

The Sigalovada Sutta

The Venerable Sangharakshita in Seminar

Held at Padmaloka, January 1983

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

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Day 9

Tape 18, Side A

S: We come on now to **masters and servants**.

In five ways should a master minister to his servants and employees as the Nadir:

- (i) by assigning them work according to their abilities,
- (ii) by supplying them with food and wages,
- (iii) by tending them in sickness,
- (iv) by sharing with them any delicacies,
- (v) by granting them leave at times.

S: I'm just looking up a word in the dictionary. Yes: I was just trying to find out here what the word for master is. The word for servant is dasakammakara(?) Dasa is literally servant, sometimes even translated as slave. Kammakara - one who does work - a servant and worker, one could say, or servant or worker. But actually there is no word for master. Rhys Davids translates as 'the Aryan master'. The original word is ariyakena, which means 'by the Aryan'. There is a grammatical form in which certain letters of a word are reversed, so instead of 'Ariyan' you get ayira; so it is the same word, actually. This is called metathesis. It's an obscure point of grammar. So it means 'the Aryan', and by implication 'the Aryan as master.' But the word master is not actually used; simply the word Aryan, in that metathetic form, is used. Do you see what I mean? So that is an interesting point. It simply says 'the Aryan' - by implication Aryan master - and the servant or worker. What do you think that means? Why should it not say simply master?

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Padmavajra: Does this have the - well, the Aryans were the, er, is this an ethnic thing - the Aryan?

S: It could be. It could be that, yes. Sometimes in the Vedic literature one gets the antithesis of the Aryans and the Dasyas(?).

: And ethic ...

Prasannasiddhi: How does - ?

S: Aryan originally meant the member of a particular race, that is to say, the people who invaded India at a very remote period, who came down into India through the passes of the North-west, and gradually conquered at least northern India before penetrating to some extent into the south. They were called Aryans. And indigenous

people they referred to as the Dasyas. They conquered them and to some extent enslaved them, and upper-caste Indians, as they became - upper-caste Hindus - were of Aryan descent; the lower ones tended to be of Dasya descent. Do you see what I mean? Though there was quite a lot of intermarriage from time to time and fresh castes created. But very broadly speaking that was the picture. But gradually 'Aryan' came to be used not in the sense of someone belonging to a particular race but someone of a certain degree or level of culture, even civilization. Then it came to have an ethical sense and a spiritual sense. And Buddhism uses it almost always in the spiritual and ethical sense, as in Arya Sangha, Aryamarga, and so on. But first there is the idea of nobility in the ethnic sense, then nobility in the cultural sense, and then nobility in the spiritual sense.

Anyway, let's go through these. 'In five ways should an Aryan', or Aryan master, 'minister to his servants and employees as the Nadir,' the lowest point. Perhaps one should say, before that, that the provisions that the Buddha lays down here don't apply exclusively to the relationship between master [and servant] in the - what shall I say? - industrial employer and industrial employee sense at all. Do you see what I'm getting at?

Padmavajra: They're more like servants who aren't employees, who actually live in the same [household], are almost part of the family.

Devapriya: Or even broader, where the master would be of the ruling class, more generally.

S: I think I'm going even further than that. The master here is not only not to be identified with a particular person; 'master' seems to suggest here whatever factor, whatever force it is [that] actually determines the [410] working arrangements. Do you see what I mean? In other words the master can be a fiction, as when you say that the master is the locus of authority. It could be a Council; it could be even a co-operative meeting. The co-op meeting decides that - well, in a sense, that is the master, except that here the master coincides with the servants. Do you see what I mean? So I think one shouldn't regard these provisions as applicable only to one particular kind of socio-economic structure. For instance, you come to 'by assigning them work according to their ability'. That does not mean that there is necessarily one master employing all the servants to work for him personally and that he should assign them work according to their ability. This would apply within a co-op; because suppose all the co-op workers got together, then they'd sort out among themselves who was fit to do what work. That should be one of their governing principles. Do you see what I mean? It doesn't require necessarily a master observing this principle and as it were applying it to you from the outside. It is also a principle which you as co-op workers should recognize and apply to yourselves or among yourselves. Do you get the idea? So one could even say, not 'by assigning them work according to their wages' [work?], [but] 'by assigning yourselves work according to your abilities.' Do you see what I mean? That is the principle in co-operative terms.

Prasannasiddhi: So is it that there isn't actually any master as opposed to the workers? The master is just the workers...

S: Yes, what I'm saying is in the co-operative set-up the fact that there is not a master as opposed to servants and employees, which is what seems to be suggested here, does not mean that these principles are not applicable within the co-operative framework. The application of the principles themselves does not depend upon a particular socio-economic framework.

Devapriya: It would apply to the ruling body.

S: The ruling body, whatever that is; and that ruling body may be made up of workers themselves.

Devapriya: I was thinking that you could extend that in terms of a government of a state or a country or a village, and you would take into account everybody including yourself ...

S: Yes. These principles wouldn't necessarily apply merely to, say, a monarchy. They could apply to a republic as well.

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Dhammarati: So it doesn't actually necessarily sanction a particular hierarchy ... ?

S: No, it's the principles which are important, not the particular means by which they are implemented. The fact that it is the master who is called upon here to implement these principles does not mean that the Buddha is sanctioning the master-servant relationship in the ordinary sense. What he is sanctioning is these principles of work. For instance, in a co-operative there is a sort of dialectical element because you as worker are both employer and employee. So you as employer should apply to yourself, or yourselves, as employee or employees, these principles. There was a discussion some time ago - I don't know whether any conclusion was reached - as to whether such a thing as self-exploitation was possible! That suggests the same sort of thing, doesn't it? That you as employer could be exploiting yourself as employee! So it's the principles which are here important, not the particular framework through which the principles are applied. So it's not a question of saying, 'Well, in these days we don't always have masters and employees - we certainly never have them within co-ops - therefore what the Buddha says in the Sigalovada Sutta isn't applicable because he's talking about masters and servants.' One could not say that. So 'by assigning work according to ability' - you can even leave out the personal pronouns and not say 'by assigning them work according to their ability' [but] 'by assigning work according to ability'. Surely that is a principle to be applied within a co-op. You see what abilities you have among the workers and work is assigned either by the workers themselves directly or by somebody whom they elect for that purpose in accordance with those abilities: not only abilities in the sense of talents and skills and know-how, but in accordance with strength.

Devapriya: And in a co-op, presumably, in accordance with one's spiritual needs.

S: Are you speaking in terms of spiritual need to work?

Devapriya: Er...

S: Here it is only the work, the assignment of work, that is under consideration. You should be given work, or give yourselves work, according to your abilities. The work should suit your abilities. You shouldn't be asked to do something for which you're not equipped.

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Devapriya: I was thinking, I suppose, of somebody who is a labourer, say, on a building site. For their spiritual development it would be desirable, say, to help them to refine their energies rather than just leaving them in that particular job, which they are well suited for in a physical sense.

S: I think that would come under another consideration. I'm not even sure whether it is considered here, though we have v) `by granting them leave at times,' presumably for retreats!

But here the consideration is that you are suited to the work, not that the work is suited to you. That the work is suited to you, that is another principle, one could say. The question to be considered here is, are you suited to the work? Whether the work is suited to you, that is a separate question and possibly comes later.

And then, (ii) the Buddha says, `by supplying them with food and wages.' Let's see what the word for wages is; it's obviously of some interest. (Looking it up.) It doesn't look as though it's included. The word is vettena. The nearest we can get is veta, a word meaning `a twig' (laughter) - to be used in punishment? Recompense? That's strange. Maybe it's part of a compound phata(?) which means food. Vettena; I'll look it up under the compound.

Padmavajra: ... Do you want ...?

S: Yes, look up wages. That's English to Pali, isn't it? Look up wages and see what it says.

Padmavajra: Wage: vetena, vati(?).

S: It's the same word, vetena. Yes, it's not in the dictionary, then. I'll see if it's under the compound. Phata is, of course, rice, literally. Presumably originally your allowance of rice. Ah, here - yes, I see, vettena. Ah, that's interesting. Yes, in the text it's printed with two Ts but I see in the dictionary they've got it with only one T. It might possibly be under one T here. Ah, yes, they've spelt it differently: vetena, wages, hire, payment, fee, remuneration. The text spells it with two Ts but the dictionary spells it with one T. Anyway, it doesn't help us very much. It could mean food and wages, or it could mean, as it's a compound, food as wages. It doesn't actually say money. Wages can be paid in kind.

Prasannasiddhi: Do we know what kind of wages - whether they had wages in those days?

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S: It does seem that wages were sometimes paid in cash; especially I think from the Jataka stories, which tend to be a bit later, we get that impression. But how common cash wages were in the Buddha's day it's difficult to say. Rhys Davids in one of his books might have some information on that point. But it could be that often wages were paid just in food. That is still the case sometimes in India. Someone works for you and you just give them food and maybe a bit of pocket money.

But anyway it suggests that you supply those who work for you with what they require to live on. There's no actual statement of the principle, so to speak, in Western terms, `from each according to his ability and to each according to his need.' In a way it's implied, because you assign work according to their ability so from each according to his ability, and you supply them with food and wages. You don't say `in accordance with the amount of work that they do.' They do the work that they can, they are given the work that they can [do], and they are supplied with the food and wages which they need. So one could say the principle of `from each according to his ability and to each according to his need' is involved here, or at least implied here.

Dhammarati: Where is that principle, where did you derive it from? Is it in the Dhammapada?

S: Which one?

Dhammarati: `From each according to -`

S: The formulation is usually quoted as from Marx, but actually pre-socialist writers previous to Marx do use that expression. Marx certainly adopted it.

Devapriya: So the whole idea of commission would work against this?

S: Yes, would work against this. Yes.

Devapriya: Also somebody working four days, somebody working five days?

S: No. They would be working according to the amount of work that they were able to do, and they would be given what they needed to live on. But of course the business, from a business point of view, would need to take into consideration whether it could afford to maintain people on that basis. Because in order to keep the business going you would need them to put a certain amount of energy into it. Before the business could pay them what they needed it would need a certain [414] amount of work from them otherwise the business would not be able to produce the wherewithal to support them.

Devapriya: Or anybody else.

S: Yes. I mean, to give a hypothetical example, you could have, say, ten people working in a co-op, and they might pass a resolution that each person would work, say, one hour a week, and that they should pay themselves full wages for working full time. Would it work? Well, you can see at once it wouldn't! So there comes a point when you need a certain amount of work for, so to speak, a certain amount of support. There is a natural relation between them even though you are thinking in terms of supplying someone's needs and just allowing him to do what he can, so to speak. Do you see the point I'm getting at? I mean there is a connection, from this point of view, between input and output. You can't support too many full-time - you can't give - you can't speak in terms of full-time wages. You can't give more than a certain number of people all that they need to live on, unless either those people or other people are putting sufficient energy into the business for the business to be able to give them that amount of support.

Devapriya: You come primarily from the principle and then interpret it in practical terms?

S: Yes; yes.

Dhammarati: The communists actually [have an] intermediate stage, don't they? `From each according to his ability, to each according to his work.'

S: Yes, they do, yes; because they recognize that the communist state has not yet come into existence; that it's on its way, hopefully.

Dhammarati: ... It seems that you're applying this principle, the obligations in a master-servant relationship implied under a number of terms of socio-economic ...

S: This is what I said earlier on: the principles don't depend upon the implementing structure.

Dhammarati: Extending the Marxist argument here, there are particular elements in a capitalist relationship between the owner and the employee that in the long run aggravate egotism and alienation. You've got economic conditions there that so influence people that you're going to push them towards a certain kind of competitive egotism ...

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S: Well, every particular structure has its own particular dangers. For instance, supposing ownership is in the hands of the state, as it is in Russia: there also the dangers are of bureaucracy and all that sort of thing, stagnation.

Dhammarati: But, for instance, I suppose the pattern of ownership, in the Movement, anyway, is quite a specific one, and the relationship of the people working in co-ops to the money that [they earn] is quite well defined. I suppose that that actually has an effect on the attitude of the effect of the people working in the co-ops. Do you think that that in itself is a good economic relationship? Is it qualitatively better than some others?

S: Which one?

Dhammarati: The idea that the Movement owns all the resources, for instance, and the workers are only getting support, that none of them actually own the ...

S: Ah, the original idea with which the co-op businesses were set up was to support Centres. This was the reason for their being set up in the first place. Not primarily just to support individuals, especially inasmuch as individuals, especially Order Members, have it as their intention to use the business, regardless of structure, to support the Centre. So that was built into the structure from the very beginning.

Dhammarati: Do you see advantages in that for people involved in the structure?

S: There is an advantage, a very big advantage, inasmuch as they're not working merely to satisfy their personal needs. They're working, so to speak, for an Ideal.

Dhammarati: So does that imply that that economic structure as such is better than the economic structure that most people in this culture work in? - that you've actually got, if you like, ethical ... ?

S: Well, when one says better, it depends what one's criterion or standard of judgement is. But certainly from a spiritual point of view, or from a Buddhist point of view, it is better that the work which you do is tied in with that with which you are most deeply concerned anyway. If, for instance, you are involved, say, with a spiritual movement, you are working for that movement, you want that movement to succeed so you are involved in businesses which are trying to earn money so that that particular movement may be supported and flourish, and [416] incidentally you are supported. To support yourself is not the primary objective. I think this is quite important to spell out, say, to part-time workers, because there are quite a few people (I think this has happened in the case of people working in the Cherry Orchard) [who] just think of the co-op, or the particular business run by the co-op, as providing a quite convenient source of part-time work and a bit of extra money. But the primary interest is not to work, say, for the Cherry Orchard, [but] to run a successful restaurant which will make a profit and, in addition to supporting its workers, will be able to contribute to the Centre. But I think if one doesn't grasp this point - that the businesses were founded as means of support for the Centre and that one shouldn't really be involved in an FWBO co-op unless one fully accepts that and

is enthusiastic about it - if one doesn't understand and accept that, confusion is introduced. People may start thinking in terms of, well, the Centre draining the co-op. Well, that is nonsense, because the co-op was set up by the Centre for the sake of the Centre, primarily.

Devapriya: But is that to say that, from later developments in setting up other co-operatives, that their primary function, again, is to support the Centre?

S: Well, it is quite possible for people to set up co-ops the purpose of which is not to support a Centre but only to support themselves, [but] I think that sooner or later that co-op will turn itself into a business in the ordinary sense; because there will be no spiritual principle there, as it were. They won't be working for anything outside themselves.

Tejamati: Unless they were set up with the aim to provide support for, say, Mitra convenors or something like that.

S: Oh, that's something else. That's again part of, as it were, Centres - an objective outside themselves, not just their own personal support. But if they set up a co-op just to provide for their own personal support, I think this question of wanting more and more for themselves would automatically arise, and the people would eventually insist on wages and then more wages, higher wages unrelated to their work or even proportionate to their work. Someone might say, 'I'm more skilled, I should get more money,' or 'I'm the manager, I should get more money because I'm the manager. Not because I need it, just because I'm the manager.' And in that way the co-op principle would break down.

Devapriya: So whether it's specifically a Centre or not, there needs to be something greater than just supporting yourself on a spiritual basis.

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S: It would seem so, yes. I mean I haven't thought this out fully, but it would seem to be so.

Dhammarati: If that principle holds within the Movement - if you want a work structure that supports you in your efforts to grow - could you extend that and say that if you want growth to be as widespread as possible in society generally then some economic structures support it better than others?

S: Not necessarily just structure. It's a question of admitting this spiritual factor, and the structure and the product of the business organized in accordance with that structure being geared to spiritual ends. Because you could set up a limited company, but for the purpose of making money which could be donated, so to speak, to the nearest Centre. I mean the function and the purpose would be the same, even though the set-up was different.

Dhammarati: The pattern of ownership is quite different from that in the society ...?

S: Yes, but there would still be that spiritual factor and orientation.

Dhammarati: I suppose what I'm saying is that certain structures more appropriately express our spiritual orientation than others.

S: I used to think that the co-operative structure did. To a great extent I still believe that, but I begin to have some doubts, not about the structure itself but about,

perhaps, people's reaction to that structure and people's power to understand that structure and really make it work successfully.

Tejamati: I suppose when you start to deal with any business structure you do start to deal with people's reactions to that structure, which people obviously have according to their own previous conditioning. But if you actually talk about Right Livelihood, nobody has come across it before so nobody has any preconceived ideas about how they should be functioning.

S: I'm talking about the actual structure, regardless of what you call it. I just call it co-op type structure for the sake of convenience. I'm not thinking just in terms of people reacting on account of giving a wrong interpretation of the word co-op. The sort of reaction or attitude I'm thinking of could be present even if it was just called a Right Livelihood project or something of that sort. I'm thinking of the difficulty which people seem to experience in accepting an equal share [418] of responsibility. If you've got a co-operative set-up, then everybody has an equal share of responsibility, and if everybody in the co-op does not exercise their share of responsibility the co-op does not function properly. Whereas in the case of another type of business structure you've got, for instance - I don't know what the term for this would be - one person owning it and employing all the others. He's the one with the initiative, the drive and he just pays them, or you could say he bribes them, with money to work for him. The initiative and responsibility entirely rests with him. If they don't work satisfactorily he kicks them out. He hires and he fires. A co-op is not like that. So if the owner of the business doesn't work, he knows jolly well his business is not going to succeed. The responsibility is on him. And he just has to pay other people. But in the co-op responsibility rests with everybody. So if certain people in the co-op, or even a majority of people in the co-op, do not fully accept their responsibility to make the co-op a success, it doesn't work. And my doubt is that it is possible for eight or ten people to accept full responsibility for it. Part-time workers certainly don't seem to do so. Do you see what I mean? By co-op members I don't mean just people (I don't know if there are any such) who are nominally members of the co-op for certain legal purposes, but those who actually work.

Dhammarati: Partly what we're trying to do with this Movement is turn out responsible individuals. Is there are argument for accepting some of the difficulties that [the fact of some] people not being fully responsible brings [to] the business?

S: Well, if they are only difficulties - but if they cripple the co-op to such an extent it doesn't even function, it isn't earning much money, maybe you have to think of a more effective kind of set-up, even though it isn't ideally such a good one. I do know some capable people get really annoyed and frustrated by some of the co-ops, or the co-op structure, because it means that their hands are tied. They are capable; they want to get on with things; they know how to do them. But they are just held up by other people who have got equal rights, so to speak, or equal voice, let us say, but not that same sense of responsibility.

Atula: This has been the problem right the way through. At Sukhavati we were still arguing three years into it whether work was a benefit to people.

S: For instance, this is why, at the beginning, we thought in terms of co-ops being manned by Order Members who, since they were spiritually committed, could be expected to be responsible. Now we have got co-ops practically run by non-Order Members. So where does that leave you? You haven't got your fully committed responsible people to run the co-op. That sort of co-op structure presupposes that kind of [419] person. So if you haven't got in your co-op people of that sort, maybe

you'll have to adopt another type of structure. I'm only saying maybe. I'm not being very positive or very definite about this. I'm just airing alternatives as it were.

Devapriya: The other alternative would be for more Order Members, surely, to work in the co-ops.

S: Yes, this is obvious. I mean really work and really accept responsibility. But around the LBC there seems to be a surprising reluctance - at least as seen from a distance surprising - on the part of Order Members to do this.

Dhammarati: Yes, it's surprising close up.

Prasannasiddhi: Maybe we're also suffering just from the fact that there is such a high turnover of people in these different situations.

S: Yes, because experience is not accumulated and handed on.

Prasannasiddhi: So if all the responsible people from FBS who have been responsible for FBS over the last two years were still there, you'd have a team of perhaps ten or fifteen Order Members - all Order Members - who would be fully responsible, all quite hard workers, and they'd all know what they were doing.

S: I sometimes have had the impression in the past - [that] an Order Member working in a co-op would look around for a likely Mitra and as soon as he could he'd push the Mitra into the co-op to take his place and he'd be off. (Laughter.) That's the impression, maybe wrong, that I've had.

: Not so wrong.

S: Oh dear.

Padmapani: What about this - what about the element, Bhante, of even full-time people in the co-op but they are not staying very long in the co-op? Would that have a debilitating effect on the ... ?

S: Well, it seems to me, as Prasannasiddhi has said or suggested, that you really need in a co-op, for a co-op to be a success, not only committed people but they must stay quite a long time. That means that length of time is an integral part of commitment itself to the business. Whereas a lot of people seem to regard the co-ops, as I said, as convenient sources of part-time work and pocket money. And you're not going to run [420] co-ops on that basis any more than you are going to run Centres on the basis of a bit of part-time help from various people. In other words - wholeheartedness. When you consider how hard a man works who is running his own business - he really works; he thinks of it day and night, because he knows he's only going to make a success of his business if he works in that sort of way. But how many people working in co-ops think in that way? And the tendency, I assume - I'm not speaking from knowledge but only from knowledge of human nature - the tendency, I guess, will probably be for responsibility, real responsibility, to be left with managers and so on, even though the manager is not really the man with responsibility. He has a certain executive responsibility, but the actual responsibility for the co-op rests with everybody in the co-op, not just with the manager. He's not the boss. He's not the owner of the business. He's not the boss's representative - not boss in the sense of someone separate from the workers. He's the agent of the workers themselves.

Prasannasiddhi: I think one thing which would help this would be if the people within the given co-op were to share the same community. In that way they would develop a feeling for each other and then the people who were running the business would tend to become more supported by other people. It would become one whole sort of situation geared to running the business and living as a community.

S: Well, experience does seem to suggest that the best results are obtained, from all points of view, when the work team and the community more or less coincide.

Devapriya: There's some debate about that: whether it's, I suppose, a bit too intense for some people.

S: I'm sure it is! I don't doubt that for one minute!

Tejamati: Or maybe a little bit too narrow. It's like you - some people say you need splitting up ...

S: The 'in' term is 'incestuous'.

Tejamati: Well, yes. Do you agree with that? Do you think it has any merit, that criticism?

S: I think intensity is necessary to generate momentum and achieve results.

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Prasannasiddhi: And also, if the leader in it, or the leading Order Members, perhaps, in a particular co-op or a particular business were to...

Tape 18, Side B

... set up a community of people in that business - well, maybe they shouldn't expect too much initially; maybe they should look more, you know, slowly, not kind of making their workers work really hard, long hours and fully committed right from the start, but to think of maybe a few years or possibly a year or possibly two years, over which those people in their community and in their business would slowly learn more about Buddhism, and more about what's being done, and therefore be able to commit themselves more...

S: Well, this is being done already, or will be done, I hope, in the case of the Cherry Orchard; because there is going to be a Cherry Orchard community in one of the houses in Approach Road, and that, I hope, will be a step in that direction.

Prasannasiddhi: There does seem to be a bit of a tendency to - you set up a community, so you think the community should be perfect right from the start; whereas the idea of the community is almost that you are setting it up in order to create a perfect finished product. The process of changing the individuals within the community so that you do have a proper community seems to be half the idea of setting up the community in the first place. But you shouldn't expect the community to be perfect right from the start.

Devapriya: But, practically, to get anything off the ground you need a core of people working very, very hard to facilitate the latter developments, and I think one of the responsibilities that, I suppose, the spiritually committed in that situation have is not to leave; not just to bung a Mitra in at the first opportunity [but] train him up. You've got a responsibility to make sure there is a continuity of growth, which I don't think...

S: That he can at least take your place.

Devapriya: Yes, which I don't think many people really take seriously. I think that's quite a responsibility to your co-op - that you don't leave until...

S: To go back to the point I mentioned at the very beginning, I think it's very important for all those working in a co-op not to work in it simply [422] for the sake of the money. I think it's as simple as that, really, or a lot of it is as simple as that.

Atula: It does seem as though the co-op structure itself does call for a high degree of maturity in its workers.

S: Well, this is why we expected at the beginning that Order Members would man co-ops. But it's difficult to get, I won't say full commitment but a full expression of commitment, even from Order Members, not to speak of Mitras, some of whom have in fact done very well.

Atula: I was just thinking of just even two years. In two years ... developed ... nothing at all. It does seem as though in the Movement there's a hell of a lot of mobility, so people do one thing for six months and move on.

S: One possibility that is being considered is what Subhuti tells me is called the wholly-owned subsidiary: that is to say the business would be owned by the relevant Centre, which would of course take full interest in it and responsibility for it. That is an alternative. There are advantages and disadvantages. But it would mean that there was a definite body of people actually responsible and accepting that responsibility and implementing it.

Devapriya: That would seem to suggest that, say, in terms of co-ops around the Centre, the Council don't actually have that responsibility. It is more with the co-op.

S: At present. Yes, under this arrangement the Council would have the direct responsibility.

Padmavajra: Would Council members and co-op members be the same people?

S: Well, it would simplify things in that case if they just wore one hat instead of two. But anyway, this is just a possibility that has been mooted. I don't know whether anyone is going to adopt it. But there is this actual practical question [that] the co-op structure, however perfect ideally, does not work without all co-op members accepting responsibility for the successful running of that particular co-op business. I think people think that since it's a co-op and it's sort of idealistic and all that sort of thing, it's going to run itself and they don't have to do very much. Well, it is certainly not the case.

Devapriya: Two practical questions come to mind. Firstly, somebody [should] research - say I wanted to spend two years studying and to do [423] that I needed support. Well, how valid will it be for me to, say, work part-time? Again...

S: Well, it would be valid for you, but can your co-op manage with that degree of interest or participation on your part? In other words, how many part-time workers can a co-op support or include without the co-op itself suffering? If too many people are only working part-time and not really involved with the running of the co-op, the

co-op is inevitably going to suffer and the confidence of the few people who are running the whole thing may well be undermined.

Ratnapani: I think from experience the most important factor with part-timers is obviously one of numbers, but also [that] their attitude, when they are there, is full. And I get the impression in the Pure Land Co-op that - well, if they didn't have to do it, they wouldn't, but since they've got to they will, and they get the money and that's that. Which would be very disheartening for others. I've been working with a lot of volunteers and part-timers and all sorts on building, but they have all been enthusiastic. So it's excellent, and then it's fine.

S: If you get someone working just for the sake of a bit of pocket money, there'll be a sort of grudging attitude. They've got to come and work. They don't really want to. They need a bit of extra money, the co-op needs a bit of extra help, so they come along. That isn't really in the co-op spirit. And it's not going to be, in the long run, of much practical use. I definitely got that impression last year with some of the people working in the Cherry Orchard. There were reports which came back to me, mainly from people not really much connected with the Movement who had gone along and patronized the place and been served, and not very well served, or not even very well treated in a few cases. Clearly the problem was resentful workers, resentful staff. They didn't really want to be there. Presumably just there for the money.

Devapriya: So maybe, practically, rather than taking on a few people just for the help, to get the job done, you should actually allow it...

S: (interrupting) Do it yourself!

Devapriya: Well, do it yourself and accept that it will take longer but it will be a lot more sound. (General agreement.)

Ratnapani: We had this situation where we desperately needed people to work. A Friend wanted some money and asked if we could employ him but we said no because we didn't want someone who was only in it for the money. We just didn't want that sort of person around. We'd rather not do the job, almost.

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S: I think that's right.

Prasannasiddhi: In a way the money consideration should be quite low down in the values - well...

S: The ideal co-op member is the person who thinks: 'I'm involved with the Dharma, I'm involved with the FWBO, I really want to support the LBC. What is one way that I can do that? It being accepted that I also need something to live on but that what I really want to do is to help the LBC, OK, there's a vacancy in that co-op which is geared to supporting the LBC, so I'd like to join that co-op. Well, I like doing that work and I like some of the people in the co-op, and it's geared to supporting the LBC which is what I want to do. Therefore I would like to join that co-op and be a worker in it.'

Padmapani: But it does imply that you can't have rotten apples in the barrel.

S: Yes. I'm afraid there are quite a few rotten apples in some of the co-op barrels!

Padmavajra: So you come to the co-op primarily with the attitude of giving. You don't come at all with the attitude of [taking].

S: Certainly in so far as the LBC co-ops are concerned. Otherwise, if you're just living in the area, you are living on the fringes of the FWBO and you like it a bit but you're not all that involved and you think, 'Well, they're pleasant people, they let you get away with quite a lot, so it's quite easy working in one of their co-ops; and you get the money for a couple of days' work; well, OK, it's just down the road. They are nice easy-going people, they don't make you work too hard' - so, OK, you work a couple of days in the Cherry Orchard or somewhere else perhaps. That's not good enough.

Atula: The case now in the Cherry Orchard is that it seems to have taken a lot of beginners, which I think is quite good ...

S: Well, whether it's good or bad it's a question of proportion. If you've got too many beginners and not enough Order Members to give them contact, that's not a good arrangement. You'll spoil your beginners in that way. There are only two women Order Members working in the Cherry Orchard, and I don't think either is full-time, as far as I know.

Tejamati: One is full-time but the other one is very much part-time.

S: Now. So that's not a lot, with all those part-time workers.

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Devapriya: By extension, maybe, one could suggest - this would apply to joining a housing co-op, or the Phoenix Housing Co-op in particular - that unless one is in some way willing and able to contribute to the situation in one way or another then there's, sort of, no vacancies.

S: Yes, indeed. Otherwise you're just filling your barrel with rotten apples, and if you have got one or two good ones in the barrel perhaps they'll be affected. Even you may be affected and just get a bit disgusted, a bit disillusioned, and then you're not able to give of your best.

The Bengalis have a proverb which I always used to quote in India: 'Better no car than a bad car.' It's a bit like that with co-op workers.

Devapriya: Even if that doesn't happen, people are less and less going to want to give, because they're not having the inspiration, the vision of being co-operative.

Padmapani: This must be linked up with a strong community, then, mustn't it - this whole structure around the LBC?

S: Well, they are all interdependent, strong communities, strong Centres and strong co-ops.

Padmapani: Not just one particular strong Centre, in this case the ...

S: You said Centre. But there is only one Centre - the LBC.

Padmapani: Sorry, I mean Sukhavati community; only one strong community around that area. Or are all communities [strong]?

S: Well, the more strong communities there were, the better it would be.

Prasannasiddhi: I tend to feel that the aspect of community as part of a business is quite an important aspect. I think that the solid core of people in the business should not only be running a business and efficient at running a business, but they should also have an active concern with the actual people in the business. Because a business situation is - quite often the work isn't perhaps the most inspiring thing you could be doing, but the communication with the people in that business is something quite important. I think that the people running a business, as well as running a business, should also be in quite good contact with the members of the business and that may include being involved with them in activities outside the business, so that the communication within the business has more of a spiritual emphasis, as well as the work. It means then when you work you can work in a more [426] harmonious way. I think it helps with the workers being more keen to work if they are in good contact with the people running the business or leading in the business. It seems to affect the way they work, in a sense.

S: That means having an Order Member in the midst of Mitras, in practical terms, usually. I did get, at one point - maybe not so much now - the impression around the LBC that Order Members really would have liked to just hand over the co-ops to the Mitras, and sort of forget all about them and get on with their own interests; which didn't seem a very sensible attitude. But I did get this impression last year.

Tejamati: After Subhuti's article it did get a little bit like that.

S: Anyway, that's been corrected, I trust. Anyway, that has all arisen out of 'by supplying them with food and wages.' (Laughter.)

: Can we have an extra day on this?

S: Well, the principles are clear, aren't they? The most general principle of all is one which applies in co-ops, in communities, in the Order, the Movement generally; applies in everything: that you can't achieve anything unless you put yourself into it wholeheartedly. It shows itself when people try and set up a new Centre. They've got to go absolutely all out to set up that Centre, they've got to have no other interest for a few years. If you're trying to set up a new Centre, you've no time for private studies; you've no time to go to college; you've no time for girl friends, you've no time for boy friends. You've not got time for anything except setting up that Centre, and anything that is going to help you get that new Centre established and off the ground, so to speak. So with setting up a business that is going to be really successful: you've got to really put yourself into it. Or even running a big Centre like the LBC, not to speak of establishing it, even running it, some people - quite a good number of people - have got to put themselves into it wholeheartedly. It can't be just a part-time interest for the majority of people who are running it.

Devapriya: One thing that I see is that maybe instead of trying to expand everything in terms of the Centre we've rather got to come back on to our sort of foundation.

S: Well, you've got to do both, I'm afraid. But if the LBC doesn't expand it's not going to really succeed. It's got to expand. [There's] a lot of room for expansion. And more people have got to commit themselves to it, and therefore I don't feel that you can generate this kind of commitment and intensity of operating unless you live together [427] as a community. This is why I make the point that eventually the Sukhavati community will have to take over at least the main responsibility for running the LBC. It won't completely exclude other people who are not living in the Sukhavati community, but they will have the main responsibility. I think they'll have to take it on. Assuming, of course, that the community itself is in a position to do that. I think, apart

from that structure, apart from being part of a community or having a community as a sort of base, it is going to be very difficult, in fact probably impossible, I think, for the LBC to reach its optimum functioning, or even a considerably higher degree of functioning. There must be a number of people who are thinking about the LBC all the time and who are living together.

Devapriya: And dreaming about it!

S: Yes!

Tejamati: I do already!

S: Dreams, not nightmares!

Prasannasiddhi: Also I think there needs to be respect between different people around a sort of given situation (general agreement). Say you are involved in a business, it is going to mean that your energy is going wholeheartedly into that, and you use the bulk of your energy during a day's work and you just won't have the energy to put into the Centre.

S: This is where Order Meetings come in, and people being part of a regular Chapter meeting or regional meeting, and letting it be known exactly where they are at and what they are putting their energy into.

Prasannasiddhi: Then people will have to respect that and not get on to people that they should be doing more when they have done a good day's work. And, in a way, in the evening you can't do any more than rest. Whereas, like, people running the Centre, their energy goes in the evening. (Laughter.)

Padmavajra: That's ideal. It doesn't work in practice!

Ratnapani: No, I find it more fun, actually, to do a day's work and then a night's work after it. It's not ideal but it gets your energies moving. There's loads more inside people than they think, actually, and until it is demanded of them I don't think they realize it is there, half the time.

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Padmavajra: Maybe you wouldn't expect it of Mitras. I mean, we don't expect it of Mitras.

S: Well, you don't even expect it of Order Members, but if they are able to function in that way so much the better.

Ratnapani: It's a bit like karate, though, in some respects. You think you've got a certain limit, and then the sensei sort of persuades you to do some more, and you've done it and what's more it didn't hurt, and your limit is extended.

S: But you don't do it every day?

Ratnapani: Oh, well, no. Perhaps not every day.

Padmapani: In that case you have great respect for the teacher.

S: (interrupting) Yes, there has to be a teacher.

Padmapani: You know that that person has more experience than you, and if he says you can go further, you go further and you experience that.

S: Well, some people would say that you can't put your full trust in these karate teachers and yoga teachers and so on! They don't always know exactly where you are at. There is that point to be considered, too.

Ratnapani: I wasn't talking about pushing others, I was talking about pushing myself. Telling others that they can do a six-day week - I was talking about myself.

Devapriya: Showing yourself that you can do an eight-day week!

Ratnapani: I usually do.

S: Anyway, let's go on to the next point: 'by tending them in sickness.' Perhaps we don't need to go into this very much, because whatever I said in connection with the spiritual community when I spoke about 'A Case of Dysentery' applies to a great extent within the co-ops. You don't just abandon your workers, or workers don't abandon one another, when they fall sick. You support them. You go and see them, give them moral support, keep in touch with them when they're sick. Of course, no co-op that is wanting to function as a business can support too many sick people for too long. I mean you can't take on an invalid. It must just be a bout of sickness on the part of a normally healthy person. I mean you might, if they have to leave the co-op, keep in touch [429] in your personal capacity, but that's rather different. I mean the co-op would like to take a sort of humane attitude, but it can't go on supporting too many people who are off sick without the business, as such, just failing.

I think people must be much more conscientious, much more on the ball. This is going a bit off the track, but I was scrutinizing the auditors' report on Aid for India accounts, and it was really quite deplorable: people taking money out of the petty cash and not, say, putting a signed receipt or a proper voucher in, etc. etc. etc. - no need to go into details - but it seemed to be terrible slackness. And one can just see all that is tightened up. I suspect sometimes it is the same within the co-op.

Tejamati: Yes, it is, it's very difficult in some cases.

Devapriya: Maybe we can persuade you again to take a Co-op Day, or even weekend?

S: Maybe when I see the co-ops are functioning better, perhaps I'll be persuaded to. But I have laid down general principles, and I've got together with people from time to time. If they don't listen to what I've already said there is not much point in my going down and saying it all over again. I tend nowadays to take that view, as time is getting precious. 'To him that hath shall be given,' to quote the words of the Bible, '... but from him that hath not shall be taken away even that which he hath.' In other words it's the strong who are going to be helped, not the weak. If your co-op is sagging at the knees, don't ask me to come and help prop it up! But if it's really successful, I'll be glad to come along and...

: Rejoice.

S: - perhaps say a few words.

Padmapani: We certainly do rejoice in our merits for being invited on this seminar.

S: Good. Good. Anyway: 'by tending them in sickness' and 'by sharing with them any delicacies.' Well, one can imagine the original paternalistic context. But here it means, I suppose, that if the co-op has got a surplus - assuming the needs of the Centre are met - by all means give a bit extra to the workers, or the workers would be justified in giving a bit extra to themselves, but as it were equally. I say 'as it were' because it's not a question of a quantitative equality, of giving everybody exactly the same amount. But if there is anything over, say something for extras or - I won't say luxuries, but things which you could do without but which enhance life - by all means share out the profits among the workers. Or [430] the workers, as I said, would be justified in sharing it out among themselves. So that they gave themselves a bit more than the bare necessities of life. In other words, they would be able, it really means, not to indulge themselves in luxuries but to interpret their needs in, so to speak, a more liberal sense: that their needs were not simply shelter and food and clothing; their needs included books, their needs included tapes of seminars; and that money could be made available for the purchase of such things.

Tejamati: Ah! That's interesting. Are you saying that maybe it should not be included in basic support, that kind of thing? (Laughter.)

S: I'm not making any such statement! But I mean people need to be provided with food, clothing and shelter, and medicine, from a Buddhist point of view. Everything else is extra. But if the co-op is making a surplus, then the co-op member should feel at liberty to interpret 'needs' more liberally than just food, clothing, shelter and medicine, and provide money for books, flowers, incense etc. etc. Do you see what I mean?

Tejamati: ... to interpret that ...

S: But you would seem to be including already in basic support what would be included here under 'delicacies'.

Tejamati: Yes, yes, I see ...

S: You are already providing delicacies, as it were, as part of the basic support which, perhaps, they are really not.

Padmapani: It sounds like you are going to take part back!

S: In other words, you are almost adopting the Oscar Wilde principle that 'I can do without necessities but I can't do without luxuries'. (?) (Laughter.)

Padmapani: Classic, isn't it?

Ratnapani: And retreats, I suppose, go in with that level, for us, of a necessity?

S: Yes - no; I think that necessities are definitely material necessities, otherwise where is the end of the other necessities? I mean a complete recording of all Haydn's symphonies might be a necessity!

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Ratnapani: I meant with regard to retreats; in practice they seem to go in with the rest of it as a necessity.

S: I think this comes under another heading. It will be the next one. We might as well go on to that, then: 'by granting them leave at times.' It doesn't say anything about

paid leave; it doesn't say whether it's paid or unpaid. But 'by granting them leave at times'; and perhaps that could be included. I think from a Buddhist point of view it wouldn't be a truly Right Livelihood situation if from time to time it was not possible for you to be spared so that you could go on retreat. There might be times when you'd have to just work and forget about time off, and even forget about retreats, but not for more than a few months, at the very most.

Atula: You'd soon dry up.

S: Well, some people would; not necessarily everybody. Some people thrive on work, can't get enough of it. There are one or two such people even in the FWBO! (Muffled laughter.)

Anyway, let's knock off for a cup of tea now. I think we deserve it.

(Break in recording. When it resumes, para (i) and part of para (ii) of the next section have been omitted.)

But you see what I'm getting at? By way of a general sort of psychological principle - that everybody is holding back, everybody wants to do less, or everybody is afraid that he may be doing more than somebody else. So to counter that you should be thinking if anything in terms of doing more than others. Or at the very least not thinking in terms of doing less than anybody else.

Devapriya: Well, there's no stretch then, is there? - leaving aside other people, just try and do more than you are, you yourself, just...

S: You shouldn't leave things to other people. This is what happens when you don't accept full responsibility yourself. One does find this happening, I think, within co-ops. A lot of people perhaps are quite indifferent to the co-op as a whole, are just concerned with doing their bit and no more than is really necessary and just drawing their money and that's that. If too many people develop that attitude, it starts affecting others, and they start thinking, 'Well, those people aren't doing very much but they're getting their money just the same; why should I work twice as hard as they seem to be working? I'm getting no more money than they are.' That sort of spirit, that sort of attitude starts developing, and it's very undermining. So if you don't put yourself thoroughly into the co-op you'll always have one eye on the other man [432] to make sure you're not doing more than he's doing; and that's a really dreadful attitude in any such situation.

Atula: I don't think ... understand.

Padmapani: It does mean you've got to have a very thorough moral and ethical basis, and also there is an element of...

Atula: I'm not so sure that is true actually, that you've got to have - because some I don't know, it just seems that some people do have to put themselves wholeheartedly into things. They don't have to have some ...

: Well, they've already got it.

Atula: I don't know, it's...

S: You don't necessarily consciously think of the principles that you are putting into practice. Every time you tell the truth you don't think, 'Oh well, telling the truth is a

good thing and I've got to do that.' You just do it. You are trained to do that. The work of education has already been done.

Atula: Yes, because some people do actually just throw themselves into what they are doing. It doesn't seem often as though they have much thought about ...

S: Well, if you do throw yourself into things you don't need to think about it. But if you aren't throwing yourself into things then you need to think about it, so that you start understanding the principle involved and putting it into practice.

Padmapani: Maybe I was coming a bit from the negative, but it seems more like that: people need to be trained in moral and ethical values. I think you're talking about a minority.

Atula: Well, no, I don't think so.

Padmapani: Oh, come on, there's loads of...

S: Well, if you practise any moral quality naturally, you don't need to learn it, but if you don't, if you're not in the happy position of practising it naturally, out of your existing level of spiritual development, you need to learn it and you need to be taught it. And such people are in the majority.

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Padmapani: It is a matter of sometimes keep going back over the same ground.

S: Yes, and reminding yourself.

And then, '(iii) they take only what is given', which suggests they are satisfied with what is given. They don't try to take extra. There are all sorts of ways of taking extra: by arriving at work late; by going early; by borrowing money from the petty cash and forgetting to repay it. You actually take more than is given when you don't do a proper day's work, so to speak. You are not necessarily connecting a specific wage with a specific amount of work, but it's understood, if you work in a co-op, that you work wholeheartedly; that your day's work is a day's work.

Dhammarati: Is this sort of attitude only possible if you've got the reciprocity? I was going over ... was coming to the LBC, and he reckoned that it's an absolute mug's game; as an employer, the more and more he made available to them the more and more and more [they] ...

S: Well, I'm talking about the co-op situation specifically here. Very often, unfortunately, in ordinary businesses, it's a question of who can exploit the other party most. If that's the attitude it is a very bad working situation indeed for everybody concerned; and one that, as a Buddhist, one should get out of as quickly as possible. It mustn't creep into a co-op. It's again trying to do as little as possible, to get away with as little as possible. If you do less than is rightfully expected of you, then actually you are taking what is not given. If you know you've lengthened your tea break or your lunch break - all these sort of things - you're doing less work, you're putting less into it. It's a really quite sickening and quite disgusting attitude when people are always trying to give as little as possible, and put into something as little energy as they can possibly get away with. That's really bad. If you don't feel enthusiastic about what you're doing, get out. That seems to be the best thing you can do for that business perhaps, in the long run; just leave it, if your heart isn't in it and you can't really give yourself to the situation. That's not to say that you should be, that you can be expected to be, equally enthusiastic every day. You have your ups and downs as

a human being, but your intention is to put as much of your energy [and] work into that business as you possibly can. You don't want to hold anything back. You want to give as much as you can. It's really dreadful having people around you thinking more in terms of giving as little as possible.

Ratnapani: It is sort of disgusting, isn't it?

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S: Yes. Well, I mean, they've no self-respect. They're mean. They're cheats, you could say.

Ratnapani: They can't - there's not even communication with such a person.

S: They don't care for their fellow workers. They're selfish. They're individualistic. They're childish. They're infantile. One can say all those things - yes! (Laughter.) You can repeat this, if you like, and play this part of the tape back to them, if you know who those people are, if you can identify any of them.

Dhammarati: Does this principle have an application beyond the co-ops? Is this a way of improving a work situation? Can one ... employee take it upon himself to improve his work situation by applying these principles?

S: I think you can, but I get the impression - judging from things I hear on the radio and such things - that if one particular employee tried, he'd be very unpopular with a lot of his workmates. I have heard stories of new workers being told, 'Come on, don't work so hard, otherwise the boss will give us more work to do. You know, make it last the whole day.' And he wants to finish it in an hour. He feels like finishing it. He's got lots of youthful energy; and the other workers say, 'Slow down, slow down, you're going too fast. We don't want to be given any more work today.'

Padmavajra: I've actually heard that said in a co-op.

S: Oh dear!

Padmavajra: An Order Member told me that he was really working quite hard and he wanted to work hard, and the Order Member who was actually managing the business came up and told him to slow down, from the point of view that he thought he wasn't pacing himself properly; but, knowing that person, it seemed a bit suspect - it seemed as though he was holding back, a bit threatened by the fact that he was working so hard.

Dhammarati: I'm sorry to ... on this, but I just wondered what the implication is ... I know that that attitude of a feeling of caution isn't as bloody-minded as to some extent it [seems], because historically employers have demanded so much for so little.

S: Yes. Anyway, I didn't actually finish what I was going to say. If you are just one person, say, working in a firm, an ordinary business firm, [435] and you try to apply this sort of attitude with the hope of encouraging a more reasonable and human approach on the part of your boss, you may be able to do it if there are just a small number of workers and if you have direct personal contact with the boss. But I think if it's a big situation, a lot of workers already into bad working habits, and the boss is quite remote - maybe you never even see him - I think it won't work. I think, therefore, the best thing you could do would be to withdraw.

Atula: There's usually two levels - the worker and the management.

Dhammarati: And maybe it's too abstract. For me that raises the question that if you're talking about, in the long run, a new society, how do you change institutions like that? Most people work in those situations: how do you gradually get the shift from...

S: I think you can't, within that particular sort of situation, that sort of structure. You have to close the structure down. I mean how can you exert personal influence, especially personal ethical influence, if you can't even meet the people that you want to influence? Well, perhaps you could; perhaps you could insist on an interview with the boss. Some people have got more boldness and self-confidence than others. Perhaps you could; perhaps you're a good speaker, perhaps you could insist on meeting the boss and put it to him. You might even have some success. It's not impossible. You could try. You might find that bureaucracy bogged you down more than actual ill will.

Devapriya: Taking this particular situation of co-ops with regard to the Centre - if that is where they are giving their energy, moneys and so on, would the Centre Council be seen as the boss? I know this, maybe it's been a...

S: Order Members - they are responsible for the running of the Centre. They are responsible, I hope, for the running of the co-ops. The nearest Order Member is the man to see, I would have thought; especially, perhaps, one especially concerned with what you are actually doing. If you're a Mitra, you presumably have got those connections with certain Order Members. Or it could be that the boss, so to speak, in the administrative sense - but bearing in mind it's the co-op as a whole that has the responsibility for the co-op. If there is anything wrong with the co-op, in a sense, it is the responsibility of all the co-op members. There is no boss to go to except the whole of members of the co-op. It rests with them. Success or failure rests with them. Because even the manager is only carrying out their brief.

Devapriya: When you have that connection with a Centre, though, it's not autonomous in its own right.

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S: No, it's not spiritually autonomous, but it may well be, under the present set-up, organizationally autonomous. I mean the Council is not going to tell you which particular kind of beans to buy. It is not going to tell you what particular kind of beans is more profitable. If you have any doubts or complaints about that sort of matter, you will have to take it to the whole body of co-op members. No use carrying it to the Council.

Devapriya: I know in the past that was a split - [they] felt that there were orders coming down from above.

S: I'm afraid under the existing set-up people always seem to have this impression, even when it's quite false, or not justified, of orders coming down from above. I think this is part, very often, of people's own personal hang-ups, psychological conditioning and reactions and so on. But, clearly, if they have that impression, you have to do something about it to resolve it. But it very often is their personal problem. It can only be resolved if there is closer personal contact.

Devapriya: That's why it seems to happen ... under-communication ... very quickly.

S: It doesn't have to be communication about co-op matters but just communication on the personal level.

Padmapani: I think it's very much down to friendship.

S: Yes.

Padmapani: It is very much down to friendship. I experienced this up in Glasgow. A particular Order Member ... the building, in the Glasgow Centre and because I related through friendship he could relate to me, although he was having difficulties with everyone else, but that was all right.

S: Not that you knew more about such matters but just that you were better friends with him.

Anyway, 'they take only what is given.' The more positive counterpart of that is that they don't hold back. They put themselves wholly into the situation. And therefore, as iv) says, 'they perform their duties well.' Again, this goes without saying. Whether it's a co-op situation, a Centre, a community, put yourself thoroughly into it. Be a perfectionist.

(Break in recording.)

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.. nature is that people don't always learn very easily, and constant repetition of principles is necessary. I remember the time when the majority of Order Members - it was quite a small Order then - seemed to have great difficulty in distinguishing between your membership of the Western Buddhist Order and your membership of a particular Centre of the FWBO. This was explained over and over again. It was long, in the case of a lot of people, [before they could take it] in. Even at a comparatively recent date, some Order Members seemed to think that to resign from a particular FWBO was somehow tantamount to resigning from the Order. Someone, in fact, said to me that he didn't want to be involved with a particular FWBO any longer. And I said, 'Well, why don't you resign?' He said, 'Oh, I don't want to resign from the Order.' This is comparatively recently.

So I remember how long it took to hammer in this principle that your membership of the Order is quite a separate thing from your membership of a particular FWBO. You may or may not, as an Order Member, belong to an FWBO. The fact that you are a member of an FWBO does not make you any more of an Order Member than if you are not. It does not make you any less of an Order Member. It took years to hammer ...

Tape 19, Side A

S: So therefore, in the case of people working in co-ops, don't take it for granted that they understand all the principles involved. They may know nothing about co-ops or your conception of co-ops. You've got to educate them. You've got to go on repeating and repeating and dinning these principles into their ears until they are firmly implanted in their minds.

: In their subconscious minds.

S: Well, in their conscious minds first. Otherwise, Mrs What's-her-name living down the road who has started coming along to classes - she likes the FWBO; she doesn't even know anything about the FWBO except it's some vaguely Buddhist group - and she sees there's a vacancy in the Cherry Orchard, and she thinks it would be a good

idea to work there: as I said before, friendly people, a bit of money. What does she know about the principles of the co-op? Someone's got to explain them. And ideally that's an Order Member, a well-briefed Order Member. Otherwise, if the people working for - and especially working in - the co-ops as members of the co-ops don't understand the basic ethical and organizational principles in accordance with which a co-op functions, how can you hope to run the co-op successfully and have a general understanding of things and a good spirit?

[438]

Padmavajra: It seems to be the problem where the Order Members aren't actually clear on the principles.

S: Or not actually present. You've got a well-meaning, perhaps, Mitra, trying to give his or her idea of what a co-op is all about, and perhaps hopelessly wrong. So this needs to be looked after. Anyway, that was just in passing. And then, fifthly, 'they uphold his good name and fame.' I think this is important. And I think I'll come straight to the point here, because one does find sometimes people, say, working in co-ops just running down that particular co-op and grumbling; the same even with Centres and communities. So you should 'uphold the good name and fame' of your co-op, which doesn't mean blowing its trumpet unnecessarily or taking an exaggerated view of its importance or beauty, but being proud of it. I mean if you're not proud of it why do you belong to it? You shouldn't work for something that you can't feel proud to work for. You shouldn't have to feel apologetic about your co-op or your Centre or your community. If you feel that way, well, do something about it, quickly, to raise the level, so that you can be proud of it and speak well of it. And I would apply this principle to the FWBO generally; if you can't feel you can speak well of the FWBO when you go outside, feel proud to belong to it, well, what's the point of belonging to it, unless you're prepared to make a really all-out effort to raise the level? Do you see what I mean? But don't take the attitude: 'Oh, it's not much of a co-op, and, yes, there's not much going on, people are pretty awful but anyway I'm working there for a while, just for the time being. Just need a bit of money so that I can go to Greece.' You should be proud of your co-op and proud of working in it.

Devapriya: Or if you do have criticisms you are willing and able to do something about it.

S: You don't air it outside the co-op; you bring it up in the proper place to the proper people, with the idea of whatever is wrong, if it is wrong, being rectified, in everybody's interests.

Anyway: 'The servants and employees thus ministered to as the Nadir show their compassion towards him in these five ways. Thus is the nadir covered by him and made safe and secure.' So there is quite a bit here that is relevant to co-ops. You could give a whole - well, you could probably give two lectures, two talks at least, on these two groups of requirements. Perhaps one of you will.

Right, let's go on to the zenith.

[439]

In five ways, young householder, should a householder minister to ascetics and brahmins as the Zenith:

- (i) by lovable deeds,
- (ii) by lovable words,
- (iii) by lovable thoughts,
- (iv) by keeping open house to them,

(v) by supplying their material needs.

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