

SANGHARAKSHITA IN SEMINAR

ORDER WEEKEND DISCUSSION - THE FWBO, WBO AND OUTSIDE GROUPS

DECEMBER 1979

... the Dharma, the Western Buddhist Order outside of the Friends.

Bhante. [Laughter]

Sangharakshita: No, you're not going to get out of it as easily as that! [Laughter] I don't have anything to say. [Laughter] In the sense that I don't have any sort of in a sense, preconceived idea at this stage as to what sort of image people should present or how they should present it. You may recollect that this arose out of some of the things that I was talking about yesterday -arose out of the question of why it was that people had found the series of talks interesting and why they thought people outside the Order, especially new people, had found them interesting. And then I went on to speak about people that I'd been talking to recently, people who'd come to see me, and whom I had found experienced quite a bit of difficulty in understanding what the FWBO was really all about, and how it differed from existing Buddhist movements, and I also stressed the point I think that very few Order members were in fact equipped to deal with the questions of people outside, especially when they had some connection with or knowledge of Buddhism already. So that's the background against which we are pursuing the discussion. So I thought it might be a good idea to start off by inviting those people who have experience of trying to present the FWBO and the WBO outside the movement, whether to people who regard themselves as Buddhist or to others, I thought it would be a good idea if such people were invited to give us some account of their experiences in this respect first. I might make some comments after that and then we might - we may be attempting this prematurely - but we might be able to arrive at a few pointers as to what sort of images, so to speak we want or would like to present and how that could best be done. So perhaps some of those who have had experience, say giving talks and answering questions, outside the movement, trying to present the Dharma from our point for view, trying to present the FWBO and the WBO would like to give us the benefit of their experiences and their reflections on those experiences afterwards.

Abhaya: Perhaps I'll just kick off. An account of something that happened to me about a year ago. I went to visit my eldest brother who is in the Foreign Office working in a very high position at a commercial level, in Africa at the moment and formerly he was in the States. He's been around the world and had a lot of experience at administrative levels, especially in the economic field, and we got to discussing - he knows of course that I am a Buddhist - and I found myself trying to put forward the fact that Buddhism,

Buddhist

economics is in fact morally based. It is ethically based rather than greed based, and I think my point of departure was quite true. I was on very firm ground, but I discovered in the course of the discussion that his knowledge of world economics and the total economic situation and his ability to talk in this way was far superior to mine, so I felt at a real disadvantage in trying to put across our point of view, and I felt that by putting across our point of view it suffered in a way. I couldn't do it justice simply because I wasn't familiar enough with this kind of language and the way one puts it across. So I felt afterwards that if I'm going to be able to put across our point of view really well, then I'm going to have to know a bit more about how economics works and a bit more about the world situation, so that you can answer in the other person's language a bit more.

S: Also so that they don't use their facts to obliterate your principles. At least try to do that.

Abhaya: It's a very frustrating feeling.

S: This underlines one of the things which I stressed yesterday, that we need when we go to talk with or to people outside, we need to be pretty well informed, not only about the Dharma itself, but about that particular area to which we are seeking to apply the Dharma. Any other experiences?

Dharmapala: Along that line some people that I talk to when I've been hitch-hiking have been quite deeply immersed in economics and have been quite interested in our practical experiences in the co-operatives, but we're on such a small scale that it's sort of like the things that they were pressing me for was how do we see this developing to a scale which they could actually relate to. That was where people were pressing me most and I hadn't been able to answer that.

S: Well is there an answer? Has anybody formulated an answer to this sort of question?

Asvajit: In a general way one can say that however large the Friends gets the basic principles will still apply - of the attitude of generosity which is the ethical attitude.

Sagaramati: I think this is a question of establishing some ground, because I remember giving a talk at Bradford University and there were a lot of Marxists there, and I could tell that their values and how they evaluated things was very different from me. They saw things in terms of the haves and have-nots. So I tried to explain what I thought were their values in Buddhist terms and say well from the Buddhist point of view that is of no value to me, we can't see things in terms of haves and have-nots. There are people and people are ignorant, they're greedy regardless of whether they're a have or have-not, basically they're the same people, and that's the people we try to deal with.

S: I think that's a very good point. The haves and the have-nots are not in fact two

different kinds of people. They're the same kind of people obviously but some are less successful and others are more successful in attaining the same<D> objectives in almost all cases.

Any more experiences? Are many people in fact going and talking to outside groups of one kind or another? Are we in fact doing enough of this sort of thing?

Devamitra: I've done quite a bit in Norwich but I don't know to what extent I've achieved much success. In particular to go into another area, for instance I don't know how long ago it was, about two years ago or eighteen months ago, I gave a talk to the young clergy of Norfolk and what I said was very well received on the whole. There were one or two people who were a bit stand-offish and a bit snooty, but after talking to them on a one to one basis I definitely struck a chord of sympathy with at least two people out of a group of eleven, but it was the wrong<D> chord of sympathy really because what I'd said I don't think was going to really make them question their own standpoint. They liked me and they thought that what I said was quite inspired but they couldn't see that it was stemming from a different source of values, and I tried to get that across to them but either they were unwilling to see it or unable to see it. I wasn't really able to articulate it for them.

S: So could you go into that a little more? What was it more specifically that they were unwilling to see or to recognise or acknowledge in a general way?

Devamitra: That there was any essential distinction between the teaching of Christ and Buddhism.

S: Well that's really quite extraordinary for clergy isn't it? It's not the orthodox point of view clearly, so why do you think that they weren't willing to acknowledge that there might be a really radical difference between you?

Devamitra: They would have either had to reject me and what I was saying or reject Christ.

S: But why don't people do that? The Christian church in the past has had no hesitation whatever about rejecting people as being totally wrong and outside the pail, why are people not so willing to do that nowadays? Is it on account of genuine tolerance or is it....

Devamitra: Well isn't this pseudo-liberalism creeping into that area?

S: Ah! Do you think so?

Devamitra: Possibly.

Sagaramati: I think they feel insecure in a lot of things.

Asvajit: Yes because it means that if there is something very different then if they acknowledge that they have to be open to it, they have to open themselves in order to see what is<D> different, and they are incapable of doing that, they are closed, they are blocked.

S: I have been thinking quite a bit recently about this question of why quite a lot of people seem to want everything to be the same, and do not want to acknowledge clash and difference, and then choose themselves which side they are on. I have experienced this sort of general umbrella or portmanteau type approach at 'The Festival of Body, Mind and Spirit.' One of the sort of conclusions I have come to is this. Try to approach it by way of an analogy. Supposing one is in a family type situation. Supposing you are a small child. You have a mother and you have a father, so that family situation is ideally for you a situation of security, which means also a situation of harmony. But suppose while you are dependant, perhaps equally, on mother and on father, a difference arises between<D> mother and father. When that happens how does the child feel? Can anybody tell us?

Asvajit: Anxious.

_____ : <D>Insecure.

_____ : Confused.

S: Anxious, insecure, yes, confused, threatened. Anything else.

_____ : Split.

S: Split, yes. So why does the child feel like that?

_____ : The loyalties lie on both sides.

S: The loyalties are on both sides, because actually the child doesn't think in terms of sides. It is as though mother-father are a sort of common hyphenated entity. It is not mother, an individual, and father, an individual, it is this conglomerate mother-father, but this mother-father splits and one message is coming from mother, another message is coming from father - the child is thrown into a disastrous situation. I think that by means of some such analogy, and I think it is probably more than analogy, you can explain people's unease and feeling of insecurity when religious authorities as they take them, religious parental figures, whether mother churches or father patriarchates them or not differ among themselves. So they do not want to accept or recognise that there is difference. They don't want to have to choose because they are not really psychologically and spiritually mature enough to do that. So I think the explanation lies at least to some extent along some such lines.

Devamitra: Why were they more ready to choose in a traditional society?

S: Well there wasn't a real choice. Because the general unanimity was so strong that there was a god, that the church in one form or another represented god, that the priest represented god - you had such a big majority on your side, you could afford usually to dismiss the dissenters with contempt. They were of only fringe significance. But this is becoming less and less possible because you've got a growing awareness of these great monolithic alternatives. You've got let's say the Anglican church, the Catholic church, the Presbyterian church, but interestingly the Pope has been making ecumenical noises in the direction of Islam, on the grounds of a common monotheism. Well in the Middle Ages they felt so solidly sure about themselves - they were of course relatively less in contact with the Islamic world - for them to be able to dismiss Islam more or less as almost something diabolical. Muhammad was referred to as 'Mahound' usually, and the Muhammadans were usually regarded as worshipping some monstrous idol called (Bafelmet) and so on.

But now they know too much about Islam to be able to do that. They can't just dismiss it as an abhorrent form of Christianity. So they take refuge in the common monotheism and stress that. But then again in comes well relatively monolithic Marxism and Communism with another alternative, another great mass, another great block of people. So some people, even within the church, can't bear to recognise a split between these two great authorities, so what do you get? - you get Marxist Christianity. What do they call it? There's some special term for this going around nowadays? There's a special type of theology - liberation theology - which embraces both, they hope, Christianity and Marxism, so that this split does not have to be tolerated because there are some people who feel pulled very strongly in these two directions and they feel unable to choose.

So I think that a lot of this unease which is created, and out of which people don't like to choose, or on account of which they don't like to choose, and they don't like you disrupting the ecumenical harmony, is a sort of infantile dependence on authority figures, and they want all the authorities to agree. So in a way the FWBO is the odd man out in the ecumenical harmony. Well there are a few other movements which are also out of harmony but they are rather different from what we are and they differ for different reasons I think.

Kulananda: Even though we may seem to be out of harmony at that level, I went to see Sagaramati giving a talk to the Yoga Circle in Manchester and there were a lot of women there who were insistent that all was one and that Sagaramati had to agree with them and approve their belief that it was. It was quite clear that what was going on was that Sagaramati was now a new authority figure and they needed his approval and so they had to get him to agree to what they were saying and that he could be seen to approve of them. So he was being treated also as an authority figure in the same sort of way.

S: So if one authority doesn't agree with the other authorities, well it puts people of that sort in a real dilemma because they're obliged to choose which means they're obliged to think. They're obliged to think things out for themselves which they don't want to do. They want to feel that there's this vaguely

beneficent authority just looking after them in a very general sort of way though without actually interfering with their lives of course. [Laughter] Just vaguely sort of blessing them and making everything all right while they just get on with doing whatever they want to do.

Uttara: In Glasgow they have this sharing of faiths, and it's like the Christians organise these. It's a bit like maybe they take the steam out of the other religions.

S: They take the steam out of the challenge.

Uttara: Right so they have this gathering and it's all one again.

S: But it's all one under the general auspices of Christianity. You see, just as the Hindus want to have everything as one under the general auspices of Hinduism. It isn't even a genuine oneness, it's only a sort of manoeuvre.

Alaya: I would have thought that with a group that any other group which has power as an authoritarian structure would increase the power of the other group in that there would be a feeling of solidarity in opposition.

S: Oh yes, this is true. I remember some years ago I was invited along to some working party which was a sort of sub-committee of some bigger committee dealing with the question of religious education in schools. I went along to four or five meetings. I found myself sitting around a table with two rabbis, Jewish rabbis, a couple of Muslim mulvis, a Hindu swami who happens to belong to the Ramakrishna Mission but was of American origin, and a Catholic priest, a Catholic nun, I think a Presbyterian minister, and in the course of our discussions I got the impression that - it slowly dawned upon me - that these people all belonged to the same thing. They belonged to the same Trades Union. There were minor differences between them but what they had in common was far more powerful and more important, and they were in fact tacitly agreeing to divide the cake, the cake being the congregations, 'if you won't trespass on my preserve I won't trespass on yours'. That was the clear sort of tacit understanding, that if you will allow me to rule my flock as I think best I will allow you to rule your flock as you think best, and this was the basis of the whole approach. It was just a sort of ganging up, so to speak, of the people occupying the positions of power.

And this came up especially strongly and especially unpleasantly in the case of the two Muslim mulvis and the two Jewish rabbis. I must say that the Catholic priest was somewhat better. He was the only person who ventured to suggest that the children might be given some voice into what sort of religious education they had. The others assumed - especially the Muslims and the Jews - that the children were purely passive and that they had an absolute right over the children born into their religion. That was the assumption, and everybody agreed upon that, with to some extent the exception of the Roman Catholic priests and of course myself. I also raised my voice, but I thought that quite interesting. Everybody more or less agreed, in most cases agreed very strongly, that children born of say Jewish parents were the exclusive property of the rabbis; children

born into Muslim families were the exclusive property of the Muslims and so on. So they had far more in common than they had to differ about.

Uttara: Isn't it maybe when they come over to this country they get away from the conflicts and others who are battling against religions, are battling against each other, so they come over here and they still feel themselves to some extent that that casts their religion. They sort of like to keep it all nice over here. They are fed up with wars or whatever.

S: I think religions generally feel a bit threatened, especially they feel threatened by Marxism and Communism and they are in a sense ganging up in self defence. I don't really see it as a spiritual phenomenon, not on this sort of organisational level. It may be that there are genuinely individuals of good will who find it very difficult to think exclusively in terms of one religion in the historical sense. I can understand that, but I think the people who are in the positions of power and authority in the different sectarian religions, the different denominations, don't think or feel like that. They are just concerned to preserve their own exclusive rights over the members of their own flocks, and they agree not to trespass on one another's preserves, and there's much the same thing in the so-called mystical cum Aquarian movement. You never find criticism do you? They never criticise one another. I think for much the same reasons.

Chintamani: This would seem to suggest that the greatest enemy to the Dharma and the work of the FWBO are authoritarian creeds.

S: I've been slowly coming to the conclusion that a lot of the religious movements of our time, including those of eastern origin, despite all their pseudo-religious and pseudo-spiritual trappings as I've called them the other night, have in fact nothing to do with spiritual life, and they're not spiritual movements. They are group or mass movements. They have a certain significance as such, but they are not spiritual movements in the sense of being concerned with the spiritual development of individuals as such, and I think that is perhaps a very big difference between us and some of the other people and groups that we shall encounter, and it's perhaps that which needs to be put across, and it's perhaps that which is one of the most difficult things to put across.

Maybe Christian clergymen could be challenged, well why are you so concerned that Buddhism and Christianity should teach the same thing? Do they really, do you really think that they do? How clear are you in your own theology to begin with? Are you really sure in your conviction as a Christian, as a Church of England clergyman? Isn't it most extraordinary that after years and centuries of intolerance you want to make as it were common cause. Do you really know sufficient about Buddhism? You could say to them that you seem on the basis of a very flimsy acquaintance with Buddhism wanting to be one with us, so is this motivation not psychological rather than theological, and sort of challenge them in that sort of way. Why are you in such a hurry to make common cause with us, so concerned to make common cause? Are we not as Buddhists, having been regarded and

dismissed as pagans and heathens for hundreds of years by you, are we not justified in being suspicious and doubting whether the motivation is genuinely spiritual? Perhaps that should be more of our approach. We are not dependant on their co-operation or their goodwill.

_____ : Why should we in fact bother having a dialogue with such people at all? Is it actually worth spending time and effort trying to get that point home to people who basically have a psychological need to hold the opposite view?

S: Well I think we have to accept that a very large number of people indeed have a sort of psychological need to belong to a group with some sort of pseudo-religious blessing, and to look up to some sort of authority. I think they are going to be the majority of the people that we come into contact with. But again nonetheless there is the question whether there are not certain groups to approach which would be more productive and more fruitful than others. Here perhaps people may have something of interest to recount from their own experience. Has anyone been along to or spoken to or discussed with groups outside the FWBO that they felt particularly rewarding? What about schools for instance?

Subhuti: I found them mostly OK.

S: Can you say more?

Subhuti: Well generally much more open minded, much more of a spread of different types and kinds of people. They're not brought together because they have some pre-existing commitment. They are often also just very interested in energy, anything that's a bit lively. But again it's only a relatively small proportion that you feel you make any impact on. I think that goes for almost any of the situations that we're going to. You can't talk for everybody or to everybody.

Alaya: I was going to say younger people, people of 14, 15, 16 who are particularly open and energetic.

_____ : At this meeting where Sagaramati gave a talk it seemed to me that the people who got most from it were those who just listened to the dialogue between Sagaramati and the people who were insisting that everything was one. It did seem that a few people really could see the folly of the position of people who were trying to insist that Sagaramati was saying the same as they believed. I think some people really got quite a lot from that.

S: But for a moment just to go off on a slightly different tack we were talking in terms of going on and talking to outside groups, but in a more general way, in connection with making ourselves better known, is there not something to be said for writing for instance articles or letters on specific points to magazines, to the press etc., etc. This hasn't really been tried. I've done a little tiny bit of it but on the whole it hasn't been tried.

Suvajra: Do you mean the open press or the Buddhist press?

S: Well both, I was thinking actually more of the general press but it could certainly include the Buddhist press. For instance the latest "*Middle Way*" carries a really ridiculous letter from Ann Bancroft about meditation not being necessary and to insist that it is dogmatic and Buddhism isn't dogmatic. It's such a silly letter! One just feels like taking the silly woman and spanking her! [Laughter] Perhaps one of the ladies would like to do it. [Laughter]

Uttara: Maybe she's upset because we didn't do her removals for her! [Laughter]

S: No, there was no direct reference to us! [Laughter] She was just again meditation it seemed.

Dhammadinna: Doesn't she not even call herself a Buddhist, isn't she a 'Zenist' or something?

S: Well she's writing a book on Zen Buddhism. I find this absolutely extraordinary! [Laughter] I think it's outrageous. I know Ann well and up to a point I quite like her, but on the other hand she is almost the last person who should be writing a book about Zen. She wrote a book about eastern religions which was bad enough, but then to go ahead and write a book about Zen! And people like this are regarded as authorities! It's painful and I think that they should be scotched from time to time and their bluff called, at least with letters to the editor.

So is there not something to be said for us involving ourselves - those who are in a position to do so, those who can write and spell [Laughter] - in this sort of way, more.

Siddhiratna: What issues were you thinking that the FWBO or even the WBO should take up Bhante in the National Press?

S: I'm thinking for the moment at least not of general issues but of those issues where Buddhism, certainly as understood by the Friends, has a point to make, especially for instance if say Buddhism itself is mentioned. Or if religions are mentioned, say on the assumption that all religions are theistic, well then one should write and point out that all religions are not theistic and that Buddhism is not theistic. I'm thinking at this stage more of things of this sort. And also challenging for instance the assumptions that a lot of Christian representatives make, that it is only through Christianity that peace can come, challenging that and pointing out that Christianity historically has been very far contributing to the cause of peace, whereas Buddhism has contributed - at least it hasn't contributed to the cause of war in the east.

So at the moment I am thinking more of this sort of thing.

Devamitra: I've dabbled a little bit earlier this year with one local paper in Norwich

which was published, along that sort of line.

S: Yes, good. I think this sort of keeps before the minds of newspaper readers, one hopes, the point that there is another point of view, that Christians are far from having a monopoly of truth and righteousness and love and peace and all the rest of it.

Devaraja: Two points. I saw the dust jacket of a book which I think Kuladeva had and I think it was by Trevor Leggett, something which was about - just on the blurb it said something to the effect of 'the misuse of Buddhism by monarchs in the East to propagate wars against each other'. That's all I read about it....

_____ : It was Trevor Ling.

S: Trevor Ling.

Devaraja: That was just one point. I don't know that actual historical background is of that book; and secondly, I thought in the past that perhaps it would be quite a good thing to have more contact with say people who were politically anarchists, because it seems to me that the development of anarchism, certainly in places like Spain has exhibited a lot of things that I feel that I personally am sympathetic to.

S: Well if one could find one's anarchists presumably one could have individual contact with them. I've nothing against that. They don't seem very prominent at present, do they?

Subhuti: Quite a lot of people have been coming to the Centre here who call themselves anarchists.

S: Ah, well that's interesting. What do they mean by that?

Subhuti: They mean that they've read anarchist literature. Some of them do belong to anarchist groups, not very many of them.

S: That's quite interesting. But what do they understand by anarchism in a broad, as it were, philosophical sense?

Subhuti: Well lack of authority, external authority, and the responsibility of the individuals to grow and develop. They definitely seem to, most of the ones that come here have the idea of development.

S: And what is their attitude with regard to violence and non-violence?

Subhuti: It varies.

S: But we presumably make it clear that we stand for non-violence. Well anarchists I suppose by their very nature are not likely to be highly organised [Laughter] so it would

be a question of making individual contacts. No doubt if that could be done that would be a good thing. I'm all in favour of going out for individual contacts with people who appear to have something. One might have read something by them or they might have published a book or written an article. I think it would be a good idea if, in some cases, we sort of made a beeline for them as individuals and opened up a correspondence or maybe got to know them personally and talked with them very seriously about what the FWBO was and what it stood for, especially if we saw in what we read, whether the book or the article, something that looked vaguely similar, or a point of view that we felt we could agree with. I think there's a lot to be said for that sort of individual contact with perhaps relatively thoughtful and perhaps even more gifted people right outside the movement. Opening up contact with them and letting them know what we are doing and that in certain areas we have some ideas in common.

Abhaya: One person I felt this really reading *The Times* is Bernard Levin who was talking about development of the individual. He was almost using very similar terminology to what you.....

S: There's someone writing in *The Spectator* too. Chintamani's written him a letter at by suggestion, called Christopher Booker. He has written very much in terms of the individual and the individual becoming mature, and not depending on mother and all that, which had a familiar ring.

Chintamani: He hasn't replied.

Abhaya: Also he wrote one article last week. He was dramatic critic in the *Sunday Times* for a few years and he was explaining to readers why he'd given it up, and he said the reason he'd given up being dramatic critic for the *Sunday Times* which was a very well paid plum position, not that he's short of money anyway, but he said that the reason he gave it up was because the plays he had to review were so negative in content and he mentioned three plays in the whole of the three years that he felt had a really positive content, and he felt that art, one of the essentials of art was that it was positively based.

S: That's a very good point then.

Siddhiratna: Is this still Levin you're talking about?

Abhaya: Yes.

Devamitra: I did actually write to him about eighteen months ago after the second Festival of Mind and Body, I sent him a copy of my review of the Festival.

S: Because he wrote a quite appreciative review didn't he.

Devamitra: Yes. I mean he didn't actually reply or anything but maybe I'm not the right person to contact Bernard Levin.

S: I think one has to persevere and persist. Some of these people are very busy people who get a big mail every day I think in some cases, but some no doubt would respond.

_____ : He seems to be getting involved in things like Rajneesh, and the group that Ali Stasinopolis

S: That's right. Perhaps all the more reason for us writing and saying well it seems a pity that you've sort of come so near but at the same time miss it so completely! [Laughter] I think you'd have to send a woman along to Alianos Stasinopolis because usually when she's around men don't get a word in edgeways. Just send along our most argumentative woman perhaps, whoever that might be.

Uttara: Would it not be good to start maybe advertising the likes of your books in *The Times* and things like that.

S: Ah well there is this question of advertising. I don't know whether frankly my own books are the best things to advertise because most of them - the more substantial ones - I wrote many years ago and they reflect general Buddhism rather than the specific attitudes of the FWBO, even though you can see the seeds of those attitudes in some cases quite clearly in those books. But there is this related issue of advertising and projecting ourselves in that sort of way. I feel that - perhaps I'm thinking now more in terms of the LBC than of the movement in general - I feel we haven't yet projected ourselves enough and that that will have to be increased, and then that will raise the question, well what sort of image, so to speak, do we want to project? I mean I've found it quite interesting in this connection to consider the question of Dhammarati's posters. Is Dhammarati here? No, he isn't. Oh. When I first saw some of Dhammarati's posters I wasn't exactly horrified but I didn't consider them in the best of taste. I don't think they would have attracted me to anything but on the other hand, I did learn from all sorts of quarters that the posters were proving highly successful in bringing people in. I think everybody agrees upon that, that those posters are probably about the most successful posters that we've had in terms of bringing people in.

So this illustrates a point that you must be very careful in say designing your advertising not simply to reflect your own tastes. I personally would have favoured something relatively sober and discrete [Laughter] and elegant, slightly Georgian [Laughter] but it's quite likely that the sort of people who responded to Dhammarati's posters would not have responded to my posters at all! So I think one has to bear this sort of thing very much in mind, and think very much in terms of the people you are aiming at, not so much in terms of your own tastes, your own likings and dislikings.

Alaya: My father who is in advertising was pointing this out to me last week, that I was criticising from an art point of view a lot of the advertisements. He was saying well that may be so but they really work. The people who finance these have surveys and they really know that these are getting to the people who they want and are really successful,

and from an art point of view it's really irrelevant whether it's attractive or

S: Because in our case, I'm speaking in terms of purely artistic taste<D>, things which are a matter of taste. I'm not suggesting that we should derogate from any of our principles in our advertising.

[End of side one side two]<D>

But some of us may have to sacrifice what we consider our artistic taste, or our 'good taste', if you see what I mean. If you look at the Underground posters for meditation or if you look at the Buddhist Society's posters they are clearly all discrete and conservative in their approach and their appeal, and one would imagine that they were aimed at a particular sort of people. People who liked to be considered as possessing good taste and being discrete and all that sort of thing. Not people who are wild, way out and adventurous, shocking and punk-rockable [Laughter] if you know what I mean. So it's no use putting out this discrete very well bred advertising and wondering why the young people don't turn up. Do you see what I mean?

Alaya: They're probably too discrete to come along! [Laughter]

S: In a sealed plain envelope! [Laughter] So I think when we do get around, as I hope the LBC will get around to more extensive publicity we should need to bear in mind things of this sort. But I do feel in a general way we're not projecting ourselves sufficiently and I think throughout the movement we need, from now onwards, to project ourselves more and more and impinge more on the consciousness of the general public in a quite distinctive sort of way. I don't know quite how we're going to do that. As a different sort of approach, a different sort of group, it is going to be very difficult probably to do that, for reasons which I explained yesterday. Because we have a genuinely different point of view, and it's very difficult for people to open their minds to a genuinely different point of view.

Devamitra: You were talking yesterday in terms of our own lack of basic knowledge and being able to articulate in a more intellectual way, but you've also talked in the past of just the sort of impact of the individual on () [S: This is true] For instance you did suggest to me some time ago that I go and visit Don Cupitt, this very learned radical theologian which in a way I'm a crazy person to go and meet someone like that.

S: Ah! What I'm getting at is this. There are two possible ways of approach. You can either defeat somebody on their own ground with their own weapons, or you can adopt a totally different approach to which they've got no defence at all. So if you go for instance to someone who knows a lot about economics and you want, let's say for the sake of argument, to put forward the FWBO ideal about economics. You can either meet him on his own ground and argue the toss in terms of economics which means you've got to be as well primed as he is, or you can disregard that completely and say how wonderfully our economic set-ups, our co-operatives work<D>, and how good they are in

human terms, and how lively they are and what a lot people get out of them, without going into the economic whys and wherefores of it at all. But what you shouldn't do, if you've got a smattering of economic knowledge, try to convince somebody on economic grounds who knows a lot about economics, because he will worst you in discussion. You see what I mean?

Dharmapala: This is what I was talking about earlier with the hitch-hiking -that he was genuinely interested in our practical happenings and the effects on the people, but couldn't see how that related on the bigger scale when he used his sort of economic knowledge, and found it very difficult to relate then.

S: I think in a case like this you have to question what is meant by bigger scale. If you mean by bigger scale simply a multiplication of small units, well there's no reason why it shouldn't work on that bigger scale, but if you mean by on a bigger scale, on a more impersonal scale, well then of course it's not going to work, because the whole thing is based on individual contact. So one has to clarify the issue in that sort of way. If he is asking will it work on a bigger scale, meaning will it work if you have a factory doing sort of piece work and all that sort of thing, well you say well no because that's why we don't believe in that sort of set-up, but it will work on a large scale in the sense of the small units, the small co-ops being indefinitely multiplied. We think it in those sort of terms. We don't think in terms of a sort of pyramid shaped structure of a more impersonal nature.

Dharmapala: It's quite interesting to see how that would actually develop.

S: Well then one can only communicate one's own conviction that it is going to develop and, as far as our own experience goes so far, it really does work and we're convinced it will work more and more, the more we can spread it, but not by adopting different principles.

Siddhiratna: Are you saying the co-operatives work for instance? It strikes me that they'll only work up to a certain level where in factories like some sort of wood-turning factory like they have in New Zealand is absolutely essential, because you can't have numbers and numbers of small units with small Transits doing small jobs as it were. At some point you've got to get into maybe shipping or export and import which uses warehouses and staff.

S: Well then one can say what one's position is about that. That if one has to choose, one would definitely choose what many people would consider a lower standard of living in order to ensure a better quality of life, that if it came to the crunch one would make that choice.

Siddhiratna: In a way it's therefore necessary to demonstrate or to question their assumptions about what standards of living we need.

S: Right, yes, and about what needs to be sacrificed for the sake of what.

Dharmapala:printing co-operative seminar this was a major issue, because it's a question of living standards and they thought that we rather exploited ourselves and this was a symptom of religious groups.

S: Yes I read about this in the report. It seemed to me that this was a really absurd concept that should have been refuted on the spot - self-exploitation! It's ridiculous! Because if you are doing something willingly and you're committed to that on account of deep rooted convictions, it's a purely artificial and academic concept for you to be said to be exploiting yourself, because then you are being judged by somebody else's ideas and not by your own, which means your autonomy is being taken away.

Asvajit: You can very simply refute that by saying well look I'm happy and healthy!

S: Ah well they will say well a slave can be happy and healthy but he's still a slave.

_____ : It's quite interesting that we seem to have had very little impact on other co-operative groups, although we have had quite a bit of contact with some individuals.

S: Well the co-operative movement is quite a bit one, and it is a co-operative movement of a certain type. I think it's mainly a consumers' co-operative movement isn't it?

Subhuti: We are talking about contact with a producing co-operative.

Kulamitra?: There's two completely different co-operative movements. There's the co-op, the consumer and co-op and now much more producer co-ops who we've had contact with, but we don't really seem to have got through to them in any big way.

S: But then one mustn't be surprised because it takes time. It takes persistence. Some of these people have been in these sort of things for years and years. They're not going to change overnight as the result of one conversation or one meeting. They're not going to experience a sudden conversion. You've got to keep up contact with them and keep hammering home your point.

Siddhiratna: There's one press that we know of has made a £72,000 turnover. They've been going six years, there's nine women printers and three males in the whole set-up. That works incredibly well. They've made this enormous profit after only going five or six years, but they do have a standard which they try to maintain which is that each worker receives about £70 a week, which is standard practice in the printing industry. But one wonders really whether it's not a matter of test of time really, testing of each others principles and whether their principles will actually last longer than ours as it were, which one would assume because ours have the transcendental aspect, that they'll actually outlast something which is merely material and mundane. It's time really.

S: What are you actually saying?

Siddhiratna: That these other co-ops do have quite a big success financially and expansion wise but that, although we stay small and we don't actually make a lot of money but the LBC's still losing x amount of pounds per week, but we may actually end up lasting longer.

S: Though I think at the same time we need to ask ourselves why we are not making money. If it is true as you say that there is this press which in the course of six years has achieved such success, well we are to ask ourselves why that is. Of course it may be that they started off with a massive injection of capital which we didn't. That of course could explain it. Or there may be other reasons. It could be for instance that they have got unethical principles and it could be that, or it could be just that they've got more skilled people, etc., etc. So we should compare only where it is reasonable to compare. But if where it is reasonable to compare we seem to be doing less well then we really have to look into things.

Siddhiratna: I've a feeling it's tied up with their image - we're talking about images and the public image of ourselves - and I think it's to do with seeing themselves as individuals deserving a proper living wage in this time and country as it were.

S: Are you suggesting that if we paid people more we should be making more money, more profit?

Siddhiratna: We would have to make more money to pay our workers proper.....

S: In other words they would have to work harder to pay themselves, but if they get paid anyway whether they work hard or not you're saying they won't have any incentive to work harder.

Siddhiratna: What am I saying? [Laughter]

S: What you are saying really amounts to that there isn't a sufficiently big carrot and workers are motivated by the prospect of carrots rather than by anything more idealistic. Are you saying that?

Siddhiratna: Not exactly, although I think that has an effect on it, that if the idea is to make that amount of money per week which is the standard of living, how you use that money, whether you covenant it or just give it in dana to a charity of your choice. Just by having to pay yourself that amount of money is going to sort of necessitate that you run that business more efficiently and you get more work.

S: Well if it's a co-op it is the worker, that is why I say their incentive will be the prospect of a bigger carrot for themselves, but our principle as I've understood it is that we don't want to do that sort of thing, you see. It's known that if you offer people a

bigger carrot well you can get more work out of them, but that doesn't seem to be a very sort of noble way of doing things or very much in accordance with the spiritual life.

Kulananda?: We're locked in the poverty mould. That's one of our problems is that we're existing on the breadline ourselves and so everything comes down to that standard, whereas if we pay professional wages we begin to adopt a more professional attitude I think.

Siddhiratna: It's an attitude and a psychology.

S: Well it depends what you mean by professional. One doesn't have to work for the sake of carrot in order to maintain a professional attitude. But if by offering a larger carrot is the only way that we can get people to work better and up to a more professional standard, well in that case you might just as well not think about co-operatives at all.

Vimalamitra: Are people really worried about money though or is it kind of the status that goes with the kind of feeling you get from having a large wage paid to you rather than the actual money?

S: It could be, because that would mean that your sort of identity and your psychological security even was invested in your earning capacity.

Atula: Aren't you actually questioning the actual people - if you follow this line - working in the co-ops? It seems to me it's a matter of motivation. One works for money and one works for the Dharma.

S: This is the basic issue, that if one is supposed to be committed to the Dharma but is not able to work so well on that account as someone who is committed to the prospect of carrot, I think that's really deplorable and you shouldn't pretend any longer that you're working in a co-op for idealistic reasons because you're not!

Uttara: These points came up last weekend in the seminar. The first one was very much in terms of self-exploitation in the sense that we do the same amount of hours as the normal person and yet we it's a bit like this pseudo-attitude of not charging too much so we undercut ourselves.

S: I don't think we should not charge the full rate to people outside. I think this in a sense, although I reject the expression, this in a sense would be self-exploitation. Well it would be exploiting the Dharma, it would be providing the Dharma so to speak with less than we ought.

Uttara: I've seen it especially with the Fairs too. That was the same. We were doing an incredible amount of hours to provide these so-called people [Laughter] with food and we were getting virtually nothing for it.

S: Well I don't think we should ever charge less than the market rate on pseudo-

idealistic grounds, no.

Subhuti: You're giving your dana to other people.

S: Right, you're giving the Dharma's dana to other people. You're giving it to Mara rather than to the Buddha - this is what it amounts to, so I don't think we should do that. That because we're a Buddhist organisation therefore we have to sell everything cheaper and make less profit than anybody else. I think this is entirely a wrong approach. We should make no less profit than anybody else.

Uttara: The other one was very much the attitude of not so much the carrot but more of working towards a mental attitude of plentitude. We can create, a person can create and sort of provide money and whatever but at the same time maybe his standards are....

S: But you see it is a question of needs. What do you actually need? Some people say that they need something but actually it is as a status symbol as it were. It is a neurotic need, not an objective healthy human need, so through the co-ops etc., we supply people's needs, but we don't supply their neurotic needs. Someone might argue that a car is a need for him because all his friends have got cars and the people he went to school with have got cars, and if he went to see them without a car, especially a really good car, he'd feel bad, well that is a neurotic need. That is not an actual need.

Devaraja: But the level of support has in a way been established not by the actual needs of people but by the actual demands of the Inland Revenue and the National Insurance, and the fact that it's kept at a certain level so that it falls below that level.

S: Well then that has to be looked into because there may come a point when your actual objective human needs cannot be met without going above that level, so then one has to look into it.

Dharmapala: Well that is already the case with a lot of the existing skilled professional people who are interested in what we're doing but just can't come down to that economic level. That is where a lot of skill doesn't come into the movement, and where we really are faced with having to send people out to train outside.

S: Are you saying that people have needs which are not really objective human needs which they are insisting on having fulfilled if they come within the structure of the Friends, are you saying that?

Dharmapala: I think initially in order to get involved with the Friends, that they have a block. If they can't sort of see how that relates to their present, what they see as their needs and their not having families and cars and houses and so on, they have a block in this area, whereas if in fact we were working on the principles that we are working on, but had a higher sort of wage scale, then I think people would be more open to look and maybe become a bit more involved.

S: I see the point of that. At the same time I'm very much afraid of the thin end of the wedge and somebody saying well he's getting such and such and in his case he spends it on his wife and family, I'm a single man, why couldn't I have the same amount of money and spend it on the things that I want to spend it on, maybe concerts or books and so on.

Alaya: Because his wife and family might be neurotic needs.

Uttara: I think this is one of the good things that people have been involved for quite a long time and they're meditating. Because say somebody comes for the first time they see it, for the first couple of months, they'll see it in those terms because their needs haven't dropped away, those sort of neurotic needs. The more they're involved meditating I think these needs and way of seeing things are starting to drop away, so they may not relate to things along those lines any more.

Aryamitra: On the other hand they do have objective needs. People say living outside a community where they sleep maybe two or three to a room, if somebody's got a flat especially in London it costs maybe £25, £30 a week and what do people get - £4 a week in the..... it's just totally out of the question.

Nagabodhi: There are transitional phases you could pass through. Somebody living outside in an ordinary job for a while. If they're becoming committed to the ideal they can start covenanting all their surplus.

S: They can give dana.

Nagabodhi: Until such time as they feel like taking that leap and moving into a community or something. Some of us have probably done that.

S: Well perhaps more stress should be placed on that, not that it's a question either you don't help at all and you're outside a co-op or you're inside the co-op and just taking your bare needs, but that it also should be stressed that there are these intermediate ways of giving and being involved by giving dana.

Siddhiratna: There's also a problem, as we're on this idea of support versus wages, that if you are only receiving support you may have a need, a desire even, a quite positive one which you would like to have the money to maybe go to India or New Zealand or somewhere like that where you feel you could either gain something from going there or give something to the situation which your co-operative may not feel is the best thing for the co-operative, but as an individual it may suit you very well to do that.

S: But you say for the co-operative, but the co-operative also, because it's a collection of individuals, has to consider the needs of each individual. So it may be - supposing the co-op has got quite a big surplus, well it may decide that well it is justified in satisfying say a certain individual's need to go to India, finances it, but supposing the

co-op hasn't got the money, it would mean sacrificing the needs say to some extent of a number of people in order to fulfil the need of one person, because there's only a certain amount of money to go round, so each co-op therefore has to try to assess one need in relation to another which may not always be an easy thing to do. Do you see what I mean?

Siddhiratna: I'm just thinking that if.....

S: It's not that in principle the co-op could not or should not do that. Well certainly everybody's needs should be met, whatever they are, by the co-op to which that person belongs, but those needs could involve an outlay which would disrupt the finances of the co-op and affect the other people in the co-op getting their needs fulfilled. Someone might have say a genuine musical talent, he might genuinely need a large expensive grand piano, and the co-op might be in principle quite willing to give him that, quite willing to pay for it, but it hasn't got the money, or it has to take the money from other people who need it in order to give to that one person. What is it to do?

So if there's only a limited amount of money well everybody sitting together has to decide and agree what it is going to go onto with regard to the needs of different people.

Aryamitra: Maybe what we've got to see is that we still seem to have to have the motivation or rather I'd like to see us gain more money to see that our needs are in fact bigger than we might have thought. I think that for most people we sacrifice quite a lot in the way of their dress, even just their clothes, their shoes etc. They don't dress properly, probably don't live properly. I think we should work towards just making more money.

S: I think it would be a healthier thing if people recognised that their needs were greater than they perhaps had liked to think. Their healthy needs I mean. That for instance decent clothes are a healthy need, that you don't have to be shabby and all that sort of thing, and work more energetically, not just for the sake of higher wages as it were but out of an objective recognition that not only do we need more for the Dharma, we need more for ourselves. We really do need more for ourselves. That it is not an indulgence and a luxury if we have a new suit or a new dress. That can be quite reasonably considered part of the needs of an individual. So perhaps in the light of experience we need to upgrade the idea of what constitutes needs, but it doesn't mean existing on the absolute minimum required for survival. Maybe that was necessary at one time for purely economic reasons, but for economic reasons means for economic reasons, not for psychological and spiritual reasons. But people do need to be able to go out and buy a book, that they need to be able to go out to a concert, that they need to be able to travel a bit sometimes. These are not unreasonable things, they are not neurotic things, other factors being equal, and that provision should be made.

Aryamitra: (unclear) motivation as well to raise these. It could be an inspiring motivation to work, for the businesses to become more successful.

S: I think what is to be avoided is that you must get more money because somebody else is getting more money. I think this is dreadful. This vitiates British industry anyway, this question of differentials and non-differentials. It's quite sickening in fact.

Siddhiratna: To take Dharmapala's point Bhante I was thinking in terms of 'Windhorse Press' in particular. It occurred to me at one point that 'Windhorse Press' was never really going to be as professional as it could be because it couldn't afford a professional printer, and that would probably mean somebody who may or may not - I mean ideally it would be somebody who was really into contact with the FWBO and coming along to classes etc., already, but may have dependants, wife and family.

S: Well it could become professional if people stuck with it long enough. That's been our problem in the past - that nobody's stuck with it long enough to become really professional.

Siddhiratna: I don't think so. Printing is a five to six year apprenticeship.

S: Anyway we are getting into details. Maybe this whole question of livelihood has been sufficiently aired. I forget exactly how we got onto it [Laughter]

_____ : Contact with other co-ops.

S: Yes, contact with other co-ops.

Siddhiratna: It's important because it shows us what we think of ourselves i.e. the shabbiness etc., etc., and therefore the kind of mentality or image of ourselves as presented to the general public.

S: I think it is important that we present an image of caring for ourselves, whether people take it positively or whether they take it negatively. The Buddha in his own day was reproached for luxurious living, believe it or not, and it may well be that a time will come when the FWBO is reproached by more puritanical movements for luxurious living. I hope I don't live to see that day. I hope you don't either. But yes, perhaps as I said we just need to upgrade our concept of what is an objective need, and that people should be willing to supply that need just because they feel well towards themselves as individuals. And not pinch and scrape simply because they don't think well of themselves as individuals. If the economic situation demands that you pinch and scrape and there's no way around it well one just has to accept that but one hopes that that is only a quite short term policy or requirement.

Chintamani: I was just thinking then that it's very easy to take one's standards from the work of the world. We should create our own standards in everything. This thing of discovering that one's needs are actually greater than one thought, (unclear.....) nice things as it were. I mean I know in my own experience it's very easy just to refer back to the time before I came to the FWBO and think well that's what I really want, and

those are fake standards. They're standards based on what I was brought up to feel I need. They haven't arisen from my present situation. I hadn't considered them cool like everything else. I suppose in a way that relates back to meetings and trying to be (obscured by noise) that should come from within us, should come from one's own..... All one's standards and principles should come from within.

S: That's why the needs should be human needs, not things that we think are necessary, that we assume that we need a TV set because it's generally assumed that one needs a TV set, or that one needs a car or whatever. One needs an annual holiday etc.

Asvajit: It seems to be very much that the basis of modern economics -keeping up with the Joneses and not only keeping up with the Joneses but going one better than the Joneses.

Marichi: I think that's a load of rubbish. I don't think that the movement's riddled with people saying I ought to have a car because my friends have cars.

S: I didn't say that the movement was.

Marichi: And Asvajit. I don't see why these are raised as red herrings.

S: But this is not the standard. This is what Chintamani said. The needs must be derived from within the movement itself as it were. That what does one need as a human being, as an evolving individual? The criterion is not what one is considered to need by people right outside the movement.

Marichi: Yes but is anybody using this?

S: I think there is always that tendency, there is always that pressure because we're in the midst of this greater society which impinges on us so powerfully from all directions.

Virananda: Don't we have to go to this greater society though for needs in the fields of just professional skills though, in particular co-ops. We need to establish our needs by referring to outside standards of professionalism. Otherwise....

S: No, you're speaking of needs now in a quite different sense. We've been speaking about needs in the sense of the needs of the individual. Things that the individual needs for his psychological and spiritual development. Now you're speaking about needs in a more impersonal way, that is to say the need for expertise. Well certainly if there is a requirement that we call in outside expertise because there is nobody within the movement with that expertise, so we call in someone from outside so that we can learn that expertise, that's quite all right. Provided that isn't done in such a way as to prejudice the ideals of the movement.

Siddhiratna: Are the individual needs then, they must be decided by the individuals.....

S: No, I think the needs will have to be decided by a consensus within the community concerned. I don't think the individual can unilaterally declare 'these are my needs', and expect that he or she has a right for the community, say the co-op to fulfil those needs - no. I don't think the individual, and when we say individual we actually mean the growing individual, is necessarily always the best judge, because one can deceive oneself so easily. This is one of the reasons why within the spiritual community, and in this context the co-op, there has to be a very close personal interaction and mutual sensitivity so that it isn't a question of you proclaiming your needs in a sort of individualistic way, but of your needs being generally recognised by everybody. They are obvious, everyone can see them, and therefore..... or even if they can't if you just mention them it becomes obvious that yes, that is a genuine need and everybody's really happy to help meet that need. It's not a question of the individual extracting what he requires to meet his needs from a reluctant community - it shouldn't be that, but of all the members of the community really being concerned that every individual member should be getting all that he or she really needs, and an attitude of being willing to help the individual member sort out what his or her needs really are. There may be quite a bit of confusion in the mind of that individual about his or her needs. But this should all be done in a positive sort of *Kalyana mitra* sort of way. Not just trying to keep down the needs for purely economic reasons. That would go against the spirit of the whole thing.

Siddhiratna: To go back to what you started off with which was in fact how we appear to people on the outside, one becomes either - I'm not terribly sure of my ground - either we are a spiritual community which has connotations and associations as it were, or we're a radical alternative counter-society or alternative culture that has other associations, or into sort of human potential and growth which is.....

S: Yes, this is the big difficulty. We're almost certain to be misunderstood and therefore the basic difficulty or the basic issue in a way is how we can put ourselves across in such a way that what we really stand for is communicated without misunderstanding. If we say for instance that we're Buddhist, we know that that will create misunderstanding because Buddhism's immediately classified as a religion and religions are supposed to be this or that, and Buddhism in any case is supposed to be this or that and immediately we're saddled with that. On the other hand, if we present ourselves as an alternative movement, and alternative culture, well that also has all sorts of associations, most of which are not relevant to us at all. Even if we present ourselves as say an anarchist movement, well that would raise all sorts of spectres in the minds of certain people at least. So this is really the basic question. That we are quite different. We ourselves know with varying degrees of clarity what we actually are, even if we can't always articulate it very clearly, but how do we communicate that without ourselves being immediately subsumed under some category that doesn't really represent us? This is the real problem that we're up against. I'm hoping that Subhuti's book will go some way to dispelling these sort of difficulties.

Asvajit: I think if they're in real human communication, the problems can be resolved

on the spot.

S: It's a big if. I've been trying with a few people this week and it is very difficult, but still it can be done at least piecemeal.

Siddhiratna: Sorry what can be done?

S: What one really stands for can be communicated on the level of personal contact with individuals.

Kulananda: Isn't that what we have most to our advantage, that we can be ourselves with people so that we do meet people, instead of.... I mean so few of us here can articulate what the FWBO's about but most of us can be ourselves, be lively, energetic, positive etc.

S: I think one also needs to be able to articulate what makes it possible for one to be like that, and the philosophy so to speak on which that positivity is based, and of which it is the expression in a way. Otherwise people might think oh he's a fine lively chap, I suppose he was born that way! Well that isn't enough because it lets them off the hook - well you were just born that way, it's just your nature. You can say well no, I'm like this for a certain definite reason, because I've based my life on a particular point of view, a particular outlook which is this.

Kulananda: But the way the conversation started today it seemed as if you could only be talking to I can't think more than ten people in the room. Talking about approaching theologians and things like that. How many of us could do that?

S: Well this is what I said yesterday. There's only a very small minority of people but I think that minority has to be enlarged. I think if I may say so that most Order members have been quite lazy in this respect, and I think this has to begin to change. That most people in the movement and even in the Order have been content to sort of almost luxuriate in the generally positive atmosphere and nice communication without thinking too much about what happens outside or without thinking too much about projecting outside. Or in a sense without caring too much for other people outside who could be really benefited immensely if they could only be brought in contact with the FWBO.

[Pause to discuss organisational matters as to whether the discussion continues or study groups begin. Everyone agrees to carry on the discussion]

Subhuti: Can I follow up this point about communicating outside.....

Devaraja: This is the point that I want to make. I think the most effective means for communicating to a group that's larger than ten people is through, well just basically through the arts, things like theatre, film, music.

S: Well that's a whole area we just haven't really explored but which we could I'm sure. Meanwhile we'll just have to leave it to "*The Life of Brian*" <D> etc., etc.

Devaraja: Certain theatrical things I've seen, they do seem to communicate something much more accurately. They sort of get beyond people's preconceptions and prejudices which.....

S: I think it must never be forgotten that theatre, even at its most debased, in the West has its roots in religious ritual, and there is still some overtone or undertone of that sort of effectiveness in theatre. I don't think it pertains to the film. That is a completely different medium, but to the theatre, the live theatre, yes. So one could still ideally take advantage of that connection, and make use of those sort of powerful almost archetypal influences and forces.

Dharmapala: To link dramatic presentation with our own festivals I think probably (unclear)

S: Well this must remain a matter for experiment. It's quite impossible to know in advance. We just have to try it and see.

_____ : <D>It seems to me that the same applies that (unclear) that if you want to work through theatre you have to be on a par theatrically with other theatre-goers and with the performers, and if you're not, better not do it.

Chintamani: That's a very important point and was something I wanted to pick up Virananda on, was the degree of technical expertise in the world, it was that the degree to which it's developed is, I feel, in many cases neurotic. It's far too developed, it's over developed, it's a sublimation of energy that should have gone in other directions, perhaps should have gone into the spiritual life, and that if we were to try and compete with that, if we were to try and pit ourselves against that, we might as well forget about the spiritual life and just work on developing those techniques full-time because that's the only way we're going to do it.

Virananda: Yes Chintamani, I had more in mind say once you are working with something like printing, it's very easy to not be aware of certain objective standards which you need just to operate a simple printing shop, which you are only made aware of by coming into contact with the world outside and seeing how it's done properly. It's not done to a lavish scale but it's done properly.

Chintamani: All right tying that up with the theatre and the arts, yes we could, as it were, turn ourselves into an artistic movement and really develop our techniques, but that's a full-time occupation. My own limited experience of professional art is the theatre and the time and energy and money that's put into mounting a theatrical production is..... when a production's on they do longer hours than any of us, with the exception of the building of Sukhavati. It would be pointless<D> to try.....

Devaraja: Why?

Chintamani: I mean the whole purpose of doing something like that is to get people to practise the Dharma. That's the only reason we're doing that. The only reason for getting through to people is to try and persuade them, to convince them of the need of practising the Dharma, and if we're not practising the Dharma ourselves, and instead are just mounting lavish theatrical productions, then we defeat our own ends.

Devaraja: But why shouldn't doing that like that be practising the Dharma? That degree of involvement in doing it, why shouldn't that be considered as practising the Dharma?

Chintamani: Well I like to meditate every morning, I like to go to study groups, I like to go to classes, I like to be involved in retreats, I couldn't do that if I was engaged in..... That I regard as practising the Dharma.

_____ : They also have economic considerations. Presumably they could put on productions less often and not work so many hours. I think Virananda's point applies there as well, that it's a question of... I mean we need to do something properly. I don't mean that we have to have huge sets and lavish productions and musicals and so forth, but we just have to do it with people who can act, for instance, and with someone who can direct.

S: I think the example of the printing press is quite a good one, just as an illustration, because one needs just a level of competence. Print needs to be just neatly laid on the page, the productions need to be just neatly bound and with nice little covers, but one is not going to go in for lavish deluxe sort of printing of the best coffee table type. So I think it would be the same with regard to theatrical productions.

[End of tape one tape two]<D>

Though one wouldn't aim at being sort of West End spectacular but a reasonable and effective degree of competence.

Devaraja: A good example of the sort of production I saw and which I think would be the sort of thing that one could aim for, that economically is on the right level, is a thing called "*King Arthur*"<D> by a theatre group called '*Footsbarn*'<D>. They're a travelling group, they can set up a small stage out in the open; they can run the whole thing with a team of about twelve people, and it was just sheer magic to watch.

Economically it's nothing. It's nowhere near anything on the West End stage, but it was superb. The actual philosophical and spiritual content of the production, I mean it wasn't really.....

S: Well of course also it's well known that one can attain a very high degree of professionalism and be totally empty as regards content, so one needs to avoid the two

extremes. You need to be professional but sort of reasonably professional, and of course you must have the definite spiritual content, but there's another point. Maybe we'll close with this, and then sort of adjourn for tea. Chintamani mentioned about a total dedication to say a theatrical production not being possible if one wanted to keep up one's meditation every day and so on and so forth. This is quite valid, but I think its valid only for some kinds of people, not necessarily all the time. I think there is a place in the spiritual life for your flinging yourself totally into something, just once in a way and even, if I dare say it, and I'm not going to be misunderstood, even<D> forgetting your daily meditation. You see what I mean. Because some people work better in that sort of way, that is to say for a few months they carry on quite strictly and maybe they do their meditation, they do their regular work, but then for a few weeks or a few months they just fling themselves into something totally, forgetting routine, not bothering when they sleep, when they eat etc., until that work is done. And I think it isn't a bad idea from time to time to have the experience of flinging oneself into something absolutely totally. I think some people almost need this. And some people I think are better served - I've made this point before - by say two or three months with a lot of meditation and very little else, and then maybe two or three months of study, and then two or three months of regular work, rather than by, in the case of some people, say an hours meditation a day, four hours work, three hours play, one hour communication - some people really like this regular pattern and it's good for them. But there are<D> other people who function in another sort of way, say flinging themselves into this or into that for several months on end, rather than trying to do a little bit of everything every day.

So even flinging oneself into a theatrical production in the sort of way that Chintamani was talking about would be justified in the case of that sort of person. You see what I mean? Again I hope I'm not going to be misunderstood, if for a few weeks you don't meditate every day, the world is not going to come to an end, nor is your spiritual life necessarily going to come to a complete halt. I'm not saying that you shouldn't [Laughter] be clearly very regardful about your meditation practice and your daily practice and so on, I'm not saying that, but I don't want to make an absolutely hard and fast rule which nobody can ever break under any circumstances if you see what I mean.

Devaraja: With regards to meditation practice, personally speaking for myself I find that I can't miss a days meditation. It's absolutely essential. The rest of my life can be maybe throwing myself into one thing and then moving into something else but I must have that, and I think that probably applies to most people.

S: Yes, people must very seriously assess where they stand in this respect and not deceive themselves, but as I said, the possibility of your flinging yourself totally into something for a few months on end to the exclusion of everything else is certainly there and could be positive for some people certainly sometimes.

Because I think very few people have the experience of really flinging themselves into something totally. I mean in theory one has flung oneself into the Order or flung oneself into the movement totally, but actually in practice it doesn't really work out like that. It's not so easy. In practice there are all sorts of little reservations and semi-demi-

commitments [Laughter] and all that sort of thing. So I think it isn't a bad thing if some people just have the experience of being totally involved in something and not thinking about anything else day and night almost, for at least a short period, at least a few months. At least have some experience of what it means to be totally involved in something. I think it's an experience which very few people actually ever have, and I think they miss something in that way.

Virananda: I suppose one consideration for most people which would hold them back maybe would be does it make money or not. Will they be able to support themselves while they are doing nothing else but this. At the moment that's the case unfortunately maybe.

Dhammadinna: If someone wants to set up that sort of theatre group they'd think in terms of raising the money for it.

S: Yes they really would, they'd go out and get the money, I'm sure they would first. If they really wanted to do that.

Dhammadinna: They'd have to disengage from the co-operatives and the movement in general.....

S: They'd put all their eggs into one basket for a few weeks with all the attendant risks. Chances are that they'd succeed.

Dhammadinna: There are people who work on the fairs who try to work in that sort of way.

Uttara: Yeah, everybody flung themselves wholeheartedly into it, and were working incredible hours, but it didn't make any money. They enjoyed it.

S: Well that was due to other reasons. It wasn't directly related to their actual work at all. In some cases well I know they were actually let down by people quite outside the movement. Perhaps they shouldn't have believed or trusted them, that's another story.

Sagaramati: Do you think the question of temperament would be a guideline about whether you would do that?

S: Yes, I think if you are slow, cautious, painstaking, anxious, I think it would be very good just to throw yourself into something for a few months [Laughter] and throw all considerations of caution and safety to the winds. If you're naturally reckless well no, not. You need a slower more painstaking cautious approach. But most people are so timid. We've got really this welfare state mentality, being looked after and everything made so nice and safe for us. I think this is something that some people at least experience in India, of not being looked after in a way. Well those who really did sort of rough it and go on their own from place to place, there's nobody to look after you, there's no safety net, but usually there's innumerable safety nets spread to catch us

if we fall, and we're pretty cautious anyway, even though the safety nets are there, we take care not to fall more often than not. So I think it isn't a bad idea to throw ourselves into something from time to time. Not out of just ordinary rashness or recklessness or impulsiveness. Clearly we have really to believe in what we're doing in order to go all out for that.

Devaraja: Off slightly at a tangent I thought that over the past few months, in the past year or so that the idea of the welfare state or a lot of its applications really seemed to take away people's initiative and their responsibility for looking after themselves.

S: Yes, people who are not in a position to look after themselves of course should be looked after, but the tragedy is that people who are able to look after themselves are looked after and therefore prevented from looking after themselves very often.

[Break in tape - straight onto]

S: first of all where is your voice!

Dhammadinna: Have you got any ideas about how people can develop these skills, being articulate or being able to articulate the spirit of the movement which they understand emotionally. Do you think we should create a learning situation for people?

S: I think there's quite a lot that can be said here. I think the first thing that people have to be really convinced about is that inarticulateness is not a virtue. That mumbling is not an expression of profundity. [Laughter] One knows of course, and Buddhism emphasises this more than any other spiritual tradition, that there are certain things that cannot be put into words, but one is not usually trying to communicate about those sort of things anyway, those are purely transcendental realities. Usually one is trying to communicate one's own personal feelings, thoughts, ideals and so on. But I do think as a sort of legacy, perhaps a partial legacy from, for want of a better term, the hippy movement of the sixties, I think some people still think that there's something not quite nice about being very articulate. Do you see what I mean? There's almost a sort of virtue of saying 'well you know what I mean' and 'I guess you know how it is' and not actually articulating. I think that's the first thing. I think one must really want to articulate and one must be convinced of the desirability of articulating and not as it were rationalise one's perhaps reluctance to articulate in that sort of way.

Though I think one can't really articulate unless one has in a way got something to articulate. I think one must be clear about one's feelings, clear about one's thoughts before one can really begin to articulate. Some people of course can as it were think on their feet and clarify in the process of articulating. This is also possible, but there must be that sort of willingness to ask oneself well what do I really think about this, what do I really feel about that? Because if you don't do that well you won't have anything really to articulate, you will be reduced to a series of mumbles or apologetic noises, or something of that sort. I don't think there's any real technique.

I think of course one thing that one can do is to really examine the words that one uses, not to fall back upon clichés and portmanteau expressions and things of that sort. To really carefully consider the words that one uses. I mean for instance we know that there are these overworked words in the English language - that something it 'nice'. Someone says 'Oh what sort of day did you have?' 'Oh I had a nice day' 'I had nice cup of tea', 'I had a nice talk' -well this is all imprecise expression. This is not articulation. This is just making reassuring semi-animal noises! [Laughter] That it was nice, it was a nice day, it was a nice cup of tea, it was a nice meeting. So people so easily fall back on these old tired, outworn cliché type expressions which really mean nothing at all in any real or serious sense. I think quite a lot of people don't consult the dictionary sufficiently.

They don't bother to find out the meaning of the words that they are using. They don't bother to find out the fine shades of difference between certain words, or even not so fine, sometimes quite obvious shades of difference. People do not pay nearly enough attention to their communication and their articulation. I think the solution lies along these lines. I don't think there's any sort of trick or technique. Of course perhaps discussion does help. If one is discussing with say someone who's got a clearer way of thinking than you have and who is more careful in his use of words. And perhaps a speakers' class helps and maybe this sort of criticism could enter into the speakers' class - that someone is using words in a very hackneyed cliché ridden sort of fashion.

Dhammadinna: That's in the general sense but if you're going to have people who can meet people on the outside on their own terms, then that means a certain amount of specialisation.

S: Well that is specialisation of knowledge. That specialised knowledge must be there first before there can be the articulation of that knowledge.

Ratnapani: I think possibly the strongest area of clichés is in fact our own clichés, the home-grown ones. I think that we have mostly got away from 'nice', but simply terms like the 'individual', 'meditation', 'situation' and so on - these have very little meaning perhaps to other people and they cover whole areas for us which we sort of assume is then conveyed, which it just isn't. I was particularly impressed hearing Vessantara for instance introduce the mett_ bh_vana over about twenty minutes at Aryatara without a single set phrase or word of Buddhist jargon. I don't know that I've heard that before. It was extraordinary and I was eventually poised waiting for one, and it didn't come, which I thought was really admirable.

S: Well every field of knowledge has its technical vocabulary. We shouldn't be ashamed to use our own technical vocabulary. I think we cannot avoid words like 'positive' or 'reactive' etc., etc., but we should use them really precisely and carefully knowing exactly what they mean, and not just bring them in instead of producing an argument.

Ratnapani: And explain them if necessary.

S: If necessary explain them, yes. But even within the movement itself, use them

carefully and considerately and with mindfulness, and use them properly. For instance sometimes one hears that there's a discussion and someone puts forward a certain point of view and somebody else says, 'oh you're just being reactive' or produces this sort of discussion-ending term 'reactive' to dismiss what the other person is saying. Perhaps they are<D> being reactive but one cannot deal with the situation in that sort of way by producing a term in this sort of way. One has to reply with an actual reasoned argument, not just state that they are being reactive full-stop, and that ends the matter.

Alaya: Or it's just your projection, that's another one.

S: Yes that's another old favourite. Well there is such a thing as projection and sometimes people do project. But one cannot dismiss someone's arguments simply in that sort of way.

Abhaya: I also think there are quite a few people in the movement who have the attitude, well I'm no good with words, I'm good at this, I'm good at that but words aren't my thing, so they tend to think of them - they've docketed themselves as not being able to use words and not good at this, whereas in fact I think it's a matter of developing from where we are at the moment.

S: Well words are a human<D> thing. Words, language is one of the things that differentiates human beings from animals.

Abhaya: I think it's an inheritance from the educational system and having to specialise in this or that and feeling that words aren't your thing. Obviously some people are going to be better at that than others quite naturally, but I think a lot of people tend to just not consider it possible that they could improve or be good at something.

S: I think also it's important not to confuse articulateness with glibness or slickness of utterance. It's not a question of having the gift of the gab in a sort of Irish sense. You can be articulate but you can be quite slow and deliberate in your utterance and take time over saying what you have to say. To be articulate doesn't mean that you have to rattle away like a machine gun like they do on the radio or TV I believe. You see what I mean? So.....

Asvajit: You can tell the difference listening to one of those people on the radio or TV. They have no real awareness of what they're saying. There's no real articulateness there. They're being parrots.

Siddhiratna: I'm not sure Bhante but one gets the impression that people that write in the *Newsletter<D>*, those people that write in the *Newsletter<D>* I think on the whole have been to university and done at least sciences or humanities, but.....

S: With one or two prominent exceptions! [Laughter] Well there's two of us! Oh no you've been to university haven't you, that's right sorry! [Laughter]

Siddhiratna: I feel that the academic level such as it is needs to be improved. I think the word 'academic' is probably a bit of a bogey-word but I think it actually means something quite positive.

S: It's the literary level I think needs to be improved. Improvements have been made.

Siddhiratna: Which means actually giving yourself time, actually it's picking up on what Nagabodhi said yesterday really.

S: But in a sense it's a more professional approach, that, as I said the standard of writing in the *Newsletter* has improved steadily over the months and years, but obviously there is still need for improvement. I would suggest in a way a greater condensation and compression and economy of utterance I would say. I think most people, especially people who are not very experienced in writing, do tend to ramble a bit and to repeat themselves. I think there's a lot of room for improvement in this sort of way.

Aryamitra: If it's even a cultural thing. I was wondering whether the English are more articulate than - probably more than some other countries. I was thinking say being in Glasgow, that I find the Glaswegians find it very difficult to be articulate.

S: Perhaps the Glaswegians are a special case. One shouldn't think of Scotland.

Aryamitra: I was thinking - well the way my thoughts went was that maybe it was something to do with also emotion. I find the Italians too are quite free emotionally and I don't think they're so articulate. I'm not quite sure as I don't know Italians personally [Laughter]

S: I think one must beware of generalisations. Say in the field of law, in the field of history, in the field of philosophy, in the field of science, the Scots have made big contributions and been very articulate indeed. One must also enquire to what extent cultural and even class factors enter into it.

Suvajra: Certainly in some sort of groups in Scotland it is a virtue to be inarticulate. To have this sort of (forfeit of?) words.

Sagaramati: That's class.

Chintamani: There's something I'm not too happy about. It's this split between one's feelings, the emotion, and the ability to express them articulately. I think that's a slightly suspicious..... I mean, what occurred to me earlier on is that articulacy is an integral part of the spirit of the movement () and to the extent that you are not expressing yourself articulately you are not expressing the spirit of the movement.

S: Well it's an aspect of communication. You can't communicate effectively unless you are articulate, which as I've pointed out doesn't mean being glib or a quick-fire talker. You can say very little in terms of numbers of words, you can speak very slowly, and you can still be perfectly articulate. And lots of people who talk a lot and produce lots and lots of words at a very quick rate are not necessarily articulate, because they must articulate something, not just reproduce words that don't have any relation to what they're really thinking and feeling. SO an articulate person is not necessarily a talkative person.

Kulananda: Something that's occurred to me on these lines recently, a thing that's held me back in the past was the distinction you've made a long time ago I think about the number of people in the movement who can actually think. You've said I believe there are very very few people in the movement who can actually think. Recently I've come across the distinction between subjective and objective thinking, and although there may be very few people who can objectively think most of us can subjectively think, so we should make a lot of effort to examine ourselves, examine our own feelings, just to churn things up through ourselves, and in that way think, in that way articulate.

S: When I said that there were very few people in the movement who could think I was thinking more in terms of original, more creative thought in the sense of say an original, as it were 'intellectual', inverted commas, contribution to the movement. There have been a few articles contributed to the *Newsletter*, to *Shabda* which make that sort of contribution, not many, but there are a few people who are able to do that. Not merely to rehash things that I have said - certainly to draw on that material - but also to interpret it intelligently and in, for want of a better term, an original sort of way. adding even material of their own, which is original but in harmony with what they've got from me or from the scriptures. There are not many people who can do that. I'm thinking for instance of that article by Vessantara where he dealt with this question of 'fine dividing lines'. That showed original thought. This idea had not come up before. I think it was his own genuine discovery and it was valid and in accordance with the other things that we think and in which we believe. So that's what I mean by thinking, and there's not much of that sort of thinking within the movement. That's what I mean by thinking when I complain so to speak of a relative lack of thinking within the movement. There are certainly people who can think logically and work things out on a rational basis reasoning say from cause to effect and so on, and if we follow such and such a line of action what will be the expected results - there are quite a few people who can think in that sort of way, but that wasn't the sort of thinking that I had in mind on that occasion.

Devamitra: Can I sort of bring it down to the opposite end of the scale? I've recently given lots of talks, one-off talks at a college in Norwich to various unlikely characters like welders and what have you, and I felt that I had a certain degree of success on a personal level with one or two from time to time, so I thought well maybe if I could get in on a more ongoing basis I might be able to involve more people, contact more people in that way, and I certainly had some success with the first group I took earlier this year which was a group of telecommunications apprentices, two of whom came along to the Centre out of a group of nine. More recently I've been teaching apprentice mechanics

and catering students, and none of them are very bright, but I've found it really difficult actually to communicate anything. Just even culturally actually, not even from the point of view of communicating spiritual values. One of things that really appalled me the other day - I took one group of apprentices to the Centre on a visit, because they'd been complaining that other general studies groups go on visits whereas I never took them out for a walk or to see anything. We just used to sit down and talk, so I said all right I'll take you along to the Centre that I'm involved in running, and I hadn't really realised the extent to which basically those lads were just a bunch of wild animals. That's the only way it could be described. I was horrified when going to the Centre because I'd arranged for Vajramati to be there to make some tea and he wasn't there, and I was left in the Centre on my own with twenty wild animals [Laughter] and I just thought they were going to tear the place apart at a certain point! So that wasn't exactly an experiment but I'm just giving my experience to you as another - the other end of the scale.

S: Well you were a little bit naïve if I may say so, because if I'd been in that situation, first of all I wouldn't have taken them all together. Twenty seems to be far too many to have at one time. I would have taken ten one day and ten another; and also, what shall I say?, realise that they weren't going to be over impressed by a shrine. They'd be more at home in a snooker place or something of that sort [Laughter]. So try as far as one could to create that sort of atmosphere almost. Have three or four of your relative 'heavies' around to talk to them, and not dainty little cakes - thick slices of bread and jam or something and mugs of cocoa if you see what I mean [Laughter].

_____ : Wrestle with them! [Laughter]

S: I think also it's a question of seeing at what particular point or into which sort of activity people fit in. Supposing we'd had a bigger more comprehensive sort of centre, maybe say with karate classes going on, well you could have taken them along just to visit the karate class and that would have meant something to them perhaps. You see what I mean? So perhaps if we're thinking of spreading our net rather widely it means that the Centre must have something to appeal to people of many different kinds, not just to the relatively literate, as it were, inverted commas, 'civilised' people. You were lucky to get them along at all! I would have thought it was in some ways a golden opportunity, but it probably needs a different approach. Or show them a few slides of the sort of things that might interest them.

Anyway have we finished with this question of articulateness? Also I think it isn't really very valid to assume, as I think some people do, that if your emotions are deep and serious and genuine, you will not be able to articulate them, and that therefore your inarticulateness is a sort of measure of your genuineness. I don't think that that necessarily follows. I think this is a bit of a legacy from the hippy era. Or else say you're going through something so wonderful it can't possibly be put into words. Well perhaps you are but on the other hand perhaps you're not. [Laughter] Perhaps you're just inarticulate.

Dhammadinna: What about the question of specialisation of knowledge? Do you feel when you talk to people on the outside or to other Buddhists. It seems like probably you were the only person who knew the correct reference in the Vinaya.

Because how many of us have actually sat down and read the Vinaya? That's within Buddhism itself, let alone having a knowledge say of Christianity so you can.....

S: I think here people have to pursue their special interests. I don't think that you can sort of lay it down in advance that you should study this and you should specialise in that. I think people have to pursue their special interests.

Dhammadinna: I wonder whether people feel that perhaps knowledge, they have a block against knowledge. You really just need to know what you need to know to practice.

S: Well this is true. From the point of view of your own practice you need to know very little, but if we are going to have any dealings with people outside the movement we have to be well equipped if we're going to meet them on their own ground. If we're not able to do that well let us abandon that ground completely and fall back on some other ground. But what I am saying is that if we do, of our own free choice, meet them on their own ground, we must be sufficiently well equipped.

Asvajit: Isn't there also the point Bhante that in being so concerned with being articulate, expressing one's ideas clearly, that you actually lose sight of whom you're addressing. You lose contact with those people?

S: No, I don't think so at all. Because I've mentioned that articulateness is an aspect of communication, and if you are trying to communicate with somebody and being articulate because you want to communicate with them, you won't lose sight of the person, you can't.

Nagabodhi: That does raise quite an important element. I found when I was talking to these people in the church the other week, not so much in my talk which was sufficiently one way for me to just say what I felt like - when it came to the discussion afterwards and we got onto the subject of god I found actually something else that took me by surprise in the situation was the strength of my own emotional reaction to what they were saying. Really I just wanted to hurl abuse at them [Laughter] and stuff like that. That was my emotional impulse. I didn't really respect the people, so again that condition, the fact that I did a rather sort of inadequate job. I think you have to be quite clear about why you're talking to people and only talk to children or welders or whatever if you feel a genuine concern for them and a genuine desire to communicate with them.

S: I think one of the things that one has to do if one is speaking with people like this, is to give them a very full opportunity of saying what they think. You see. Let it come out into the open. Sometimes the absurdity of it will then become obvious to all. You see what I mean? So in this sort of situation you could say something like, 'well as you

know I'm a Buddhist and Buddhists do not believe in god. I don't feel any need personally to believe in god but we recognise the fact that our Christian and Muslim friends do believe in god. It's rather curious from our point of view. What is it actually that makes you believe in God? Just say, 'well I'm assuming that you don't believe in god just because you've been brought up to do so, but could you explain to me, could you make it clear to me why you feel the need to believe in god? Why you actually feel, well not just feel but why you believe as an objective fact, so to speak, that there is a god of this kind, and how do you personally reconcile the discrepancies which are acknowledged to exist between what appears to be the action of god in the world and what appears to be your conception of god as someone all good, could you please tell me how you see this personally? And then they can sort of open up and perhaps it becomes obvious that they are really muddled and be embarrassed by the question, and then you can take it from there. Or it may be that they've got quite a straightforward thought out traditional theological approach and then of course you can go forward and discuss things on that sort of basis.

I think it is important to let the other person have his say and listen for quite a while. I think this is very important.

Nagabodhi: The point also I was making though was that whether it was my own experience at that church or sometimes my own experience in classes and watching other people in classes, I often feel that sometimes I'm in that mood, sometimes other people are in the mood of actually feeling contempt for the people they are talking to, and not - almost wilfully - not communicating. They're sitting in front of a class full of people who are rather stupid, they're all married for example and they've all got jobs in the world. They're not very interesting. You sometimes almost pick this up off somebody and you see consequently that they're not really trying to communicate. I would have said communication just has to come from the will to communicate.

Asvajit: But if one really feels that for a statistical individual or set of such individuals, I think the thing to do is just direct those feelings towards the system that has sort of made them in that mould, rather than that it is they themselves who are rather victims of the system, and one can sort of transform one's feelings a bit in that way.

S: Though of course one has to recognise it isn't just the system. Otherwise you just make people creatures of circumstances which certainly doesn't give them any recognition as human beings. But I think it is very important for anybody giving talks or taking classes, not to feel this sort of, as it were, contempt. This is the word Nagabodhi has used. I think that's really quite disastrous. One must actually feel some kind of fellow feeling with people, even though you do believe well they perhaps aren't on the right path and perhaps they are very immature and undeveloped, but nonetheless, you must have a very strong and even warm fellow feeling with them, or for them, before you can really do anything with them. I think the primary consideration must be to enter into communication on whatever level it is possible to do that. The primary consideration is not to teach, the primary consideration is to enter into communication. If there is something that you have to teach, you have to offer, it'll

come across in the course of the communication. You don't have to think about that. What you do have to think about is opening a channel of communication. I think this is very very important.

Uttara: Could I say something along the lines of just the communication exercises. Isn't this generating non-articulation? You don't need words. Communication isn't to do with words. This is what we say. The words are just a vehicle to get across our communication with other people. This is the way we teach it. I mean isn't this going against what we've just said, that we need words to.....

S: No I don't think the communication exercises function in that way, because I remember from the days when I was taking them, you noticed in the intervals between the exercises people's tongues were unloosed, and what they had been doing really encouraged them, well if not to communicate, at least to talk, which for some people was quite a step forward. And also one of the reasons why we have the communication exercises, especially the first, is that before you can communicate with someone you must at least look at him, and we found, and I think we still find, that people very often don't look at the person to whom they are speaking. So that is the first lesson almost in communication. I don't know how things are now. I know we still have the communication exercises every now and then, but I don't think they do in practice create the impression that verbal communication isn't important. I think in fact they encourage verbal communication in practice.

_____ : <D>In the part when you do use the sentences I've always seen it in terms of it adds another dimension to the words. I mean you can't hold an intellectual conversation with those words and the way that you use them gets you beyond just purely intellectual - using words as ends in themselves.

S: Well I prefer to say it just gets you away from non-communication, because in communication an essential ingredient is that you are communicating to a certain person of whom you are aware. So if there isn't much, as it were, intellectual content in the verbal communication, well you can't escape from that more direct approach as it were. Whereas if there's a lot of meaning in what you're saying intellectually, you can lose sight of the person to whom you are actually speaking.

_____ : It can also get you away from prejudice as well, talking directly the person. You notice that with communication exercises people are able to talk to one another afterwards whereas perhaps before prejudices and projections onto each other would just drive them away.

S: And which would perhaps initially have entered into the verbal communication, had the intellectual content not been excluded for a while.

Uttara: Before they were back to the machine-gunning type of communication.

S: I remember one instance very well. I won't mention any names - I remember who it

was and he's still very much around - I was looking around and I heard someone saying [*spoken very loudly and quickly*] <D> 'Do birds fly, do birds fly, do birds fly, do birds fly' to his partner and clearly it was being used almost to keep the person at bay and to prevent communication. He wasn't aware of it at all.

Ratnapani: Since you mention that Bhante I've come across using that sort of thing where one thinks one is doing something to benefit the other person so this person is terribly shy and you fire at them thinking well they'll have to react.

S: You provoke them.

Ratnapani: Doing something for them, whereas in fact by doing that one is forgetting to communicate oneself. That's made me cringe over the years.

S: I've seen in the remote past some really painful examples of this sort of thing, some really dreadful<D> examples of that.

Ratnapani: They're still around.

_____ : The conceptual element comes in the breaks between the exercises. It's always seemed to be a really important part of the exercise as a whole. Although something happens in the exercise itself which doesn't happen in the break, also something happens in the break which doesn't happen in the exercise itself.

S: Of course you see there's a little secret here. Sometimes people do exercises best when they don't realise they're doing exercises, you see. [Laughter] You catch them off their guard. They think it's time off, but of course actually it isn't. So always watch people in the breaks. It's very interesting, it's very significant what people do during the breaks in a quite general sort of way one could say, during the intermediate period, in the intermediate state<D> even. Sometimes the truth sort of comes out because they're not on duty. It's all unofficial - it's a break.

_____ : As soon as you ring the bell again they switch on. [Laughter] I've seen it happen.

S: But anyway time is passing. We're going to conclude on time actually I hope. Any fresh point as it were regarding our as it were projection of ourselves beyond the movement?

[end of side one side two]<D>

Subhuti: I think if we go out to other groups or use the media in any way at all we've got to not allow ourselves to be manipulated by the situations in which we communicate. I think that happens quite often. That even if you do have to use the terminology, social terminology or psychological terminology or something like that, you've got to be careful that the situation in which you communicate doesn't bind you to that level of

communication.

S: I think also one has to insist on having one's say. Not allow oneself to be interrupted or headed off. Be quite difficult in that respect.

Subhuti: And demand that you have the appropriate time and that you have time for discussion if you want that, and that you're in the right situation, and you find out what the terms under which you're going to be communicating are going to be in advance.

S: And the bigger the media, or the more widespread the media the more careful you have to be.

Uttara: It was just something you said yesterday about - I think it was from the Buddhist Society - who said that he related to the FWBO in terms of a trend.

S: A trendy.

Uttara: What I was thinking was that maybe he thought that it's like a trend, it's just a passing whim etc. It doesn't last very long. He felt that maybe because it's mostly made up of young people he could see the FWBO in terms of people who are involved in it as a passing whim rather than actual.....

S: I don't think he did actually mean it in that way. I don't think he thought really very much before using that term. He agreed, he accepted, he stated himself that the Buddhist Society was staid. So I suppose he thought that the opposite word simply was 'trendy'. He also did say dynamic. He said dynamic and trendy. I said I don't disagree with the dynamic [Laughter]. In fact he said more dynamic than the Buddhist Society, but I said I really wonder what you mean by trendy. I said we don't see ourselves as a trendy movement at all. He took my point quite cheerfully. He was unable to say what he actually had meant by trendy.

Virananda: You hinted at what he might have been meaning by him not seeing the movement as being traditional Buddhism.

S: Yes for instance - this is something we didn't discuss all that much but it was in his questions - he said that the Buddhist Society offers access to traditional methods whereas we have adapted things, so I said well no we haven't and I disputed that the Buddhist Society did in fact offer access to fully traditional methods as I wasn't convinced of this. I thought that as regards meditation practices certainly our approach was much more traditional. For instance if you go on the Buddhist Society Summer School well you have access to Mr Douglas Harding and his rather bizarre methods which aren't in the least traditional. We don't have anything of that sort.

Subhuti: I think it's that we still have a reputation for being a bit of a hippy movement in those sort of circles. Because we have co-operatives, because we have communities.

S: Also because - I pointed this out to Mr Cohen - that people in the Buddhist Society have got no direct contact with us at all. I said that he himself was the first person - I told him this - who had taken the trouble to try to find out what we actually thought, and I said I appreciated that he was the first person and I hoped there would be others, but it was significant that he was the first in fact, who had taken trouble really to try to find out what our point of view was. It hasn't happened before.

Dharmapala: The bhikkhu, Akasha I think his name is, came here in a sense also to find out what we were doing, and he expressed that he saw us more as a sort of experimental and lacking in tradition as well.

S: I think when people say, especially those who consider themselves Buddhists, that they are sort of trying to find out what actually we are doing, it's entirely on existing assumed categories, without really trying to find out what is our distinctive point of view or distinctive approach.

Dhammarati: Maybe the way we are trying to communicate in classes and so on, is in a sort of good sense of the word trendy because it's young people who can speak to young people. Almost this contemporary sort of language which is more idiomatic. (unclear)

S: But that's not trendy, that's just idiomatic and non-academic.

Dhammarati: It's also able to change. The sort of people coming to the Centre - I think like in Glasgow for instance - you do find expressions adapting and changing along with circumstances and language that people use. In a way that's trendy. You change with the times outside or at least your expression does.

S: Well the Buddhist Society does that, to give it its due. If they have members of the upper middle classes coming along they change their attitudes and if they have members of eastern royalty coming along they change their attitudes and approach [Laughter] quite considerably. So there isn't all that much difference in a way! It's just a question of what you're basically trying to do.

Uttara: Whereas you're trying to use the English language. We are trying to use the English language in order to communicate traditional Buddhism.

S: Or our understanding of Buddhism, our experience of Buddhism. I think we are more Western. At the same time we are more traditional. This is a sort of paradox in a way. We're quite radically traditional in a way. In some ways we're more traditional than those who believe that they're following traditional eastern Buddhism, because they're merely following in some cases convention, which is rather a different thing from tradition.

_____ : It seems [obscured by distortion]. We are original, in the sense that we go back to the origins and that appears to be original in the other sense, but traditional people seem to think of something rigid and fixed and static even.

S: Those who consider themselves traditional in most cases are following sort of eighteenth and nineteenth century Buddhist practices and customs. Just as say Church of England people consider themselves traditional, they are following the settlement which was established in the reign of Queen Elizabeth. They are certainly not going back to the time of primitive Christianity. They are only traditional up to a point. They go back a little way. We go back much further. That is what makes us seem so radical!

Siddhiratna: In the sense of our image to the world outside in general that radicalism is going back to the roots and finding out what the original purpose was. In one of the lectures you said that was possibly revolutionary as well in that one is promoting a kind of Buddhist lifestyle because that is the image, that is what we are actually trying to do.

S: For instance this editor of the *Middle Way* who interviewed me put this question. He put the question about Right Livelihood. He said I believe that Right Livelihood is very important for the FWBO. He realised that. He could hardly have done otherwise if he had read our literature. So I agreed with that and of course I emphasised it and explained why it was important to us. In fact I considered it quite a crucial issue, and one of the main differentiating factors between ourselves and a group like the Buddhist Society, because it meant that we were trying to carry Buddhism over into our everyday lives instead of just having Buddhism as sort of side interest.

Siddhiratna: I was thinking a little while ago Bhante that there are two things it seems to me that we've actually changed quite radically from Buddhist tradition. I've forgotten what the first one is but the second one does seem to be in the realm of right livelihood and.....

S: Well we don't depend upon alms. I think if we put this across it would go down well with a lot of people.

Siddhiratna: That is actually one of them. The other one is I think in one of those suttas, something about the Buddha's description of the relationship between the worker and the boss, which we don't have that distinction.....

S: We don't.

Siddhiratna: ... in co-operatives as opposed to a kind of private business. That would be a departure from tradition.

S: I could justify it if I wanted to, yes. It could be justified. For instance the word 'bhikkhu' is derived from a word - I was looking up the word in the Sanskrit dictionary the other day, that is the ordinary Sanskrit dictionary, not Buddhist Sanskrit dictionary - and the derivation of 'bhikshu' was actually given from 'bhaga' meaning a share. A bhikshu is one who takes a share, one who takes the share to which he is entitled, which is the co-operative principle, yes. And then if you say, as it is said, that the Sangha

represents a sort of model for society in general, then you can say well the Sangha consists of those who simply take a share, and that that is regarded as a model for society as a whole. Therefore ideally the whole of society should be constituted in that way, with everybody taking his share, what he needs for his or her own development, and giving in return, though not in<D> return<D>, whatever he or she can. So actually one could in completely traditional terms justify this if one wanted to, quite easily.

So in this way a bhiksha or bhikshu is not derived from a verb meaning to beg but from a verb meaning to take a share, or one who takes a share, and this actually was given in the Sanskrit dictionary, compiled of course by non-Buddhists, as the primary meaning, as the the<D> meaning. A bhikshu is one who takes a share or takes his share.

This is one of the reasons I think why nobody from the Buddhist world ever enters into controversy with me openly [Laughter] because they suspect that I can justify everything [Laughter] from the scriptures, which I think actually I can [Laughter] because by nature I am quite cautious in this respect so I've gone quite far perhaps but I've gone very carefully step by step and I can retrace all those steps, and I know exactly where I depart from conventional interpretations and I know exactly which traditional texts I have to justify my position. But I think not enough of you<D> know all that. That is the difficulty. Not enough of you are interested in fact frankly.

Ratnapani: Something I was noticing while were talking Bhante about knowledge and articulation and so on. We know so much less than you but heaven help the next generation if they know so much less than us.

S: But in a way that isn't a bad thing, because it means you are thrown back on your spiritual resources and it is essentially a spiritual movement. Sooner or later I think we shall produce or attract more scholarly people who will do all that sort of work if it is considered necessary, but at the present it is much more important that people should be into things, as it were spiritually, even neglecting this more scholarly side, than the other way around. If one has some scholarship too so much the better, but it is not indispensable by any means. And in a way perhaps it isn't a bad thing that the movement stands on its own spiritual merits rather than on textual justification as it were, at least in its early days. Then it really makes it clear just what the foundations actually are.

Dhammarati: Would it be possible for you to retrace your steps in a *Shabda<D>*?

S: Oh it would take much more than that, much more than that. It is quite a complex business. Only I know exactly where our sort of attitudes differ from say conventional contemporary Buddhist views and why<D>, and on the basis of what Buddhist principles and so on.

Dhammarati: You get like fragments of information about how the co-ops are developing and so on and sort of fragmentary references to texts and other philosophers.

(unclear) something more systematic.

S: Well Subhuti is going to do something, maybe he will have a chapter on this sort of thing. Why knows? The relationship between the FWBO and the existing Buddhist traditions. [Laughter]

Virananda: I think we can call a halt now to this session.

_____: One more question.

Virananda: OK.

S: Six minutes.

Chintamani: Partly this question arose out of yesterday's point concerning the world situation. If there was to be trouble of any kind what in the area of knowledge do you feel should be part of our survival pack?

S: I don't know about area of knowledge.

Chintamani: Worldly knowledge.

S: Well techniques of survival I suppose. [Laughter] Gardeners I imagine will be greatly in demand. Gardeners could grow food, produce clothing.

Chintamani: As simple as that?

S: I think well if the degree of catastrophe was such it would be as simple as that. Unless you wanted to live like little rabbits burrowing into the ground. It might be an interesting question, what would be your survival kit in the broadest sense if the old world was destroyed and you had to go forth and help create a new world, what would you take with you? If you had to choose for instance between maybe a Leonardo from the National Gallery and a few good vegetarian recipes! [Laughter] Well which would be more important to transmit to posterity. I mean especially if it was a Leonardo portrait say of the Virgin and child?

Devaraja: I'd take the vegetarian recipes. [Laughter]

Chintamani: I'd rather the Virgin and child.

Virananda: OK. Thank you very much Bhante.

S: Thanks to everybody. Good. I hope to find everybody quite a bit more articulate in future.

END OF SESSION<D>