary to ask them? Why should it be necessary to entreat them and supplicate?

Sagaramati: In a sense it's true.

S: In a sense it's true. What sense?

Voice: Well, they won't teach .... unless one is open to their teaching.

S: Unless you're open, yes. But suppose you are already open then surely you don't need to ask them? Can't they see that you are open and then just teach?

Voice: The active element of receptivity.

S: Active element in the receptivity, mm?

lokainitra: But if you are open to them, surely that means that you are always requesting them anyway?

S: Yes .... you show your openness as it were, you express your openness. The expression is in a way part of the openness.

lokaritra: Yes, mm.

S: If you really want something, you ask for it. The asking is a natural extension of the wanting, if you don't even ask for it, well the assumption is you don't really want it. So it's not exactly that the Buddhas need to be asked they're always ready, but you have to be open, be receptive, and you have to show your openness, show your receptivity and in a way the showing is part of the openness and receptivity itself. Supposing you want something from someone, but you don't like to make it clear to them that you want that, well what does that suggest?

Voice: Woolly mindedness.

Voice: Lack of openness.

S: Lack of openness, yes. Supposing you want to borrow some money from somebody, maybe just need a couple of pounds quickly, so, you know, you want to ask that from someone. You know that they've got it, you know that they're ready to lend it to you, that they would be quite willing to but somehow you he~itate to ask them, you hesitate to make known your need, you hesitate to 'flake known the fact you want that from them, well, what does that suggest? I mean, we often find this sort of situation, you know ....

Sagaramati: Decietful.

S: I wouldn't say it was ... decietful

Voice: Reserve holding back .

S: Reserve, holding back, yes in other words?

Voice: Guilt (laughter)

S: Possibly .... well.... inevitably (laughter) a sort of lack of confidence, yes? You don't really have the confidence .... you know, in a way, they're quite willing to lend you, but you don't quite like to put yourself in the position of possibly being refused, yes? So that means you haven't got the real confidence that they're going to give you, yes? This is the reason why, or one of the reasons why you could hold back and not express your t-d or your want, so do you think there' S anything analagous to that in our sort of reluctance sometimes to ask for spiritual teaching?

Voice: We don't feel that we're worthy of it.

S: Don't feel we're worthy of it, that element could come in too, but we might get more than we bargained for? (laughter) We might get some spiritual teaching instead of a little pat on the head. (laughter) That's especially the case with Zen masters isn' t it? If you ask them for teaching you really do take your life in your hands, yes? But people say that they want to be taught, that they want to learn but it isn't all that easy to find people who really do want to learn, in a spiritual sense. So it's good that one expresses ones willingness and ones readiness to learn, give expression to ones receptivity in this sort of way, make it absolutely clear that you are open, that you want to be receptive.

Voice: Like asking for ordination.

S; Like asking for ordination, yes. But sometime~ you find that people do adopt the attitude of well, 'I won't actually ask, because when I'm ready, well, people will know and they'll just tell me' so that also suggests a certain lack of openness in that way, perhaps. So why do you think it is said that 'saluting them with folded hands, I entreat the Buddhas in all the quarters'? Admittedly of course the context is that of the Manayana, but why do you entreat the Buddhas in all the quarters, to 'I make shine the lamp of the Dharma'? Why not just the Buddhas in your own immediate environment? Surely one would be enough?

Voice: You're thinking of others also.

S: You're thinking of others also, yes. You're not just requesting that you may have teaching, you're requesting that teaching should be made available to all living beings, you're as it were asking on behalf of all living beings and you want to keep the channels of communication open between the mundane and the transcendental for all beings, for the whole world.

Voice: This comes back very strongly to the sort of .... ? .... thing we were talking about yesterday, dualism of enlightenment and

S: mmm, yes.

Voice: In what way?

Voice: Well, you need the lamp of the Dharma in the darkness of delusion.

S: mm, in the suffering of delusion. I remember once, a friend of ours, actually I think it was an Order Member, though this was many years ago, strongly objecting to this line, "For those wandering in the suffering of delusion." He said he didn't feel that he was wandering in the suffering of delusion (laughter) so what would you say about that?

Voice: He's deluded (laughter)

S: He's deluded. He might not be suffering but certainly deluded. If you are deluded the suffering will come sooner or later. And of course it's because you are as it were opening yourself to the teaching that we have an extract from the scriptures immediately after these 2 verses of the Entreaty and Supplication. It suggests the

attitude with which you should always read or hear the teaching. That's why we have the Heart Sutra, you know, containing the essence of the teaching at least from a

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S: (cont.) Mahayana point of view and other readings, according to the occasion. But what about this whole question of receptivity in general, spiritual receptivity, what about its

importance, how important is it? What are the obstacles to it, why aren't you more receptive? Are some people more receptive than others?

S~aramati: With being receptive it seems like a cool bright state, yes? It's -ri like most of the time we're just too dull to be receptive.

S: mmm, yes? It is .... in this connection it is significant that the Entreaty and Supplication comes out of rejoicing in merits, yes? Which is a very bright, almost radiant state, in which you are very, very intensely aware of the merits of other beings, especially merits of the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas, mm? and so, being aware of those you rejoice, you're in a very positive state, yes? And in that rejoicing positive state you become receptive, you open yourself, you know, to the teachings of the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas in whose merits, on account of their teaching, you're rejoicing. And you open yourself up to the Dharma itself, having rejoiced in the merits of the Dharma itself as it were. I say 'as it were' because there's no Dharma apart from Buddha or Bodhisattva communicating that Dharma. Essentially you rejoice in the merits of beings especially enlightened beings, like Buddhas and

bodhisattvas. Yes, we're not bright enough to be receptive. So what happens then.

Why aren't we bright enough to be receptive~

Voice: Fear of change, seems to be fear of wanting to change, that if you do receive something from outside ? might be able to take it in and change yourself.

S: mm, yes? Inability to cope almost. Could there be such a thing as over-receptivity do you think? Could you actually take in too much?

Voice: er ..... no .... that's being pampered.

S: Ah yes, to suggest that one could have too much receptivity is almost like suggesting you could have too much awareness or mindfulness, you could have too much passivity yes, but you couldn't perhaps really have too much receptivity. So how is that, I mean couldn't you actually take in more than you could cope with? lokamitra: Well it depends on what the receptivity is aimed towards.

S: Yes.

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~kamitra: I~ is was aimed towards something spiritual and generally higher then you couldn't really take in too much.

Sagaramati: The only reason you can't take in too much is because you're reacting to it, and if you're reacting to it you're not open and receptive.

S: mmm . mm.... but is receptivity the same as a sort of indiscriminate

openness? Don't you think people could get a spiritual indigestion as well as a mental indigestion even through being genuinely open, you don't think that is a possibility? For instance they might have spiritual experiences which they couldn't handle, genuine experiences to which they'd been genuinely open and so they couldn't handle them, they did throw them off balance, do you think that this could not happen?

Voice: You somehow imagine that there would be some sort of fail-safe mechanism to operate in the mind which would in a sense - 'right, this is as far as you go, for the time being' sort of thing.

Lokamitra: If that did happen, it would imply that the rest of ones being wasn't in accordance with that, that ones approach was possibly, more possibly more psychological than ethical.

Voice: No .... I mean one needs the time to transform ones being and, you know

Lokamitra: Well, in a way that's exactly what I'm saying.

S: I'm thinking for instance of some of the stories that one reads about Zen masters, that is to say before they came Zen masters, when they appeared sometimes to other people to be quite mad because they were so unbalanced on account of the experiences that they'd been getting into.

S~aramati: Is that taking in too much?

S: Well if it isn't 'taking in too much' what is it? Perhaps it's a half way stage, you know, you can't really take in, yes? You can't really take in, it's sort of stuck half way, it's more like that, yes? You're like the you know, the Indian saying, the snake who has swallowed a frog which is too big, you know, because it is so big he can't get it down but because of his fangs, the way they curve, he can't vomit it up, yes? So it may be that you have been receptive but for the time

being at least you're unable to handle the experience, i.e. unable to fully assimilate it, yes? You are sort of mid way between the path of vision and the path of

S: (cont.) transformation perhaps. That can be quite an uncomfortable sort of state.

Voice: (not clear)

S: But this raises the question of what is madness, we have been assured by at least one recent authority that mental illness or madness is a myth, that there is in fact no such thing. I mean I have myself seen, in India, people who would be considered mad in this country and very likely confined but in India they are regarded as, maybe not exactly holy people but people who are into something spiritual. It's regarded in quite a different way, they're regarded with a lot of sympathy and a certain amount of reverence even, as being people who are into something a bit, not exactly abnormal, the Indians don't really have that category but something a bit out of this world, yes? certainly not ordinary, yes? but not anything that gives rise, in the Indian at least, certainly the Hindu, to any feelings of fear.

Voice: A sense of horror seemed to come over me when I sa! 'One Flew Over the Cuckoos Nest' the situation as shown in that film.

S: Ah, but there one is not horrified by whatever mental illness is visible but by the way in which it is treated, yes?

Voice: Indeed.

S: Or ? treated ... because this question of over receptivity arises, or the possibility of over receptivity arises, in the case of you know people who are maybe leading retreats or leading something of that sort, you know, in connection with whether one is not pushing people too hard or too far or sort of opening them up too much as it were, if you see what I mean. Especially perhaps when one considers that the next day they may have to go back to the 'world' as it were, back to their jobs, their wives and families, yes .... It is not that they have opened up too much but that the opening up involves something at least analagous to the path of

transformation as well as to the path of vision, you've got to be pretty sure that they've got enough time to complete the corresponding path of transformation as well as achieve the path of insight or, you know, what ever corresponds to it, it maybe on a slightly lower level. In sort of pushing them a bit further you've got to be sure at the same time that they're going to have time sufficient to assimilate that.

S: (cOnt.) So perhaps to some extent it boils down to that.

Voice: (not clear) ..... to relate it to the outside world .... the ability to distinguish between what is inside and what is outside (not clear) most people.

S: Well, perhaps, perhaps, because sometimes, relative to the experiences and other experiences, altogether change ones ideas about 'inside' and 'outside' mm? What is 'inside', what is 'outside'. Whether there really is an 'inside' as totally distinct from an 'outside' and vice versa. This is one of the reasons why, you know, people might think you mad if you get a little bit into these things and your ideas of what was inside and what was outside didn't quite agree with theirs.

Voice: But you do meet people that are obviously suffering from delusions ... believe things that are not actually true, which are not happening.

Lokamitra: Laughter.

S: Well, one could agree that there are such things as delusions but you know, what are the delusions, what are the non-delusions? (laughter) But some people would consider Nirvana a delusion, the meditative experience itself a delusion, yes?

Voice: (not clear)

Voice: I don't thi~ that bears much, any corresponding value

S: Well, let's put it this way, when someone says that .... so and so is a K.G.B. agent, what does he mean.

Voice: lie represents to them the forces of evil.

S: Yes, I mean in their vocabulary a K.G.B. agent means something oppressive and evil and disturbing, so you can't dismiss that as a delusion merely on the factual grounds that, in the public reality that particular person, the kind, helpful nurse is not in fact a K.G.B. agent, mm? (laughter) but what the person says is psychologically true

Voice: The public reality has said it.

S: .... you mustn't reject the psychological truth because it's been wrongly labelled. I mean for instance, supposing you'd lived in the Middle Ages, you wouldn't have used the expression, you know, 'K.G.B. agent' you would have said there's a devil trying to get at me, you know this would have been quite acceptable because everybody believed in devils and that they did appear to you and try to harm you,

S: (cont.) and so on, yes? So a person is not necessarily deluded in the real sense, you know, if they merely use factual terms in a sort of poetic way as one might say, yes. They are describing their experiences quite genuinely and they haven't got any other words maybe in their vocabulary, they don't use the old mythological vocabulary anymore, they know that everybody in their environment, you know, hates the idea of a K.G.B. man and regards it as something very evil and so on, so this is the word that they use, that there is a K.G.B. man trying to get at you ... nurse says 'nonsense, it's only me, I'm trying to help you' (laughter) but he may experience the nurse in that particular way.

Dhamarati: It does seem to be a matter of degree, because I've seen for instance a man with a really big, festering sore on his head where he's tried to take out the microphones, placed there by the people who were controlling him. The fact remains that he'd really had a good go to 'get the microphone'. He'd made quite a mess of his head.

Voice: Could he be physically experiencing some sort of disturbance in the top of his head which, very possibly

S: Yes, also don't forget also, you see we are brought up thinking in terms of microphones, loudspeakers, electronics, yes? Not ... we don't use a religious vocabulary any more, so what other vocabulary are we to use if we feel someone is getting into our head, which could be someone's actual experience. So how, you know, you are brought up learning the language of electronics, you don't understand how electronics works, it's a sort of magical thing to you, so you say, 'someone's plugged in to my head, there's a microphone there' whereas before, well 'the devils whispering in my ear' now you say 'someone's plugged in a microphone' yes? It's the same sort of thing, the same kind of meaning, yes? So one must be very careful I think, because in a way the language is absurd, one doesn't reject the meaning as absurd.

Voices: (agreement)

S: Just as for instance, say a poet says, 'well, a beautiful angel came to me in

my sleep and inspired me with this poem' You don't say, 'well angels don't come to people (laughter) nonsense' and reject his poem as worthless therefore, the product

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S: (cont.) of delusion, no, you treat it seriously, yes? Because that's just the language he's using to describe his experience. It's the only language perhaps that he knows. Unfortunately we've got this horrible language of microphones and wires and things of that sort, yes? Well, we just have to try to understand what the person is trying to get across. Not just find faults with the language. So I would say that using language in this sort of way is not to be regarded as a form of actual

delusion. In Buddhism there are basically only 3, possibly 4 delusions and they are called. When you mistake the impermanent for the permanent, that is a delusion, a real delusion. When you mistake the painful for the pleasant, that is a real delusion. When you mistake the unreal for the real, this is a real delusion and when you mistake the, this is a difficult one to translate, well let's say the ugly for the beautiful, the impure for the pure, that is a real delusion, so these are the sort of spiritual or if you like metaphysical delusions which are the real delusions. So the real question is whether people are suffering from these or not? I haven't read that book 'The Myth of Mental Illness' but I keep meaning to. I gather it's being very influential. I'm not saying that there aren't unhealthy or unskillful states which people might not get into, which might even need some kind of treatment, but I think one has to be very careful to and I think this is the main point of this book .... not to label these illnesses on the analogy of physical illnesses, yes? Because when we say somebody is mentally ill, that is really only a manner of speaking on the analogy of physical illness. I mean, leaving aside all question of what is physical illness. Even that can be discussed, so 'mental illness' is really a sort of metaphorical expression, if it's anything, but if it's taken literally perhaps there is no such thing as mental illness as has recently been insisted.

Voice: Well presumably it's a description of a .... in the same way as physical illness would be a description of a physical abnormal state, mental illness would be a psychological abnormal state .... in some way

S: Well this raises the whole question of what is abnormal. Whether you can use the word of -x psychical experience in the same way as you can of mental experience

.. of .... of psychical experience?

Voice: I suppose you'd use it with regards to people who were experiencing intense suffering, like you use physical illness for someone who is experiencing pain in a physical way. 102

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S: Well that is a symptom of illness isn't it? Yes. So you can certainly experience intense mental suffering and that could be regarded as a symptom of something psychically

~:rong~ In fact Buddhism does do this in a way, because supposing you're deeply attached to something and then you lose that particular thing you suffer. So Buddhism will take the view that your suffering then is the symptom of an illness, the illness being your intense attachment to the thing which you've now lost.

Voice: category of people or children who .... as far as one can see haven't developed a conscience at all, they are sometimes known as psychopaths, but there's a correct definition of psychopath, you actually get children or adolescents or adults feeling they are entitled to kill the adults, feeling absolutely nothing, would you call that mentally ill?

S: I wouldn't call it mentally ill. It's more like arrested development. They haven't been socialised as it were, they haven't been able to recognise the existence of other people with feelings like their own and haven't been taught perhaps or haven't been able to learn to regard those people as others like themselves and behave towards them accordingly. They're in a purely infantile state essentially. The infant only thinks of himself, the infant, for himself is the only person in the world really. When he wants something he shouts and shrieks until he gets it. It's only gradually that he comes to realise that there are others in the world and you have to take some account of them you have to consider them. But it seems the psychopath is one who never learns this so he grows up perhaps even with a sort of intelligence, even sort of skills, abilities, but nonetheless he is emotionally at least, an unsocialised person. So what is society to do with its psychopaths. There are only 2 things, well only 3 things which we can do, only 3 alternatives. We did touch upon this in a less extreme form yesterday. You can either eliminate them, which means kill them, which some societies do, you can confine them, which other societies do, or you can let them loose, allow them to remain at liberty and suffer the consequences, let them find their own outlets. So only these 3 possibilities. But in all cases they have a disruptive effect, which is one of the reasons why you can't have your perfect society~ In all cases they have a disruptive

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S: (cont.) effect. Even if you eliminate them they have a disruptive effect because you've got to catch them and then they've got to be killed, yes? And for individuals in a society who don't want to kill, to have to do that as a sort of social necessity is disruptive. If you confine them that's disruptive because you've got the bother and the expense of looking after them, people have got to look after them, healthy people perhaps have got to look after them. And if you allow them just to go on the rampage well certainly there is going to be disruption. The question arises, can the production of the psychopathic characters be stopped. I mean is it a congenital thing? I don't know if this has been investigated, whether some people are congenitally pathological or whether it is simply due to defective training. Some I believe say that it's due to a lack of love etc., at a very early age, I don't know about that. I don't even know whether the whole subject has been thoroughly discussed at all, what makes the psychopathic character? Anyone know anything about this.

Voice: I know that they've been working on genetic practice and things like that, and chemical balances.

Voice: I know there isn't a very clear distinguishing between the various categories of mental illness in the actual practice of medical research and even at academic levels is quite, quite because of the tendency, with psychopaths for example .... those that have been deprived, those that are neurotic in a certain way, perhaps even those that they call psychotic, then tend to look at it in terms of degree of disturbance you know . . . that somebody is 'very ill' or someone is 'slightly ill'

S: It would seem to me that in a sense the psychopath, in himself is not ill, he doesn't experience any internal conflict. The conflict is entirely between him and society. So one could say that the psychopath is like an infant or like an animal, you know, he has not become fully human. In that sense he is a case of arrested development rather than a case of mental illness.

Voice: Surely a fourth alternative is to continue their development, to its end do you think that is possible?

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S: Theoretically, yes, that is a possibility but I think psychopaths are notoriously difficult to handle, it's as though there's so much ground to be recovered, so much lost time to be made up for, that it is virtually impossible to do it. I don't know if there has been any experiences in this field .... anyone .

Dharmarati: The theory is that the ? either you have your psychopath and next to that your integrated social group and try to train them that way, or you can create a social group that is all psychopaths and let them fight it out and (laughter) .... get a social order imposed.

S: When I spoke of psychopaths finding their own outlet of course, very often in the past they've found their outlet through war, I mean, maybe some of them joined the army or they became professional torturers and executioners or something of that ...t.... because this work was carried on by people of some kind or other. Or they might work in abattoirs, or slaughter houses and so on. No doubt there are degrees of .... of this kind of thing. Some might be just about assimilable into ordinary society, others definitely not. Some might be susceptible to treatment, others perhaps not.

Voice: Aren't there also cases of children who have been left in the wild by themselves when they were very young and they've survived by themselves and later been caught ... and acted no better than animals because that's how they've been bred for years and yet have also been educated (not clear)

S: But, I mean this is a field, in a way full of confusions, yes? There has been a bit of literature about such people recently, but there's also been a fair lot of controversy as to what actually happened, and you know, what their condition was originally, and how they were treated and so on. But then the question still arises, supposing a child is, sort of lost in the wild, when it is, say 5 or 6. It certainly couldn't survive perhaps, it's lost as a baby, but

say, lost when it's 5 or 6 and adopted by animals. Well, if it was a normal child, even though it had been through that sort of experience for several years, it could still, no doubt, be socialised afterwards. But supposing it was a child that was not properly socialised to begin with, yes? and then perhaps it couldn't be reclaimed but that would be not because of the years spent in the wild but because of what had happened before it got into the wild, yes? So, one would have to be very careful about generalising in

any of these instances.

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Voice: I suppose the danger of thinking that there is such a thing as mental illness is that you begin to see just a particular, quite a restricted range of consciousness as being normal, and that people who act, maybe in just the standard, accepted way in society, in rather group action, will be regarded as normal, and the other sort of state of consciousness will be thought of as being something abnormal that needs

treatment which is quite wrong.

S: Yes .... yes .... I think it's a quite interesting experience to have personal contact with people who are, you know, by ordinary conventional standards, mentally unbalanced or a bit mad, or something of that sort, and try to relate to them. I'm not suggesting one should try to do this if they are psychopaths or any sort of real danger, but there are lots of harmless lunatics, as they are called, you can meet any number of them in India, where they are allowed to wander around free, so long as they don't interfere with somebodies women-folk. They are allowed to wander round, that's just the one thing that is not tolerated. People don't mind if they steal a bit or they act in any other way, but if they molest the women-folk then, very often in a village they'll be ~toned to death, but otherwise they are allowed to wander around and you can meet them and talk to them. It's quite an interesting experience to talk to people who are not, in a way, 'sane' as we would usually say. Anyone had any experience like this?

Voice: Mmmm

S: And what do you feel about it?

Voice: It was quite energising, very ? quite deconditioned.

S: Quite deconditioned what do you feel, do you feel that they are human~ In a broad sense. Do you feel some possibility of communication?

Voice: Quite often with very low grade mental patients, I did sort of call them, 'low grade' ....(laughter).

S: That's a different thing, surely isn't it? That again, the really 'low grade' is arrested development.

Voice: I sort of used to wonder whether there was any point in making them smile and laugh,

because I wasn't convinced that they really, sort of felt .... it made any difference.

Sagaramati: It is like the only experience I've ever had it, remember Lance ?

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Sagaramati: (cont.) that was like talking to someone in another world ... it was like he wasn't really human, he was like somebody in another sort of realm.

S: mmmm inmmm Because you can have people who are, you know, by conventional standards at least, mentally ill or even insane, who have a high intelligence, yes? So what does one feel about ones personal contact with people like that, how does that feel?

Voice: In some cases it can be quite disturbing because they see to sort of recognise things, sometimes you don't really see, they see things about you, or they've had some sort of vision that maybe they really just can't contain. They can't really explain it, you get this feeling that in some ways they're may be a

bit ? they have some sort of wider perspective, there are ~ maybe not many people who can contain this situation.

Voice: Because quite often they don't have the reserve, they don't hold back, they

just say what they think.

Lokamitra: They're like young children sometimes, yes? They will say exactly

what they think about you .... 'I don't like you' (laughter).

S: Yes ...~. well, there's an absence of certain social conventions. They might infact be highly conditioned in some other way that you are not. But in some ways that you are conditioned, they are not, mm? I mean, this is perhaps what is quite illuminating, that the same basic structure presumably, they are recognisably human, but it's as though what is black in you is white in them and what's white in you is black in them, and then you can see the relativity of your own approach and how conditioned you ~re. It's not necessarily that they are freer than you, although they might be, but, more often than not they're equally conditioned but in a different way, they might even be more conditioned than you in some ways but because they are differently conditioned, it highlights the fact that you are both conditioned, that you are conditioned too, but simply in a different way. You may even be conditioned in a more positive way than they are, in the sense that from your type you can develop more easily to the next highest level, but still it is a conditioning that you must grow beyond in anycase. And personal contact with people like that may help you to see that or to feel that or to realise that more clearly. I mean, in quiT!!!

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S: (cont.) in quite a number of communities, of societies one listens carefully to what mad

people say, especially when they say it b[ut] chance, because it gives a new slant, a new angle which you might well have overlooked. So it's sometimes quite good to consult people whose outlook is quite different from yours about . especially a certain practical matter. It's said for instance, I think by one of the Roman writers, ~ong the Germ~ tribes, before taking any important decision they always consulted the old women, so why was this? Because women see things so differently from men and it would be a mistake, in a situation where you needed to see things from as many different view-points as possible, so as to take into account all circumstances, it would be a mistake to overlook the point of view of women who see things in a different way from men, maybe notice things that men would just overlook. So it's just the same in the case of mad people, they might see something that you overlook, so, hear what they have to say. This is a sort of traditional wisdom as it were, primitive peoples know this, hear what the shamen has to say, lie's sort of mad. Take some other point of view into consideration, yours is limited.

Voice: I don't know very much about his work but I know ? Laing has tried to draw parallels between mental illness and actual spiritual experience.

S: I'd be quite suspicious of any parallel, there perhaps is an analogy, b~ parallels I'd be quite suspicious of. I think in his case there is a tendency to ni romanti~se about the non-rational, if you see what I mean. Because you commit people who are labelled, say, 'insane' and who are clearly from a Buddhist, a spiritpa~l point of view are in a very negative state, howeoever one might describe or label that, but the feeling you get off them is really very sick and very negative. They are really, very, well, I'm going to use the term 'ill' people, from a spiritual point of view, whether or not they are ill mentally. Of course one gets the same sort of feeling from lots 0£ people who are labelled 'normal' and healthy, yes? (laughter) But we mustn't remantiojse the mentally ill and try to build them up into so sort of, what shall I sat .... quasi-mystic. No, sometimes they are just poor unfortunate people in quite a negative state, it doesn't help them I think to remanti~se it.

Something is wrong, howeoever one might describe that, and whereas the medical description may be inadequate, still there is something wrong which needs to be

dealt with, perhaps by some spiritual means. I say, from my own experience, ~~ich

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S: (cont~) hasn't been very much, it's been quite limited, I'd say with regard to the so-called mentally ill people, the so-called insane people, there are definitely two kinds, that is to say those from whom you pick up a positive vibration and those from whom you pick up a negative vibration and they, I mean perhaps medical science would kLmp them together but to me these seem two quite distinct categories. But in cany case it's interesting to have contact with people of this sort because it just makes one aware of how conditioned and limited ones own standpoint is and how there are other possibilities of experience than those with which you are aquainted, even on the ordinary, mundane level. I mean their experiences are not necessarily spiritual, they may not even be as high as yours but they are different, so by becoming aware of that you just become aware that the range of human experience is broader than you had thought before. So this represents what one might call a sort of horizontal receptivity, yes? as distinct from the vertical, receptivixty to higher spiritual influences like

those of the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas.

Voice: I'm trying to think how this fits in with the idea of reincarnation it's ... with ... previous incarnations, you have to have a positive environment and go through the group process, the group conditioning in a positive way.

S: Well, the Buddhist view-point is that the environment into which you are born does depend on previous karmic factors so that you would in fact be born into that environment which enabled you to reap the consequences of whatever karmas you had committed.

Voice: If you are born into an environment which makes you into a psychopath,

assuming this is possible

S: Ah, yes ... there is this question raised in the Buddhist-texts as to ... what is the karma which has produced someone, I suppose that ~ would regard as mentally deficient, yes? And the usual explanation which is given is that if in a previous life you have not utilised the opportunities that you had for your individual

development then you would be born dull witted and so on. So one could say, from a karmic point of view, that if the psychopath represents a case of arrested development, then he is one who in a previous life had not cultivated or not

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S: (cont.) made use of his opportunities for development or even perhaps not only disregarded them but had actually inhibited himself in that way, who had not only neglected, but wasted his opportunities.

Voice: And what is the psychopath to do, should he come into contact with Buddhism and becomes interested in it?

S: Well, the psychopath can't do anything. It's like the alcoholic .... do you see what I mean, for instance supposing you're not an alcoholic to begin with, well then you're free to have a drink or not to have a drink, yes? It's within your power. Alright, supposing a time comes when it's so habitual it's no longer in your power not to have a drink. You've reached a sort of negative point of no return, you're power not to have a drink has been lost. So in that sort of situation what can you do? You can't do anything, because you have lost your freedom, you've minimised your own freedom and you are responsible for that because originally you had the freedom, do you see the point? Originally you could have abstained but now you can't because you've allowed yourself to go step by step down to that negative point of no return. So once you've done that you're unable to do anything for yourself so, you know, where lies your only hope?



S: (cont.) point of no return, your power not to have a drink has been lost. So in that sort of situation what can you do, you can't do anything because you have lost your freedom, you've minimised your own freedom and you're responsible for that because originally you had the freedom. Do you see the point? Originally you could have abstained but now you can't because you've allowed yourself to go step by step down to that negative point of no return. So once you have done that you are unable to do anything for yourself, so where lies your only hope. Well in other people, in other people coming along, other people might have forcibly to deprive you of drink for a while because you can't do it. At the very best you might say,

"Well, I hand myself over to you, treat me. I'll go into hospital. I'll follow what ever treatment you tell me." But they might have to tie you up to keep you away from the stuff, you might even beg and plead with them to give you just a little drink, you'll die if you don't get it you believe, but they don't give you and you may eventually be cured if you are lucky. So if you've not made use of your own opportunities, if you've actually degraded yourself in that sort of way, whether by becoming an alcoholic or by becoming if such a thing is possible, a psychopath, then your only recourse is, well you have no recourse, that others see your plight and take pity on you and try to help you but then your development becomes, well I won't say a very chancy thing, but much more difficult just because you are dependant on a lot of care, a lot of sympathy, a lot of compassion on the part of others and there might not be very many people who want to take up that sort of task. So we have to beware that we don't by our own foolishness and carelessness allow ourselves to slip back into such a state that we are no longer able to help ourselves. And just as in the case of the alcoholic we can allow ourselves to get into that state in various ways and for various reasons, what I call that negative point of no return and then the only people who can help us, or who are able to help us or are willing to help us are Bodhisattvas, whether in the traditional sense or really kind hearted people that happen to be around in our human environment.

We've all meet at different times people who can't help themselves in one way or another and one would like to think that when one comes into contact with those

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S: (cont.) people all your compassion is awoken but does it actually happen like that, the chances are that you will feel annoyed and irritated and frustrated by them, unfortunately, but that is the sort of position they have put themselves into. It is only a real Bodhisattva who can cope with such people, and really help them. The ordinary person, even a quite well meaning, sincere person will find it incredibly, almost impossibly difficult to do anything with them, it is almost beyond human patience. There must be some sort of transcendental element, some real Bodhicitta sustaining you to be able to help such people. It requires

infinite patience, such as very few people have. So one should be very careful not to allow oneself to get into that state and you can get into it in various ways.

Voice: Do you see people in the Movement working more with such people eventually'.~ S: I don't. I don't. Not that I would discourage anybody who felt that they had a sort of vocation in that way, but I think not, not unless we become a very big movement indeed.

Voice: Is that because the priority is to build up the movement?

S: Well, to have as strong as Buddhist Movement as possible and to invest ones energies sensibly. I mean most people have only got a limited amount of energy so use it as productively. If by investing the same amount of energy you can produce say a dozen really live individuals, surely that is better than investing it in such a way as to produce only one, or perhaps not only one in view of the present plight of the world, society generally. This is why I have an aphorism, which will, I don't know whether it has appeared, or it will appear in the next edition of sayings which goes like this. 'One should not waste time helping the weak. Nowadays it is the strong who need help%~Because things are so difficult that even the strong might give in but a little help and they' ll pull through, so that little help that you give them, well, that is a good investment of energy.

Voice: In a way this is the Buddha after his enlightenment. He said those that have little dust on their eyes, he couldn't really do much in a way for tifr others.

S: Well, he could do more for those with only a little dust and there's a better chance then in the long run of even the psychopaths being helped. If you've got a very large number or a considerable number of really healthy individuals around.

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Voice: It's something like a chain reaction.

S: Yes. Well, what about this second verse. "With handgfolded in reverence I implore the Conquerors desiring to enter Nirvana; May they remain here for endless ages so that life in this world does not grow dark."

So this verse too is based on an episode, how genuine we don't know, in the Buddhist scriptures, in the Buddha's life. Does anyone know what this one is? Voice: (inaudible)

S: Yes that's right, in the Mah~Parinirvana Sutra. The Buddha gives Ananda a broad hind, we are told that if he was requested he would stay on until the end of the kalpa, in the world. Commentators differ on their interpretation of this, kalpa here means the full term of natural life, i.e. a hundred years, others say it means until the end of the world period, but in any case Ananda failed to tfla}ce the thought in, due to the intervention of Mara we are told and the Buddha therefore passed away. It's rather an odd opisode. No one it seems is able to say what it really means. What do you think it means? I mean supposing it did actually happen, even that is in doubt, but supposing that did actually happen, what do you think it

meant? Did the Buddha need to be asked to stay on for the remainder of his hundred years or until the end of the aeon, do you think that to be possible. Surely it's the same principle as in the case of the original request to preach the Dharma. Does it mean that people are ceasing to be receptive?

Voice: Does it mean that Mara does, come in the way of every situation.

S: Yes. Was it just a mysterious episode that we can't really fathom and had really better just dismiss or had better forget about, but again it's not so easy to forget about because there is this question of imploring the Conquerors not to enter Nirvana, to remain as it were, in the world, so the general principle is the same. So how do you see this? Do the Buddha's need to be asked to remain in the world?

Voice: Well, what we were saying yesterday (not clear)

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S: Yes, ah yes. There's no end to the entreaty, you have to go on entreating.

Voice: And also the Bodhisattvas will always be

S: Always be tempted to enter Nirvana and will always be requested not to enter into it. (laughter). Yes. It's a permanent possibility, you mustn't think that once you've asked your Bodhisattva and he says O.K. I'll stay on for a bit, that's that, you have to go on asking, have to go on wanting, you have to go on being receptive, there is that to it. It's not because here the Bodhisattva is the Buddha but in principle it's the same. In other words do not take your Buddha for granted, even when he has been preaching 4~ years, don't take it for granted, go on asking, go on being receptive, one could take it very much in that sort of way.

Voice: It's like attention, you mustn't become relaxed.

8: Yes, yes. One could say that the proper attitude on the part of ordinary people with regard to Buddhas and Bodhisattvas is that they might disappear any minute, yes, because the Samsara is so painful and the pull of Nirvana which is within their reach is so strong, that unless you keep before them constantly your need, and are really open to them, they might just disappear, float off into Nirvana. You only have to turn your back for a few minutes and they're off, if you're not careful, you see what I mean? So attention is as it were to be kept up, attention is to be kept up, don't let your attention waver for an instant. But there's another way of looking at it too. That teaching depends upon you. If you are not listening to them can they be said to teach? So if you are not listening to them they might as well be in Nirvana. Yes? So if you don't listen to them you put them into Nirvana, you make them inoperative because this is what being in Nirvana means, you make them inoperative by not listening. So

unless you entreat them they are in Nirvana. How could it be otherwise? So the minute your attention slackens or you turn away they are unable to preach, there's no one to preach too, there's no one listening, no resonance. The preaching doesn't mean emitting words, it means having beings listening. So the minute beings are not listening the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas are in Nirvana. So you must keep up your entreaty to keep them preaching.

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Voice: The trouble is that means that beings have got to keep Buddhas and Bodhisattvas out of Nirvana.

S: Yes.

Voice: How do beings go about this without feeling bad about it.

S: Yes. (laughter) By constant entreaty and supplication, which means being aware of them, being receptive to them and wanting to hear them teach otherwise they remain in obedience, even when there are Buddhas and Bodhisattvas around, physically, they might as well be in Nirvana for all the good you allow them to do you.

Voice: (That means they are ?) .... a bit conditioned by your response. Surely they can break through, even your inattentativeness surely?

S: Yes they can break through your inattentativeness but if you absolutely don't want to be receptive there's nothing even they can do about it. If you want you can silence them into Nirvana. (laughter). If you want you can silence all the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas. It's a terrible thought isn't it. Yes. You can put out the lamp if you want to, for yourself anyway, perhaps even for others.

Voice: Then you make a distinction between the conditioned and the unconditioned final.

S: In what way?

Voice: There's no possibility of .

S: There's no possibility of contact, there's no contact anymore. So there's even no unconditioned, so far as you are concerned, it's completely inoperative, as far as you can see, unless it's in a very subtle cosmic sort of way. You've banged the door in the Buddha's face, what can he do? Just sit quietly on the other side until you open it again (laughter). And you might even forget that there's a door there, might forget to tell other people and they might not know, and no one knows anymore that there's a door there that can be opened, that remains shut for a very long time. So you see that there is not this sort of hard and fast distinction between a Buddha's, let's say activity to use that word, and other beings' receptivity, that they go together. If you are receptive he will be active. If he is active

S: (cont.) it means you have at least started to be receptive. (pause) One might say that on any level, even teaching secular subjects. Nothing is so stimulating to the teacher as I'm sure any one who has tried to teach knows, as the interest to learn on the part of the pupil. Nothing is as stimulating

as that. Without that it is very difficult for the teacher to teach, even when in a sense he wants to. That stimulus, that interest and curiosity and alertness and receptivity must be there as it were at the moment of teaching otherwise nothing happens or very little happens or the teaching process becomes dull and mechanical.

Voice: In a sense the Buddha doesn't want to be in Nirvana.

S: In a sense, yes. In a sense it doesn't depend upon him altogether.

Voice: It's not really any different for him whether he's teaching or not. It's whether there's people receptive to him. If there's people receptive then it's just natural activity for him to teach, if there's not, just to remain silent.

S: Well, you could if you like, though this is perhaps a little, I won't say ( ? ) but a little unusual. But you could say that if other beings do not allow him to teach it's as though the Buddha's own enlightenment even is not complete. I mean this is putting it rather strongly but perhaps there is something to think about there. Because is there any such thing as absolute self-sufficiency, even for a Buddha? It's not easy to describe what the Buddha's experience is like in terms of unenlightened experience. One could perhaps say something like that.

Voice: (inaudible)

S: Well, you could take an ordinary human analogy. Supposing you like somebody else, in a quite normal healthy way let's say. If they are aware of that and like you back does that not give an extra dimension to the fact of your liking itself? Do you see what I mean? I mean is the fact that you like them not enhanced by the fact that they like you in return or can it be completely the same, or exactly the same whether they like you or whether they don't. Perhaps it's a bit like that.

Voice: Well, wouldn't that depend on what sort of like it was?

S: Well, I said a healthy, human liking, yes? I'm only using that analogically, just so I can make clear what I'm getting at. So it's as though the Buddha you might say, is begging sentient beings to allow him to teach.

Voice: You can see that in the Bodhisattva Ideal. If a Bodhisattva can't get fully enlightened until all beings have crossed over the ocean of suffering, if people really want to stay in that ocean of suffering then they're holding the Bodhisattva back.

S: Perhaps we should pause there for refreshments. (laughter)

B: It did occur to me just at the end of our discussion about madness that in the States, in some of the Tibetan Centres especially in ? ? himself has been talking a bit lately in terms of the tantric wisdom, being a 'crazy wisdom'. And that talk of 'crazy wisdom' seems to be going down rather well with the Americans, especially the American Buddhists. Now why do you think this is?

Voice: Well, they are a bit extrovert anyway.

S: But is there a necessary connection between extroverian and being crazy?

Voice: Is it as opposed to a sensible wisdom, respectable wisdom?

S: But they're very sensible, respectable people apparently, mostly professional people as far as one can see, judging by the photographs in magazines. So why should they be so attracted to this 'crazy wisdom'?

Voice: They need the irrational.

S: They need the irrational.

Voice: Probably fear. (not clear).

Voice: It may be a bit like the encounter groups that are often, professional people go along to them because they can't really express through their daily lives what comes up.

S: But do you think that they are taking the 'crazy' seriously? Do you think they are taking the 'crazy wisdom' really seriously?

Martin: (inaudible) .... they don't take it very seriously any more because if they are crazy . (not clear).....

S: So why are they attracted, what is happening, what is going on? When serious sensible people start being attracted by the crazy? There's a parallel in British Buddhism, especially in the Buddhist Society, in the case of Christmas Humphries. He's always going on about Alice in Wonderland as though it was a real Zen text, and quoting chunks from it, why do you think that is? There's some irrationable and sensible .... yes.

Voice: It isn't really real, they don't see it as really real but as a sort of fairy tale.

S: Yes, a sort of fairy tale quality, yes. If you say that Alice in Wonderland is just like a Zen text, just like Zen Buddhism then you can imagine that Zen Buddhism is just like Alice in Wonderland, aren't you. You're religating it to the nursery. You're almost sort of isolating it, quarantining it. I think this is what is happening when middle class Americans lap up talk about the 'crazy wisdom'. They like to think they're crazy but of course they're not, that's the last thing they are. They're spiritually crazy perhaps but not in their own eyes, in ordinary conventional terms, crazy is the last thing that they want to be but they get a bit of a kick perhaps out of thinking they're a bit crazy in being into Buddhism and Tantra is crazy. It's got this 'crazy wisdom'. But the same crazy people have their regular steady jobs and all the rest of it. It struck me when I read this in some of the issues of say, Christian Mirror and so on about 'crazy wisdom'. They're not crazy, not in that sense. It seems very odd.

Voice: Seems like another rationalisation, a way out of serious practice. S; Yes, yes, almost.

Voice: Sounds like a compensation for a one-sided life.

S: A compensation, yes. And the real crazy wisdom can't be a compensation for anything. It's total. Chumpa himself seems to be going in for 'crazy wisdom' in quite a big way these days (laughter) but you notice he's still wearing a very expensive suit, so he can't be so crazy (laughter).

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SL Anyway, let's go on to the 7th and last section. 'Transference of Merit and Self Surrender.' There are four verses here so let's read them round.

"May the merit gained in my acting thus

Go to the alleviation Of the suffering of all beings

My personality throughout my existences

My possessions

And my merit in all three ways  
I give up without regard to myself  
For the benefit of all beings  
Just as the earth and other elements  
Are serviceable in many ways  
To the infinite number of beings  
Inhabiting limitless space  
So may I become  
That which maintains all beings  
Situated throughout space  
So long as all have not attained  
To peace."

S: So what does Matics say, for the first verse, 'Having done all this let me also be a cause of abatement, by means of whatever good I have achieved for all the sorrow of all creatures.' And the next verse, 'I sacrifice indifferently my bodies, pleasure and goodness, where the three ways cross, past, present and future, for the complete fulfillment of the welfare of all beings.' And the final third verse, 'As the earth and other elements are in various ways for the enjoyment of enumerable beings dwelling in all of space so may I be in various ways the means of sustenance for the living beings occupying space as long a time as all are not satisfied.'

Once again there's not really any difference between the meaning in the two translations, but Mrs. Bennetts seems to read that much better. Voice; There is one difference in the meaning actually, in the second verse. Matics says in the the three times whereas Mrs. Bennett says merit in three ways.

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S: AH, yes. Merit of the past, merit of the present, merit of the future, so in the three times. Though you could say, in fact it is said traditionally, merit by way of body, speech and mind, but the meaning is clear. I mean, 'all your merit' so that would be in fact all your past merit, your present merit, your future merit through the body, through speech, through mind. You

give it all up, you don't want any of it just for yourself. So what's the overall feeling here, the overall mood as it flail were?

Voice: (inaudible) ..... sounds like quite a different thing from enjoyable.

S: But if you enjoy something it's at your service as it were, yes, see what I mean?

Voice: Yes.

S: 'Just as the earth and other elements are servicable in many ways' and Matics says, 'As the earth and other elements are, in various ways, for the enjoyment of enwnerable beings.' Yes, their at their service to be enjoyed by them. The meaning here is quite clear. You get meny references to this in tradition, that the elements are for everybody. Everybody can stand on the earth, everybody can make use of the earth, everybody breaths the air, everybody makes use of the air, everyone makes use of water, everyone makes use of them. They are free to all, they belong to everybody. They are completely at the service of all living beings so the Bodhisattva aspires to be like that. He aspires to be of service to all living beings in the same way as earth, water, fire and air. He aspires to be available to them, of service to them, to be enjoyed by them, just like the elements, without any restriction or limitation. And everybody equally breathes the air, everybody equally walks on the earth, in the same way the Bodhisattva want~ to be equally of service to all.

Voice: (not clear) .... suggested traditionally that the six element practice (not clear)

S: I don't think so, don't think so. It is obviously connected in the sense, in the case of the six element practise you relinquish any personal appropriation and here one gives up even one's merit, in a sense one's goodness, you don't want

S; (cont.) even to keep your goodness just for yourself, just to get you to Nirvana as it were. One might say that this is, if not the most difficult certainly one of the most difficult things, to give up your own merits, your own goodness, in a way your own reputation. You know the story of Hakuin, the famous Zen Master. He was wrongly accused of making a young woman in the village pregnant and he lost his reputation as a Zen monk, as a Zen Master and so on. So what did he do? The woman, when the child was born just put it on his doorstep, on the temple doorstep, so he took it in and brought it up for years. And after some years the woman repented and she confessed that she had fasley accused him of being the father of the child to screen somebody else, and so he gave the child back, but he never said anything, except 'Is it so.' When people said, "Well look, this girl is accusing you of being the father of her child." he said, 'Is it so.' He didn't say anything more than that and when the child was put on his doorstep and people said, "Well look, the child has been put on your ~orstep, it's your child, you had better bring it up." "Is it so" and he brought it up. When the woman came and begged forgiveness and said she'd falsley accused him and took back the child he said "Is it so~I. In other words he wasn't concerned about his own reputation as a virtuous Zen Master, you see. So he had no attachment to his own merit in that sort of way, which of course very often people do have, they are very attached to their own good name, or reputation and so on. In a way from a human point of view it's understandable but from the highest spiritual point of view that kind of attachment is something to be given up. So the Bodhisattva does not want to keep his own merit, his own goodness as it were, he's not attached to his own goodness. He doesn't mind appearing not to be a Bodhisattva or not even a good person if

that is necessary. He certainly doesn't want to keep his merit to himself so that they can get to heaven or to Nirvana and not other people. You can say that if a sense of ego, if the ego sense is the principle obstacle standing between you and enlightenment how can you get to enlightenment if your ego is simply accumulating good actions which it regards as its own, so it might have to be the base to begin with but it can only be a base, it can't take you all the way~

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S: (cont.) So too strong a consciousness of how good you are, even though you may be very good will hold you back from a higher attainment. So here one says as it were, 'Yes I know I've performed the puja of the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas, I've saluted them, I've gone for Refuge, I've Confessed my faults, I've Rejoiced in Merits, I've Entreated and Supplicated the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas to preach.

I've been open but I don't claim anything of that, I don't claim any of that merit just for me. May it rebound for the spiritual advancement of all living beings, because that is all that I am really interested in. I don't claim any of the fruits of my good actions just for myself. I wish them to be shared by all.' So this is called transference of merit and self surrender, because here you have surrendered yourself virtually. You don't have any selfish interest even in your own good actions, you don't wish to claim them or to appropriate them just for yourself. So in this way the transference of merit and self surrender paves the way for the arising of the Bodhicitta. And in a way the whole seven fold Puja is orientated to the arising of the Bodhicitta, to encourage it or to help it, if one can speak in that way, to arise. That is, as it were, the next step, although it's only hinted at towards the end of the seven fold Thija. Because the Bodhisattva is one who, as it were, dedicates himself to gain perfect for the sake of all, he's not interested just in his own salvation.

Voice: Can you say something about the Bodhicitta?

S: Well, Bodhicitta literally means the thought of or will to enlightenment, but the main point really to grasp about it, it isn't someones individual will in the narrow sense. ' You have to start of with an individual will making an individual effort but it is something which, as it were, supervenes upon the individual will or the individual spiritual effort where it reaches a very high degree of purity, refinement, positivity and also openness. It's when as it were the stream of tendency making for enlightenment takes you over, if you see what I mean. That's were the surrender comes in, you surrender yourself to it, open yourself to it, you become a channel for that. This is what the arising of the Bodhicitta really means. So it isn't really you in a sense anymore, not you in a

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S; (cont.) narrow egoistic sense, there's something higher than you working through you. You are still recognisably there as an individual living being functioning, but in fact it isn't

you, there's something higher than you operating or working through you and this is the Bodhicitta and it's working, it's moving in the direction of the enlightenment of all living beings. You've made yourself open to this and this is what is meant by the Bodhicitta. So in a way it isn't anybody's individual will or individual aspiration in the narrow or egoistic sense. But this is why I have sometimes said that the Bodhicitta is something that manifests with the context of the spiritual community. I'd emphasize the fact that it isn't individual, it isn't collective, it's a sort of third category, like the spiritual community itself. There's the spiritual community itself, especially to the extent that it's a transcendental HP community, is an embodiment of the Bodhicitta. The Bodhicitta can't be anybody's individual property. In a sense you can't have just one Bodhisattva for that reason, although you may appear to have. So you could say that the Bodhicitta is something that manifests when you have a number of individuals in a spiritual community who have reached the point described or embodied or represented by the last stage of the seven fold Puja. If you've gone through your seven fold Puja properly with real feeling as you reach the end of it there should be an experience somewhat like the arising of the Bodhicitta. That is how you should all feel, it's not even individual, it's supra-individual. Do you get the idea? There's a third term, or third category altogether. It's not a collective thing but it pertains to the spiritual community. So strictly speaking though the scriptures do speak of an individual Bodhisattva developing the Bodhicitta~ strictly speaking I would say it isn't so, or at least to speak of it in that way is so misleading, well, is so unhelpful as to be misleading because you can not but help to think of the Bodhicitta as the thought or the will of what seems to be a particular individual, that is just what it isn't. In other words, by thinking of it as arising within the spiritual community, then you safeguard yourself somewhat more against thinking of it in terms of an individual phenomenon, in the ordinary sense

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S: (cont.) Just as on the ordinary level you can have a wave of emotion that sweeps through a crowd, which is sub-individual, in the same way you can have a

Bodhicitta manifesting in the midst of a spiritual community which is

supra-individual. So that when that happens then you feel that you are as it were working for something greater than yourself, but not that there's really any distinction between you and it, you are completely at one with that. But at the same time it's not a mass sort of thing, even though a number of individuals are involved, it's not a mass thing because they are individuals.

Voice: Can the arising of the Bodhicitta be (not clear) with the beginning of the transcendental?

S: It's very difficult to sort of correlate Hinayana doctrinal formulations which have become rather rigid with Mahayana doctrinal formulations which perhaps have become equally rigid.

But I would say, loosening them both up and trying to get at what they were both really referring to, or were referring to before they became rigid, I would say that in the full sense the Bodhicitta is something that happens after Stream Entry.

Voice: After Stream Entry.

S: After Stream Entry. You can certainly have an aspiration towards Buddhahood and to be a Bodhisattva, and a very sincere dedication to the Bodhisattva way of

life long before you become a Stream Entrant. But the arising of the Bodhicitta as a total experience I would say only take~ place after Stream Entry.

Voice: So if you are looking at it within the context of a spiritual community, can individuals in the community who were not irreversible still sort of get some taste of the Bodhicitta.

S: Oh yes.'

Voice: From the atmosphere as it were that's around them.

S: Oh yes, certainly, but then it wouldn't be a full arising of the Bodhicitta, I would say. It might well be a mixed experience. You might have some people within the spiritual community who were Stream bIR Entrants and for them there might be

x=x.xixg a genuine arising of the Bodhicitta in the full sense and others who were may be not Stream Entrants but very positive and very receptive and

S: (cont.) accepting the Bodhisattva Ideal might get a very definite feeling of the experience of the others, say the Stream Entrants within the spiritual community and in a way participate in that, at least for the time being.

Voice: They in a sense enjoy the fragrance of the ...

S: In a way yes, exactly, they enjoy the fragrance of it. They may not be flowers themselves but they enjoy the fragrance of the other flowers, or those who are flowers.

Voice: Some may even be seen to be a bit unusual because of it.

S: What do you mean by that? In what way?

Same Voice: Say one's aspiring towards that and not yet got grasp of it.

S: You mean the Bodhisattva Ideal, yes. That you might appear unusual?

Same Voice: Yes.

S: Well, I think you'd appear unusual if you were making any sincere effort after even individual development. Unusual to people who perhaps weren't doing that. Perhaps if you were trying to be a Bodhisattva you'd appear even more wildly excenteric.

Voice: Simply because you wouldn't necessarily conform to group morality,  
group conventions.

S: I mean people might think you really prove it if you gave away something, maybe money that you could have spent on yourself, people would regard that as quite

in servicable and sane, rational, but to give it away, that's crazy.

Voice: Especially to someone who might just waste it away.

S: Well, they might consider that if you just wasted it by spending it on yourself, well that's understandable but to give it to others for some good purpose, well, that's really crazy. It's a bit like the code of morality of the so-called gentleman in previous centuries that when he made a list of his debts, what were the first debts to be paid- that just had to be paid?

Voice: Gambling.

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S: Gambling debts, that's the one. What debts came last on the list, that didn't really matter if they were paid or not. Tradesmens bills. (laughter) You see the attitude.

Voice: When it says there, 'So I may become that which maintains all beings' is there any vague reference at all to ... (not clear)... substance that maintains all beings situated throughout space or is it putting .... (not clear)

S: I think it's a reference to Ahasha, that is to say what is translated as sometimes as space itself, sometimes as ether. It's the subtle element as apposed to the gross elements of earth, water, fire and air, that sustains them as they sustain living beings. So the Bodhisattva is seems aspires not only to be like earth, fire, water and air but to be like Ahasha which contains and supports the elements themselves.

Voice: Does it not also have the idea of the Dharma ....(not clear)....

S: The Dharma too, yes, because as we saw the word Dharma comes from the verb meaning 'to support' beyond even the Ahasha you could say it's the Dhamma that supports, in the sense of the cosmic law.

Voice: In terms of communities is it therefore important as to how people use their time. I was thinking in terms of spending alot of time outside the community.

S: How does that connect in fact?

Same Voice: I was thinking in terms of support.

S: Yes, you might say that in the same way as the Bodhisattva aspires to give whatever support he can to the whole cosmos or to the beings of the whole cosmos, if you are just sort of trying to be a Bodhisattva., at least trying to practise the Bodhisattva Ideal on your own level that should naturally imply your giving, that should involve your giving whatever support you can in the full sense to your particular cosmos, your particular, your particular little world, that means in your particular community. So if you were really sort of trying to develop the Bodhisattva spirit that would involve being supportive within your immediate environment i.e. within your spiritual community. If you were not functioning in a supportive way within your spiritual community it would mean that you were not taking the Bodhisattva Ideal seriously on your own particular level. In other words

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S: (cont.) if you've just regarded the spiritual community as a sort of convenience to your individual development that would be very much the Arahant Idea, so called. But if you really accepted the Bodhisattva Ideal you would consider it as part of that, that you were supportive to the spiritual community to which you belonged. You weren't just in it for your own sake as it were, not even for your own spiritual sake.

Voice: Often it is for one's own convenience then there's like a dullness to it.

S: Well, that's even self-defeating, just as in a way the Arahant Ideal taken in its narrow, extreme form is self-defeating as you can't really help yourself without helping others. If you think in terms of helping yourself to the exclusion of helping others it means you've got a very rigid idea of self and others. As long as that is there you can't even gain, as it were, your own enlightenment. So helping yourself involves helping others, helping others involves helping yourself, you can't really separate the two. So you can't really use the spiritual community just as a convenience for your own spiritual development, even though you might try to do so. You can't really develop yourself individually unless you are really supportive within the context of your own spiritual community. You can't really develop yourself unless you care also for those who are in the community, and do what you can to help the whole situation.

Voice: Because it's often the spark from one person that can alter the situation.

S: Yes, indeed.

Same Voice: Especially in times when things may be a bit low in the community. So one should never wait for the community to help you out, to put things right. When you see something wrong, something needing to be done the best thing you can do is to go and do it and just that everybody else will be sparked off. Not just wait for them to do it so that you can be sparked off. (laughter) Otherwise you have a situation where everybody is waiting around, waiting for everybody else to start doing something and getting more and more

resentful because nobody does. (laughter) I've more or less seen this sort of

S: (cont.) situation, at least to some extent, at least occasionally. And of course everybody feeling more and more guilty. (laughter) That doesn't help either. Right, so let's look back over all these seven stages of the seven fold Puja.

Voice: It seems to me from our reading and discussion that each of the stages are so important that they merit much longer than two or three minutes that we spend on them.

S: Has there been at the different centres does anyone know much or any study of the text of the seven fold Puja? Has this been done at all? Or very often?

Voice: Yes, it does happen.

S: Good.

Voice: We were studying the Bodhicaryavatara at Suddharvati with Subhuti.

S: And of course the verses will be included.

Voice: We had a talk about the puja .... (not clear).

S: Good.

Voice: One of the general points that one is always confronted with, with newcomers to the puja, is talking about the objective element to it, like Protectors and so on. Sometimes we try and explain them in purely subjective terms but I don't think that's quite satisfactory.

S: What do you mean?

Same Voice: Well, you talk of the Buddha as your innate potential if you like and the Protectors in your own better self and so on.

S: Yes, well that is quite true but one can't exclude the objective all together. But supposing you actualise your potential, well, what will happen. You would be a Buddha, objectively. So in the same way others have actualised their potential and have become Buddhas objectively, so if Buddhahood is just some potential in everybody's mind, where no one ever gets around to actualising it, that is absurd isn't it. If you can actualise it, it suggests that

others have actualized it and therefore that there are Buddhas objectively and that these Buddhas can help you, spiritually. The thing to explain is that they are not helpers in the mundane sense. They are not, you can't pray to them

S: (cont.) for wealth and riches and so on. They can help you if you open yourself to their influence, spiritually.

Voice: I think that the difficulty people have is when they take the poetry as rather literal dogmas and I think maybe it should be explained to them

S: When I used to be taking classes in London I always used to explain or at least mention this, that the seven fold Puja is extracted, or that the verses of the seven fold Puja are extracted from an Indian text, the Indians do go in for very flowery language and this is poetry anyway. So just try to think up the spirit of these words, don't take it all too literally. I think one has to say this ...

Voice: I think one does actually.

~: Otherwise you get like our worthy Finnish Friends, just not wanting to recite the verses when there are not actually any jewelled lamps on the altar.

Voice (not clear) ..

S: At the same time there is an objective difference, call it skillful and unskillful if you like, but if people are trying to make it all out just subjective and relative and there's no real difference, one must deny that. One can explain yes, but one must be careful not to explain away. It's all very nice if it just ends up all subjective and just some cosy sentimental, nothing really objective, no Euddhas just nice thoughts in your own mind, doesn't get you very far.

Voice: I think .... (not clear) . when one actually performs the puja there's actually a vast difference, and it's, can be difficult to get into the

mood of each section.

S: Yes.

Same Voice: (not clear)

S: In other words one should be careful not to go through it too speedily.

That's one of the reasons I just strike the little bell or gong at the end of

each section, to mark it off from the next one and also to create a little pause.

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Voice: The other thing that came into my mind was (not clear) Confession section. I feel that the whole subject of confession is quite a big one ...(not clear.)

S: Well, the actual performance of the Seven Fold Puja should recapitulate in a very concentrated, intense form, as it were 'collectively' that is to say in the context of the spiritual community, attitudes and moods which one is trying to cultivate all the time. You shouldn't leave your puja and vanda and Going for Refuge just to the time of the seven fold Puja, when you actually recite these things. You should be working on them all the time so that when you get together, say in the evening, among the members of the spiritual community for the sevenfold Puja you are just recapping, in a more intense form all together. So in a way you should have done your thinking before hand. In the case of people just coming along who don't normally think to try to ...(not clear) ... in this way, obviously the seven fold Puja won't and can't mean so much. But do you see what I mean, it should be a condensation of what you're trying to do all the time. This was specifically mentioned in connection with several ~ections wasn't it. That your Going for Refuge should be all the time, your Entreaty and Supplication should be all the time, I mean all of these things should be going on all of the time, not just for half an hour in the evening.

Voice: It's a bit like medicine, to begin with you don't really feel anything for it, and then ...

S: Well, maybe it's a bit more like healthy food.

Same Voice: Yes, well maybe that's the best way.

S: It's a bit like wholesome food. When your palate has become completely vitiated, wholesome food to begin with is like medicine, has a rather unpleasant flavour until you get used to it, like tea without sugar (laughter) or wholemeal bread. Some people don't like it, they've got so used to white bread, they think wholeme~ bread is very odd stuff. If you've got used to tinned fruit you won't enjoy fresh fruit so much.

Voice: I know that when I first did a Puja my experience was very coloured by

early Christian conditioning.

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S: Ah, yes. Particularly Confession I would imagine.

Same Voice: Especially the Confession. (laughter)

S: This is from being a Catholic~

Same Voice: No.

8: Oh. I've heard about Catholicism, or I've encountered it at least. When you think of confession as people creeping in to some little box and muttering through a grill and there's some one on the other side hearing it all with both ears flapping, all the sordid details and then absolving them all, and they go away all clean and pure to do it all over again. (laughter) You think of confession in that sort of way, don't you.

Voice: Especially in the confession to an authority figure. Almost as though you're standing up with hands raised in reverence and terrified almost because .

S: Not of suffering.

Same Voice: But of punishment.

S: But of punishment, yes. I think that we have to accept this to the extent that some people at least see us, see Buddhism as a religion we are going to carry for them all the unpleasant associations which religion has for them, in its Christian forms. Unfortunately it seems we can't really get away from all this. So we have to explain as best we can, as carefully as possible.

Voice: It comes back to what you were saying a few days ago about maybe introducing people to start off with to the Basic Puja and so by the time they do a fully fledged seven fold Puja they might have

S: Perhaps this will have to be considered very carefully when we start up activities at Suhhavati. I know there's some difference of opinion between people taking classes. Some prefer the cautious approach, slipping in the Puja bit by bit, others favour a full-blooded Buddhist approach right from the beginning. You'll have to face it sooner or later you might as well have it from the start, (laughter) they take that view. Rather than trying to cut down on the number of lamps and flowers and so on, well no, let them encounter it in all its glory right at the beginning and if they don't like it, well maybe Buddhism isn't for them in this life.

Andy: There seemed to be two stages in the Beginners Class at Aryatara. For along while we used to have curtains which came across in front of the shrine, we'd pull them across and just have a small ... incense, flowers and a candle. But classes started getting very strong and we just left the shrine there. It just seemed to make the whole thing even stronger. It's like the atmosphere there was strong enough to take over that.

S: Yes, a lot depends also on how happy and cheerful everybody is. The atmosphere you create. And then they certainly will not associate that atmosphere with anything that they have experienced of Christianity. I think that this is probably the main thing. If you are all going about with solemn, not to say sad faces, and speaking in hushed tones, (laughter) they will start associating that with Christianity, especially if you've got a guilt-ridden hang-dog expression (laughter). Or if someone is being all pompous and ecclesiastical. Then of course they will think of Christianity, or be reminded of Christianity. I think some Buddhists are asking for trouble when they use titles like Bishop (laughter) Oh yes, in the United States and in Japan, Bishop and Mrs. so-and-so (laughter). It's bad enough having Bishops in Christianity. The (Shasta ?) Abbey, complete with priors and prioresses

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S: Scrubbing it out all together if you're not careful. The medium is the message sometimes.

Anyway, and general points about the whole Seven Fold Puja.

Voice: I do have a question about the mantras at the end.

S: In what way?

Voice' (not clear) is something that comes from ....(not clear)

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Same Voice: Comes from my experience in India. Doesn't it mean something like throwing into the fire?

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Voice: Oh, yes.

Voice: So this isn't the mantra of Prajnaparamita?

S: Not as a deity, no.

Voice: OhL

SA' Well, yes and no, there is no hard and fast distinction.

Voice: But the normal tx association isn't

S: Isn't, yes, but this is from the Heart Sutra but there is a mantra associated with Prajnaparamita, a long one, I can't remember it, associated with a deity as it were, for visualization. There's no reason why one shouldn't use it but it hasn't been in tradition as far as one knows.

~: Why is there a difference between the Padmasanibhava mantra in the concluding mantras and the one that we chant .

S: The chant was derived by Ananda from some Tibetan friends of ours and that's how they chanted it and the words which are different is Tibetan words instead of Sanskrit words. This is the correct form really because it's all

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S: (cont.) in Sanskrit but the Tibetans in chanting and singing in a more popular sort of way, they just translate a few of the words into Tibetan.

Voice: The Om Mani Padme Hum mantra, is that, the tune used, is that Tibetan as well?

S: As far as I know yes, and the Tara mantra too.

Voice: I realised last night I always have a slight resistance to the Om ~ani Padme Hum tune. What it reminded me of was a sort of, it's like a New Year Party and stuff like that, Auld Lang Syne (?) at the end (laughter) I just had that feeling on the tune.

S: Doesn't sound at all like Auld Langs Syne (?) to ~ne.

Voice: No, I mean the association. I can remember very early on at parties

S: I was under the impression that New Year Parties were very different affairs.

Voice: Ah well, this is at the end (laughter) this is done about 4 o'clock in the morning.

S: When everyone is very beery and weepy and all that sort of thing. You don't get beery and weepy at the end of pujas (laughter). They certainly don't go on until 4 o'clock in the morning (laughter). People get rather annoyed if they go on beyond 11 o'clock, (laughter) for some reason or other. They don't seem to mind parties going on into the early hours but they seem to draw the line at pujas (laughter). It's quite strange, I hadn't thought about that before. Why is that, that you can go on having a party until the early hours but you don't go on having a Puja til the early hours~ Why is that?

Voice: It's the strain of having to be self-conscious for so long. At parties you just, you're in a sleep state anyway, aren't you, very nearly, it's quite drowsy but maybe if you're doing a puja you just become aware that it's getting near bedtime.

Voice: Pujas take place within the context of a regular life style. (laughter)

Voice: I've known people do pujas and then go to a party. (laughter)

Voice: Yes, but the irregularity doesn't start till after the puja.

S: Well, I know an occasion when the puja has been held very very early, almost in the afternoon, to leave plenty of room for the party. (laughter)

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S: (cont.) This happened fairly recently ...(not clear) .... I was asked to lead it. I said no, not in the middle of the afternoon (laughter) ... (not clear) half-way house as it were. I sort of hinted that if I did lead it I might well lead it all the evening (laughter) ...(not clear) .... the puja well out of the way before anything important happened.

Voice: Do you think that evening is the best time of day for the puja~ That's the time to have Pujas~

S: Well, I assume you mean better than other times because all times are good for pujas. I must say I personally like an evening puja, I don't know how other people feel.

a~tc

Andy: It's good doing the Basic Puja in the mornings.

S: Mmm. I think also if one is relatively a night person, or isn't too tired and sleepy, a very late puja is very good, or can be very good. A midnight puja, or again a very early morning puja, just before dawn. Assuming that you are awake enough and sufficiently rested to be able to do it properly and appreciate it. There's a very good atmosphere at those times, around midnight and even in the very early hours, say ~Mt~~ between 3 - 4 o'clock for a puja. There's quite a different kind of experience, if one's sleep pattern does permit that.

Voice: Another good time when there's not much disturbance around is just as it gets dark.

S: Yes.

Voice: But in London it's rush hour.

S: Yes. It's nicer in the country.

Voice: I think one of the reasons why we don't want, like we have long puja and you just don't want to go on, to continue doing the puja is that there is something in it that, after you finish you want quite

S: Yes.

Voice: You want to be just still and ~i~te.

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S: Well, it naturally leads into a med~tive mood. I find it quite hard to imagine people going off to parties after a puja.

Voice: It's quite a revelation for a lot of people, coming here and doing a full puja and then sitting for a period of med~tion. I've never done that before.

S: I thought it was standard.

Voice: No, normally it's the meditation first then the Puja.

S: Oh, you mean it's that way round.

Voice: The Om 6hanti is ...(not clear)

S: I think puja is a good preparation for med~tion because it gets your energy a bit out, enables you to get rid of wandering thoughts and to be a bit intergrated and a bit into things and you settle down into the meditation. When to come directly from doing other things into meditation is a bit difficult. Some people say that after meditation they don't feel so much like doing a puja, not everybody would agree with this but at least some people do.

Voice: I much prefer doing the puja after the meditation because then I can

give myself much more to the puja.

S: I think I personally prefer the puja at the end but the majority of people seem to prefer it at the beginning so we are doing it that way. Also people feel that if we have the puja first, then the meditation if some people feel like staying on and sitting for a longer meditation they can do that. Otherwise if it is a set period and then the ~uja and they are feeling like meditating some more it can be a bit disturbing.

Voice: If they don't feel like meditating they can go out after the puja S: Well, yes, if they've done their meditation before the puja well, fair enough. Well, time is very nearly up so let's leave it there.

THE END

S: Gambling debts, that's the one. What debts came last on the list, that didn't really matter if they were paid or not. Tradesmen's bills. (laughter) You see the attitude.

Voice: When it says there, 'So I may become that which maintains all beings' is there any vague reference at all to ... (not clear ~... substance that maintains all beings situated throughout space or is it putting .... (not clear)

S: I think it's a reference to Akasha, that is to say what is translated as sometimes as space itself, sometimes as ether. It's the subtle element as opposed to the gross elements of earth, water, fire and air, that sustains them as they sustain living beings. So the Bodhisattva seems to aspire not only to be like earth, fire, water and air but to be like Akasha which contains and supports the elements themselves.

Voice: Does it not also have the idea of the Dharmas ....(not clear)...

S: The Dharmas too, yes, because as we saw the word Dharmas comes from the verb meaning 'to support' beyond even the Akasha you could say it's the Dharmas that supports, in the sense of the cosmic law.

Voice: In terms of communities is it therefore important as to how people use their time. I was thinking in terms of spending a lot of time outside the community.

S: How does that connect in fact?

Ba- Voice: I was thinking in terms of support.

S: Yes, you might say that in the same way as the Bodhisattva aspires to give whatever support he can to the whole cosmos or to the beings of the whole cosmos, if you are just sort of trying to be a Bodhisattva, at least trying to practise the Bodhisattva Ideal on your own level that should naturally imply your giving, that should involve your giving whatever support you can in the full sense to your particular cosmos, your particular, your particular little world, that means in your particular community. So if you were really sort of trying to develop the Bodhisattva spirit that would involve being supportive within your immediate environment i.e. within your spiritual community. If you were not functioning in

a supportive way within your spiritual community it would mean that you were not taking the Bodhisattva Ideal seriously on your own particular level. In other words

8: (cont.) if you've just regarded the spiritual community as a sort of convenience to your individual development that would be very itchy the Arahant Idea, so called. But if you really accepted the Bodhisattva Ideal you would consider it as part of that, that you were supportive to the spiritual community to which you belonged. You weren't just in it for your own sake as it were, not even for your own spiritual sake.

Voice: Often it is for one's own convenience then there's like a dullness to it.

S: Well, that's even self-defeating, just as in a way the Arahant Ideal taken in its narrow, extreme form is self-defeating as you can't really help yourself without helping others. If you think in terms of helping yourself to the exclusion of helping others it means you've got a very rigid idea of self and others. As long as that is there you can't even gain, as it were, your own enlightenment. So helping yourself involves helping others, helping others involves helping yourself, you can't really separate the two. So you can't really use the spiritual community just as a convenience for your own spiritual development, even though you might try to do so. You can't really develop yourself individually unless you are really supportive within the context of your own spiritual community. You can't really develop yourself unless you care also for those who are in the community, and do what you can to help the whole situation.

Voice: Because it's often the spark from one person that can alter the situation.

8: Yes, indeed.

Same Voice: Especially in times when things may be a bit low in the community.

one should never wait for the community to help you off, to put things

right. When you see something wrong, something needing to be done the best thing you can do is to go and do it and just that everybody else will be sparked off. Not just wait for them to do it so that you can be sparked off. (laughter) Otherwise you have a situation where everybody is waiting around, waiting for everybody else to start doing something and getting more and more

resentful because nobody does. (laughter) I've more or less seen this sort of

S: (cont.) situation at least to some extent, at least occasionally. And of course everybody feeling more and more guilty. (laughter) That doesn't help either. Right, so let's look back over all these seven stages of the seven fold Puja.

Voice: It seems to me from our reading and discussion that each of the stages are so important that they merit much longer than two or three minutes that we spend on them.

S: Has there been at the different centres does anyone know much or any study of the ~xt of the seven fold Puja? Has this been done at all? Or very often?

Voice: Yes, it does happen.

S: Good.

Voice: We were studying the Bodhicaryavatara at Sukhervati with Subhuti.

S: And of course the verses will be included.

Voice: We had a talk about the puja .... (not clear).

S: Good.

Voice: One of the general points that one is always confronted with, with newcomers to the puja, is talking about the obJective element to it, like Protectors and so on. Sometimes we try and explain them in purely subjective terms but I don't think that's quite satisfactory.

S: What do you mean?

Same Voice: Well, yon talk of the Buddha as your innate potenkal if yon like and the Protectors in your own better self and so on.

S: Yes, well that is quite true but one can't exclude the objective all together. But supposing you actualise your potential, well, what will happen. You would be a Buddha, obJectively. So in the same way others have actualised their pote~al and have become Buddhas objectively, so if Buddhahood is Just some potential in everybodies mind, where no one ever gets around to actualising it, that is absurd tK1 isn't it. If you can actualise it, it suggests that others have actualized it and therefore that there are Buddhas objectively and that these Buddhae can help you, spiritually. The thing to explain is that they are not helpers in the mundane sense. They are not, you can't pray to them

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S: (cont.) for wealth and riches and so on. They can help you if you open yourself to their influence, spiritually.

Voice: I think that the difficulty people have is when they take the poetry as rather literal dogmas and I think maybe it should be explained to them . ...

S: When I used to be taking classes in London I always used to explain or at least mention this, that the seven fold Puja is extracted, or that the verses of the seven fold Puja are

extracted from an Indian text, the Indians do go in for very flowery language and this is poetry anyway. So just try to think up the spirit of these words, don't take it all too literally. I think one has to say this

Voice: I think one does actually.

S: Otherwise you get like our worthy Finnish Friends, Just not wanting to recite the verses when there are not actually any Jewelled lamps on the altar.

Voice: ..... ( not clear ) .

S: At the same time there is an objective difference, call it skillful and unskillful if you like, but if people are trying to make it all out just subjective and relative and there's no real difference, one must deny that. One can explain yes, but one must be careful not to explain away. It's all very nice if it just ends up all subjective and just some cosy sentimental, nothing really objective, no Buddhas just nice thoughts in your own mind, doesn't get you very far.

Voice: I think .... (not clear) ..... when one actually performs the puja there's actually a fast difference, and it's, can be difficult to get into the mood of each section.

S: Yes.

Same Voice: ..... (not clear) .

S: In other words one should be careful not to go through it too speedily. That's one of the reasons I just strike the little bell or gong at the end of each section, to mark it off from the next one and also to create a little pause.

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Voice: The other thing that came into my mind was (not clear) Confession section. I feel that the whole subject of confession is quite a big one ... (not clear.)

S: Well, the actual performance of the Seven Fold Puja should recapitulate in a very concentrated, intense form, as it were 'collectively' that is to say in the context of the spiritual community, attitudes and moods which one is trying to cultivate all the time. You shouldn't leave your puja and vanda and Going for Refuge just to the time of the seven fold Puja, when you actually recite these things. You should be working on them all the time so that when you get together, say in the evening, among the members of the spiritual community for the sevenfold Puja you are just recapping, in a more intense form all together. So in a way you should have done your thinking before hand. In the case of people just coming along who don't normally think to try to .... (not clear) ... in this way, obviously the seven fold Puja won't and can't mean so much. But do you see what I mean, it should be a condensation of what you're trying to do all the time. This was specifically mentioned in connection with several sections wasn't it. That your Going for Refuge should be all the time, your Sutra and Supplication should be all the time, I mean all of these things should be going on all of the

time, not Just for half an hour in the evening.

Voice: It's a bit like medicine, to begin with you don't really feel anything for it, and then ..

S: Well, maybe it'. a bit more like healthy food.

~ame Voice: Yes, well maybe that's the best way.

S: It's a bit like wholesome food. When your palate has become completely vitiated, wholesome food to begin with is like medicine, has a rather unpleasant flavour until you get used to it, like tea without sugar (lau~hter) or wholemeal bread. Some people don't like it, they've got so used to white bread, they think wholemeal bread is very odd stuff. If you've got used to tinned fruit you won't enjoy fresh fruit so much.

Voice: I know that when I first did a PuJa my experience was very coloured by early Christian conditioning.

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S: Ah, yes. Particularly Confession I would imagine.

Same Voice: Especially the Confession. (laughter)

S: This is from being a Catholic?

Same Voice: No.

a: oh. I've heard about Catholicism, or I've encountered it at least. When you think of confession as people creeping in to some little box and muttering through a grill and there's someone on the other side hearing it all with both ears flapping, all the sordid details and then absolving them all, and they go away all clean and pure to do it all over again. (laughter) You think of confession in that sort of way, don't you.

Voice: Especially in the confession to an authority figure. Almost as though you're standing up with hands raised in reverence and terrified almost because ....

S: Not of suffering.

Same Voice: But of punishment.

S: But of punishment, yes. I think that we have to accept this to the extent that some people at least see us, see Buddhism as a religion we are going to carry for them all the unpleasant associations which religion has for them, in its Christian forms. Unfortunately it seems we can't really get away from all this. So we have to explain as best we can, as carefully as

possible.

Voice: It comes back to what you were saying a few days ago about maybe introducing people to start with to the Basic Puja and so by the time they do a fully fledged seven fold Puja they might have

S: Perhaps this will have to be considered very carefully when we start up activities at Sukhavati. I know there's some difference of opinion between people taking classes. Some prefer the cautious approach, slipping in the PuJa bit by bit, others favour a full-blooded Buddhist approach right from the beginning. You' ll have to face it sooner or later you might as well have it from the start, (laughter) they take that view. Rather than trying to cut down on the number of lau~s and flowers and so on, well no, let them encounter it in all it's glory right at the beginning and if they don't like it, well maybe Buddhism isn't for them in this life.

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8L Well, yes and no, there is no hard and fast distinction.

Voice: But the normal ti association isn't

S: Isn't, yes, but this is from the Heart Sutra but there is a mantra associated with frajnsparamita, a long one, I can' t remember it, associated with a deity as it were, for visulimation. There' s no reason why one shouldn' t use it but it hasn't bean in tradition, as far as one knows.

~: Why is there a difference between the Padmas~bhava mantra in the concluding mantras and the one that we chant .....

S: The chant was derived by Ananda from some Tibetan friends of ours and that's howihey chanted it and the words which are different is Tibetan words instead of Sanskrit sords. This is the correct form really because j~5 all

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S: (cont.) in Sanskrit but the Tibetans in chanting and singing in a more popular sort of way, they just translate a few of the words into Tibetan.

Voice: The Om Mani Padme Hum mantra, is that, the tune used, is that Tibetan

as well?

S: As far as I know yes, and the Tara mantra too.

Voice: I realised last night I always have a slight resistance to the Om Mani Padme Hum tune. What it reminded me of was a sort of, it's like a New Year Party and stuff like that, Aul~ LengO Syne (?) at the end (laughter) I Just had that feeling on the tune.

S: Doesn't sound at all like Auld I~ge Syne (?) to me.

Voice: No, I mean the association. I can remember very early on at parties

S: I was under the impression that New Year Parties were very different affairs.

Voice: Ah well, this is at the end (laughter) this is done about 4 o'clock in the morning.

S: When everyone is very beery and weepy and all that sort of thing. You don't get beery and weepy at the end of pujas (laughter). They certainly don't go on until 4 o'clock in the morning (laughter). People get rather annoyed if they go on beyond 11 o'clock, (laughter) for some reason or other. They don't seem to mind parties going on into the early hours but they seem to draw the line at pujas (laughter). It's quite strange, I hadn't thought about that before. Why is that, that you can go on having a party until the early hours but you don't go on having a Puja til the early hours? Why is that?

Voice: It's the strain of having to be self-conscious for so long. At parties you just, you're in a sleep state anyway, aren't you, very nearly, it's quite drowsy but maybe if you're doing a puja you just become aware that it's getting near bedtime.

Voice: Pujas take place within the context of a regular life style. (laughter)

Voice: I've known people do pujas and then go to a party. (laughter)

Voice: Yea, but the irregularity doesn't start till after the puja.

S: Well, I know an occasion when the puja has been held very very early, almost in the afternoon, to leave plenty of room for the party. (laughter)

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S: (cont.) This happened fairly recently ...(not clear) .... I was asked to lead it. I said no, not in the middle of the afternoon (laughter) ... (not clear) half-way house as it were. I sort of hinted that if I did lead it I might well lead it all the evening (laughter) ...(not clear) .... the puja well out of the way before anything important happened.

Voice: Do you think that evening is the best time of day for the puja? That's

the time to have Pujas?

S: Well, I assume you mean better than other times because all times are good for pujas. I must say I personally like an evening puja, I don't know how other people feel.

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~: It's good doing the Basic PuJa in the mornings.

S: }(-i. I think also if one is relatively a night person, or isn't too tired and sleepy, a very late puja is very good, or can be very good. A midnight puja, or again a very early morning puja, just before dawn. Assuming that you are awake enough and sufficiently rested to be able to do it properly and appreciate it. There's a very good atmosphere at those times, around midnight and even in the very early hours, say between 3 - 4 o'clock for a puja. There's quite a different kind of experience, if one's sleep pattern does permit that.

Voice: Another good time when there's not much disturbance around is just as it gets dark.

S: Yes.

Voice: But in London it's rush hour.

S: Yes. It's nicer in the country.

Voice: I think one of the reasons why we don't want, like we have long puna and you just don't want to go on, to continue doing the puja is that there is something in it that, after you finish you want quite

S: Yes.

Voice: You want to be just still and

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8: Well, it naturally leads into a meditative mood. I find it quite hard to imagine people going off to parties after a puja.

Voice: It's quite a revelation for a lot of people, coming here and doing a full puja and then sitting for a period of meditation. I've never done that before.

S: I thought it was standard.

Voice: No, normally it's the meditation first then the Puja.

S: Oh, you mean it's that way round.

Voice: The Om Ohanti is ...(not clear) ...

S: I think puja is a good preparation for meditation because it gets your energy a bit out, enables you to get rid of wandering thoughts and to be a bit integrated and a bit into things and you settle down into the meditation. When to come directly from doing other things into meditation is a bit difficult. Some people say that after meditation they don't feel so much like doing a puja, not everybody would agree with this but at least some people do.

Voice: I much prefer doing the puja after the meditation because then I can give myself much more to the puja.

S: I think I personally prefer the puja at the end but the majority of people seem to prefer it at the beginning so we are doing it that way. Also people feel that if we have the puja first, then the meditation if some people feel like staying on and sitting for a longer meditation they can do that. Otherwise if it is a set period and then the puja and they are feeling like meditating some more it can be a bit disturbing.

Voice: If they don't feel like meditating they can go out after the puja. S: Well, yes, if they've done their meditation before the puja well, fair enough. Well, time is very nearly up so let's leave it there.

THE END