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- P1 This place has become less Buddhist over the years, I have noticed.
- P2 What would you define as a Buddhist conversation?
- P1 There are different types of Buddhist of course.
- P2 That is a problem to start with. We can sit and talk about doctrine.
- P1 Or chanting, how many chants have you done?
- RW Well the Christians do that too. There is a record out now of Cistercian monks; it's getting towards the top of the charts.
- P1 I was reading a book by Eckhart Tolle¹ about how it is slowly but surely spreading round the world, a better consciousness.

RW It's true, in many different ways, if you can only recognise them. There is a basic, sort of instinctive, movement taking place to a certain level in people; it isn't being taught, it's coming out of them, that is why they are seekers, otherwise they wouldn't be seekers.

"There has got to be something more", which of course there is. It is becoming more light now, spreading throughout the world. Though on the surface it appears to be the opposite, definitely, on the surface it would appear to be the other way around.

(Laughs)

<Break>

RW The 'Dhammas', as such, are those things that recognise the causes of things, whereas 'dhamma' suggests the doing of them, without necessarily recognising any causes at all, "I'm hungry, I'll eat", whereas the 'Buddha dhamma' is the recognising of the basic causes of how your mind works, and how you attach onto things, or let them go, as the case may be, or become averse to things, and how you begin to form the conceptual area of the mind whereby you judge things as right or wrong, good or bad: this is what 'Buddha dhamma' is.

But to "do" unknowingly, is just plain dhamma.

Dhamma means doing. Buddha dhamma is recognition of the doing and is a different thing altogether.

<Break>

RW You can say about this two things: there is Buddhism which is a belief system and there is the way of the Buddha, which is a recognition system, which is totally different and does not need any of the book learning at all. When you get book learning you get a belief system rising out of it, which is a different thing altogether, and at the very best will only go as far as (to create) an even state of mind for a short period of time, Samatha, which you have to keep renewing because it is conditioned, as opposed to Vipassana which leads to the opening of the mind to see things clearly, and which does not require any historic material whatsoever.

¹ a German-born (1948) writer, public speaker, and spiritual teacher

Buddhism is learning; the way of the Buddha is not learning but being.

Christianity is a belief system until you reach the point, by chance usually, of recognising yourself, (inaudible). Christianity does not recognise the oneness, it is always separate, it is dualistic, which is distinct from what the man said. He said: "I and my Father are one". But does not Christianity say when you die "he sits at the right hand side of God the Father Almighty"; separate, not as one at all. Here we have a belief system.

P3 Isn't that because of the state Jesus was in when he was alive.

RW They are talking about Jesus as a man and God as a spirit, and they are separate and always will be. They are not talking of the Christ spirit that entered into him which was still the Father. It is the Christ that matters, not Jesus.

P3 They rely on the Gospels and the quotes from Jesus.

RW What you have is a pseudo spiritual area which in truth is a political one.

P2 If you have oneness you have the possibility your congregation may through the principle of gnosis acquire oneness without you being an intermediary.

RW They don't want that because then they have lost the power.

P2 That's why they decapitated so many Gnostics.

RW Because they were on the right track and the Cathars also got it right, and they had to murder the lot of them.

P1 There is a lot being said about the Black Death right now, someone has written a book and there is discussion going on, and that it was one of the factors that broke the power of the church.

RW From that you get a division, the Protestants, because they saw the church was rotten.

P1 The church could say we will pray and it will be fine, but the Black Death came along and they prayed and they were shown to be, well..

RW No power whatsoever.

P1 And then they lost a lot of power.

RW And were shown to be corrupt within the church. This is where you get one or two sects coming out because of one or two enlightened people who saw things differently and the Quakers come along, and the Methodists, coming from persons who are semi enlightened, mystics.

Germany and Austria produced quite a few, and France.

P4 And the Orthodox Church in Greece and Russia.

RW Ah, a different church, the Roman church is corrupt, the Eastern Church is the true one, and it has remained true right from the beginning. The Eastern Church to this day is still true.

P4 I read the book of an orthodox priest and if I had come across this earlier I would have been more friendly to the teaching of Christ than I have been, but I have come back to it

now, having first learnt meditation from the Buddhist perspective the Christian way resonates a bit more now.

- RW A number of people have found this: that with Buddhism they clear a lot of things out of the mind and the mind gets more clear and then they see Christianity differently and they go through it and it becomes something very real. It would appear that Buddhism is a step into the Christian. Buddhism deals with the physical side of life and when you see things properly you can recognise the spiritual side of life and follow that, and it means something and it's not a belief anymore, not a belief.
- P3 When you said earlier Buddhism came to the frontiers of Europe, I was wondering about Sufism which is above any sort of "religion", the Sufis say "come to me all creatures of God". Did the teachings from the east creep into it I wonder?
- RW There is very much a mixture here. I do not think any is totally separate from one another
- P3 At that level they all meet
- RW Oh they do, very much so, go back beyond Buddhism, the furthest we can trace is Zoroaster, I would say, and the line comes down from that. That would explain Jesus and his birth and the 3 wise men from the East who were not looking for the Christ but for the coming back of Zoroaster. Yes, which to a degree it was, the child borne as Jesus was covered by the spirit of Zoroaster, and it was through the spirit of Zoroaster that the boy of 12 was able to teach the priests, it was Zoroaster talking through him. So the wise men were correct, but the story is they were worshipping Jesus. Then of course the spirit is only there for a limited time then the spirit of Zoroaster leaves him, and he is taken over for a very short period of time by the spirit of Gautama the Buddha, and the Christ spirit then comes along at the end of the life and enters the body at the point of death, yes entered only at the point of death because had it entered earlier the body couldn't have contained it, it was such a powerful entity. But to Jesus (are attributed) the words rather than (to) these other entities that gave the teaching. He was the messenger, which does not really matter provided the message is received, it does not matter who it is that carried it.
- P4 Was Jesus aware?
- RW Yes he was aware.
- P1 What happened after Jesus died, what was operating then during the resurrection?
- RW This was the shadow of Jesus himself for the first time, through his death, and the close proximity to the Christ entity that enveloped him before entering into the body, it was through that he became..., as he said at the end, something like, "my God my God why hast thou forsaken me" and then just prior to giving up, "it is finished." That was the recognition and it was the enlightened spirit of Jesus that came to show himself.
- P1 Yes, and it was so powerful it could appear as if alive?
- RW That's right. But you see the work had been done by then because the spirit, through the blood, had entered into the earth anyway. That was the whole process: the sacrifice was not Jesus, but the Christ, moving from his celestial sphere into the earth, which is why to this very day, having penetrated through all the earth, and back out again, through every part of the earth, there is the thing arising in people today recognising there is something more of the spirit arising, which is the next point of evolution of man beginning to recognise he is a spirit entity rather than a physical body

P1 Until now it has been covered in dogma.

RW There is something within people which is beginning to show and it is throughout the world people beginning to recognise there is something beyond what we appear to be. That question, "Who am I" is beginning to arise that originated way back there and stimulated that aspect that was dormant within which is now being woken up.

It is far deeper than you think it is.

P5 When you said earlier there is more of a positive spiritual attitude in the world, yet it appears the opposite, is it because of where the focus of attention is, of the media...

RW It probably needs to make itself more visible in order for people to turn away from it.

P5 It is becoming...

RW It is becoming unacceptable, the terrible side of the man himself, which, let's face it, is not very pleasant at all, which means it has got to get worse before it is recognised

P6 In terms of my memory it does not seem to be any different now than it was 20 years ago.

RW The point is, all the while you have man, as man, you have problems, because he is not a creator, he is a destroyer.

P6 Is that because he has a creative side he also has the reverse too?

RW He cannot accept things he does not want, but he is able to destroy these things, and that is not a good thing, he's got to learn to live with them, only then can he make something of himself.

If you like to take the Biblical aspects, the Israelites going into Palestine, "here is the land in which you may dwell." Never did he say, "This is your land", but man possesses it for himself, and that is where he goes wrong, "I make that", "This is mine".

There is nothing which is his; he comes in with nothing, he goes out with nothing. How can he possess anything? He can have the use of all these things, of course he can, but he should not claim them as his own, because he could not make them himself anyway.

The Indians of North America, and Eskimos, had it better, "the Great Spirit created everything": it all belongs to the Great Spirit, and we can have the use of these things, we do not own them. Therefore when we use them we must pay our compliments, as you might say, and give our thanks for the blessing of the use thereof.

Not a bad way of seeing things, but other people say "this is ours, you can't have it", and this is where things go wrong. And whether primitive or highly evolved, you still could manage that, all we need is a degree of comfort, putting straw or skin over a rock to make it comfortable to sit on, you build a cave instead of finding one, we live in caves, manmade caves, we haven't come all that far that we don't need them now

We eat and drink to keep ourselves going, we need company, and to keep warm in winter, none of these things have changed, but the methods of achieving them have changed, and are they necessary and for the benefit of everything and everybody? No. Usually it is by doing somebody down that you get on, which is not very clever, is it? And being by nature lazy, we develop tools to make life easier, and gadgets to save time to have more time to laze around, only there is a big snag to that, it does not realise what it is doing for quite a long time, and suddenly it realises the tools it's made for time saving, and the

methods of communication, it suddenly realises it is the slave to these things and they are not his servants any more, it can't be lazy anymore, and that is why he is very dissatisfied, he has got to keep working more than he ever did and harder than he ever did and he thinks, this is progress. (There is) something wrong with the thinking somewhere. He has to accumulate more and then he has to earn more in order to safeguard what he has accumulated. Who possesses what, or do things you possess you, to make you their servant? It's a cockeyed world isn't it?

P1 The monk who came, X's friend, was he in Thailand?

RW Yes.

P7 Was he in New Zealand?

RW Yes, he set up a monastery in New Zealand. He is quite an intelligent man, he went to a University, and he spent time in the army, and was up to the rank of Captain, and was in action as well, and left the army and took the robe. He's been round the world a couple of times and started this monastery in New Zealand, and advises in quite a number of monasteries in Thailand, and he's taken one or two pilgrims on a trip to India; that is how X got to know him.

P8 How old is he?

RW He is about 45 years old. He must have had something going for him as he had a bursary from the King of Thailand to enable him to go to University in the first place.

He was here in December, and now he has come back over from Thailand, and he came here in particular to see me, and at the present moment he is in Wales with a group of people.

He is quite a remarkable man actually, a very remarkable man. It is quite strange actually, when I see him it is like meeting my own brother.

P3 He has a very light quality.

RW Yes, but he does not have it all his own way, he also has cancer, cancer of the liver. He is not a well man at all.

He is a natural, you might say.

P3 I have asked you this before but I will ask it again. There is this strange feeling of being beside the body and the body is just nothing

RW It is not that important, though it's important as a vehicle; in its own right it is a no-thing. As far as the consciousness entity recognises it, it is just a vehicle, no more so than a car or a bicycle

P3 It shows me that the body is inhabited by something else, consciousness is not of the body.

RW That's right, to a degree it (the body) is inert though it has its own life span, though it is not conscious in its own right, consciousness operates through it, and true consciousness is separate, though it operates through it all. That's what we are: consciousness, not physical bodies. It's not easy to explain that one.

(Laughs).

P3 Are we all part of the same consciousness?

RW Consciousness is the be all and end all and these things are constructs out of that consciousness, and necessary for the while, and useful in that sense, because you have duality rather than unity, and you can learn far more quickly from duality than you can through a unity process.

I would maintain that these animal bodies have no particular intelligence of their own but the consciousness is the intelligence itself, and since consciousness was there before the body, the body does not create it, though we might have assumed it does.

P3 Where does instinct come from?

RW. Instincts are direct recognitions of consciousness itself rather than the body, surprisingly.

It is not an easy thing to find that the consciousness and the thought activities, or physical activities, are not the same; it is not easy to discover that. But, with a little care, particularly in the sense that when you find yourself thinking thoughts that you wish you did not have, and which you can't get rid of, as happens to everybody at some time or another, if they give that a little bit more attention they find it's as though there is two of you. There is a bit of you observing the chaotic state of mind and the content of mind, and there is the content state of mind itself, as 2 separate units. You find within the thought mind itself there is an emotional attachment which gives it a strength and a flavour, as you might say, whereas the consciousness aspect which is observing it, it is almost as if it is saying "what's this all about, we don't really need this."

Have you noticed that, at some time or another?

The nature of the thought aspect is chaotic, with of course its addition of emotion, but the nature of the observing aspect of consciousness is quite peaceful and not concerned at all other than with "what is going on?" So it remains at peace and isn't disturbed at all.

These are 2 direct opposites, and which one are you? Are you the observer, or are you the doer? If you are the doer you lose this aspect of consciousness of being that, and that's it, you are back into it, but if you accept that you are the watcher instead, then you begin to see it is not "me", it's a process going on over which I have no control.

Now we are beginning to see I am not that which is going on, which previously I thought that I was, and this is where ego begins to diminish. We are not too sure what this is, but gradually we begin to realise that consciousness is what I truly am, not this chaotic condition, whereby any external thing can start this whole chain of thought and emotions to start going on, because it has already been conditioned to respond in that way. And it's nothing to do with you at all.

When you can remain back in the conscious observer, then gradually, the clockwork begins to slow down and doesn't get wound up again.

(Laughs)

And so we begin to get free of it, and as it slows down we can see it more clearly and see it is no way to go, and just leave it be, let it die, and so we get clear of it by being purely conscious, and then you realise the consciousness is a flow taking place from somewhere other than oneself, here, so it is something which is flowing through, and eventually you come to see it is out of the universal itself that it flows and not from me.

I and my father are one, I am part of that, it is not other than me.

A strange identity when it is not a me anymore.

(Laughs)

A joke isn't it?

But as one begins to appreciate it for what it truly is and see the benefits that have already arisen in the sense that one is already living more peacefully within oneself and with those around us, then one can let it go further, and one does, you don't make it go, it does it for itself, until it clears you through as a whole channel. So the greater aspects of the greater consciousness operate through this minor one here, until the 2 become as 1.

Call it God if you wish, it does not really matter when you think that in the Hebrew sense, God, from which we get that word, means the indefinable, that which cannot be known or understood.

We have the universe of consciousness which is not easy to understand, and yet we can know. Strange isn't it? If we regard it as empty, like the space in the room is emptiness, you are very well accustomed to it, you know what emptiness is, but how do you know?

Do you think it's empty? You don't, because empty is only a word, it is meaningless. Is it possible that within the consciousness of the mind itself it is empty of all ideas and concepts and knows the spacious element of being empty itself, so that the 2 are as one, and you actually experience empty, just for the moment, "oh yes I know". It does not need a word, does it?

In a biblical sense we start off with something of this nature, "In the beginning there was a blankness on the face of the deep". A strange expression meaning emptiness, or no-thing – yes? Then comes the word, a vibratory sound, and the word was God, "was God", not God produced it.

So in the aspect of so called creation we appear with God before we get anything else, apparently, then you go through the whole lot, let there be light, let there be this and so on and so forth, for the so called six days and the seventh day rest.

Now here is a strange thing, what was a day in those terms which are purely celestial. We know a day because it is the time for the earth to revolve around once, relative to the sun, day and night, whatever. There were not any things, no, so is a celestial day umpteen billions of years, not just a day of our week? So it could mean 7 aeons of time, a celestial week, not our week of 7 days. So we get an alteration here, 7 physical days, because that's the only day we know, is not right is it.

So this God created everything. Created everything. Out of what did he create it? There wasn't anything there? Is it possible there was only that conscious element of space itself that manifested itself rather than create something separate, so that nothing that is manifest as physical, be it sentient or insentient, that isn't part of that one thing? A bit like couch grass, you know, there is one root a mile long and umpteen tufts of grass and each tuft of grass saying "I'm separate from you". Are we not all that one consciousness? Is it a possibility?

I got this a few years back; otherwise it would be one of those mysteries. It came into my mind, something that I had been taught from the Bible when I was a little boy, "Not a bird falls from the bush that the Father isn't aware of." (Matthew 10:29) And when it came into

my mind I pondered, what's all this about? If this had been created, the bush, the bird, whatever, that is just one of billions in the world, how could it (God) know so many if they were all separate creations? But, if they were all manifestations of itself it would be impossible not to know.

So there was no creation, just a manifestation of that aspect of spirit, no matter what form it takes, no matter whether it is sentient or just a bit of rock, it makes no difference, it is the spirit from which it came. So everything you touch is God, everything you see is God, God in terms of the unknowable, the conscious spirit, the great spirit, which is manifest in every way.

Now here is a possibility, something to ponder, to see whether it be true or false. Don't believe because I am saying it that it is the truth. I am putting it up as a proposition to ponder. See how true it may or may not be. It is only one aspect of course, but it is worth a try.

So there is nothing which is not in these terms a holiness. Now, when we look at this as a form of manifestation, does this argue with the Buddhist aspect, because there is an unborn, uncreated unmanifest, there is that which is born, which is created, which is manifest. There is your void, there is your creation.

Again compare it to the atomic theory, there is no such thing as a solid, it is just electrons and protons whirling around so fast they create the illusion of a solid, that is science for you. So again this aspect, "the word" in Christian terms, protons, neutrons, the nucleus of an atom; so science, the bible, Buddhism, 3 different ways of seeing the same thing. Is it not possible that all things are as one?

Again, here and now, in this very room, everyone of you in this room is aware of the others, particularly me since I am doing the talking, as usual, a bit of a gasbag really. But you "sense feel" the nature of what is here, do you not? How can you be conscious over there of the nature over here? It is true isn't it, you are aware of it? But how is that possible if these (*bodies*) are separate?

Alright, the manifest part is separate, because this is this body here, and this is different from that, that's true, but we don't altogether live in that area, we live in the thought area of separation because thoughts are about things, they are not of things.

But when we live we feel, and here we have "of things" and not "about things". So we experience that it is over there or wherever, it wouldn't matter if it was a cat or a dog, you feel for them, a person you feel for, a tree at times, if you look at it, you do "sense feel" there is a living aspect there, if you can allow yourself to do that. So is there a oneness after all and can we live with that more closely? And aren't we much more attuned to life itself rather than being at odds with it? Life is in feeling, it is not in thinking. Again this is where Buddhism is a belief system and nothing to do with what the Buddha taught, which was to clarify the mind and see things clearly for oneself for what they truly are, and then, "ah, it's not separate from me. I am."

P1 I was playing some games today, it's something that's been on my mind for a while, it's a silly example, a very silly example, where you are talking about instinct and consciousness, and I'm getting to realise more and more how consciousness knows if we just let it come out and do it for itself.

RW That's right, consciousness is spirit.

P1 Even in playing a game on the computer, if I use thought it does not work, if I use instinct or consciousness to do it...

RW Unless there is feeling there is no understanding, is there?

P1 ... it just works, it just does.

RW When you learn to feel these things then you have understanding and can work with it, but if it is just "upstairs" it is just confusion.

Let's face it, feeling is the key to appreciating consciousness because consciousness only knows things through feeling, whether it be coarsely, or extremely finely, or anything in between, it only knows feeling, it does not know anything else.

P1 When you say we are aware of each other, and we are aware of you, of course, the feeling is right, that's why we are relaxed. If the feeling wasn't right we wouldn't be here basically.

RW It is not a bad thing just to learn to allow feeling to take place, in the sense of being conscious, rather than demanding to see or know something. If you only look at a blank wall, so called, you see just a blank wall, but if you quietly gaze at it without any thing in mind you'll see a lot of little impressions in the wall you never knew existed because it will show itself to you when you are just conscious, the same way as other things will show their nature to you if you are just conscious. If you are demanding something you will only get what you demand and it won't be what is really there.

That is why if you truly give your full attention, and I mean full attention, to you, or you, or you, or whatever you are dealing with, if only for a second or so, just that, without any thought all, your full attention, this, it is there, you'll find you give yourself to that person, and there is only that person, nobody else, and that person will blossom in that moment because they see you then and they welcome that, and what you find in actual fact is that in the seeing there is only that which is seen, so if you have no concept or idea, then you see things truly for what they are.

P1 In a funny way it is almost as if suffering is a result of the conflict between thought and ...

RW It is, it is moving away from being truly conscious of things, it's moving away into ideas, of separation, it doesn't work.

This is why with empathy, as you might say, a person who lives in empathy, will pick up other people very very easily, their troubles as well as their joys, and share precisely what they are going through; not necessarily their thoughts, and not necessarily wholly their emotions, but they come to know them, and that way you know people better, you know what makes them tick, you can accept them for what they are, because usually speaking they are not very happy with themselves. Tell me somebody that is happy with themselves. Difficult isn't it?

I might feel OK, here and there, even though it's only temporary, and it doesn't last very long and very few can stay that way.

So you see it is a "feel" thing as much as anything, all the time

P8 It's interesting, last week... my flat is not very big and it's what you would call packed. Everything has a place... because there is not enough room I suppose, and I suppose all my life I've always been trying to...other people who have these places where everything

is put away... I've always.. I suppose part of me has been trying to sort of...eventually one day have this kind of place where things... I'm not saying everything is put away, that's not me, but most is put away, and I just don't have the room. But one day last week I suddenly thought I like my flat and I don't mind my clutter and I like how it is, because I also keep thinking Feng Shui, these things shouldn't be there, you know, but the thing is, they are essentials, I don't have... anything....there is nothing except... you know, I don't have anywhere to put all my pans so they are all hanging up on the walls, and there is no, there is nowhere to put anything. And, but I suddenly thought , I like my flat and I like how it is and why am I trying to make it something different?

RW That's a good point, a nice way of putting it.

P8 I felt at home, and all these years I've been trying, thinking one day, one day, one day, you know, I just thought I'm comfortable with my clutter, it's my home and it feels home.

RW Look, if it were the other way round you wouldn't be very happy, it's better to have a bit of clutter about

P8 Yeah, it's not big clutter, but I don't, that was the first time I thought " I accept me" instead of trying to change, or to be how other people would like, you know, a perfect, being somebody else. It was a really nice feeling, thinking "No".

RW That's good. Excellent, I like that.

P1 On the opposite side of the coin I have been de-cluttering nonstop.

RW We're much the same we get cluttered up and every now then we tidy up the clutter, we don't get rid of it.

(Laughs)

P1 I feel more at ease now that all the dust and the clutter and the rubbish has gone

P5 Russell do you have any observations about our visitors last week?

RW What do you mean, observations of what?

P5 Do you think they enjoyed it, the 2 bhikkus, it seemed to me they did?

RW It started in December, last year, Sudhiro ² came first, and as a result of that he wanted to come back again to confirm what he saw, which he did. I know what he did because of the way he handled me afterwards. Did you ever see bhikkus hug anybody?

P5 No it was remarkable.

RW Does that not tell you anything?

P1 What was that bit?

P5 The bhikkus sat in their robes all through the meeting, quite separate, but then at the end they could not have been closer to Russell.

² Ajahn Sudhiro: Watpah Kanjanabhisek, Thailand; Sammapatipadarama Monastery , New Zealand.

RW They hugged me in actual fact. You can see in that picture he's got his arm round my waist. Bhikkus don't do that.

P5 Yes I thought that was very striking.

RW Anyway there you have it, they were quite happy with what they found anyway. We did have a few words which I'm not going to repeat, in which we found ourselves in total accord, put it that way. A very good man, a very good man.

It is the first person I have met where I have been able to communicate fully like that. I never met anybody else I could do it with. Ever. So yes I think he was quite content with us. I'm quite happy about it too, how could he not be. We'll probably hear some more about it in due course.

When he came along last week I invited him to take over the meeting, and he said "no, you do it," meaning he wanted to listen. I didn't do it deliberately, it's only because he wanted that. I admit the first time I met him I did it deliberately, which I've done with other Bhikkus, merely because I wanted them to see what went on here quite honestly without any..., because it is different to anybody else, as you know, and them to see and to judge it. I wanted their judgement quite frankly, so the first time it was like that, but the second time he wanted it, not me...

(Laughs)

... which speaks for itself.

The way we work is different here, we don't work on words or ideas, in the sense of "this is what the Buddha did, or what the Buddha said", or anything of that nature, though we may refer to it from time to time, or to somebody else for that matter but words really are meaningless as far as that goes, it operates differently, on a feeling basis, so that you can come to see from within yourself, gradually, as you cool down and you relax things begin to arise and you see, or as a result it may be a day or two later.

It is nothing to do with teaching, I don't teach. You know that don't you?

P5 Yes

RW I don't teach anything. That is why we can have such diverse aspects of conversation from time to time, because it is all leading to a degree of rapport, and that means most of all, because out of that rapport *you* become at one with yourself, and in that oneness of self things begin to happen.

But nobody else works in that way to my knowledge. It is all intellect, intellect, intellect.

P1 It is almost as if you start teaching and then there is a separation.

RW You begin to become more natural to yourself you see and this is the way it should be, to my mind anyway, because you are the source of anything you need to know, not me.

That is the way you come to it, by gently accepting.

So it is a tuning in process that operates more than anything else

P5 Yes

RW As a matter of fact, one of the things about Sudhiro, he says that when he was a lad his mother taught him so very much, she was a devout person, in Buddhist terms, and she taught him so much and it was why he took the robe eventually, and one of the things he said to X after the first meeting was strangely, "listening to Russell was like listening to my old mother."

P5 Well that's rapport.

RW I'm glad about that, in a strange way. There's been a momentous meeting, as you might say. It is probably something that he has not found anywhere because it is all teaching by rote, unfortunately, but we don't do that.

P1 I am surprised actually, I would have thought that he would have received his experience and would have met people...

RW He'd come along a traditional path, and it works, of course it works, but you've got to give yourself fully into it and take it past the teaching stages, it's got to be brought inherent within you. I came to that in a totally different way without any knowledge of "Buddhist" whatsoever, and I saw the same thing, consequently we fit together like a hand in a glove.

Here you have people from a different country, a different tradition in every way, they in the robe with their rules and goodness knows what, and the strict formalities you are aware of, and suddenly it's all dropped, it's like family, family in the dhamma as you might say, family in spirit as much as physical, it is really wonderful when that takes place.

And of course I'm not really a Buddhist anyway.

(Laughs)

But I suppose in their sense maybe I am.

(Laughs).

A bit of a joke in many ways. We've never, right from the beginning, in the Society as such, we've never called upon the Sangha for anything, we have assisted in establishing the Sangha in the early days, it was set up from here the original Sangha Trust from which we found enough money to find a house, and so on and so forth, which gradually emerged into the Sangha itself as an English situation, though, we never invited them here to teach at all, we invited them here to give them a rest and weekends away from the hustle, from time to time, to go back refreshed, but we haven't asked at any time for them to come and teach.

If we can't do it, as well, then we are not worth being here, and we've proven it over the years. So today they come if they want to come, not because we invite them.

And of course, this, has been allowed to develop in its own way rather than by tradition, which is again different, and totally independent of any other outfit, which is the way it should be, I think.

To some degree, we hope, we've helped to establish an English tradition rather than an eastern one. And obviously it works, and that is the only thing that matters, the product at the end of the process

P9 Have you ever got anything down on paper, have you ever written anything?

RW I don't see things in the normal way of seeing things, I tend to go by the way things are, you respond to an individual individually, even though there may be a group, so there is no set formula of any kind, no lectures or what have you, no sense of learning in that respect, though more often than not it will direct itself to an individual in a particular meeting at any one time and yet that of itself is sufficient for everybody else at the same time.

It is quite odd, you can't address a whole lot of people generally, you can only deal in depth with one, or another, as the case may be, and out of that everybody gets the impression, rather than the words, which is very important to me, the impressions counts far more than the words.

It is not a thing you can teach anybody to do, it's the sort of thing that comes instinctively from within oneself, and of course I suppose this is the key to the thing, though I never realised it before, but one isn't concerned with being a teacher, or anything else at all, it doesn't matter, one is very much concerned with any individual at any point in time that needs that, and you meet their needs, because it is there and requires it, (*inaudible*), ... no decision about whether I can do this or not, I can't, quite frankly I can't, I can merely open a channel for something to operate through me towards that individual. That is all I can do.

So it is not me as an individual, but that which comes from the greater areas and which responds to the needs of any individual, and it delivers it in such a manner that it helps everybody else at the same time.

Because, I suppose, it is the truth of the matter.

(*Laughs*)

I don't decide what is right, and what I don't know. I've learned to trust it all so much that it just works

P9 On the other hand if it was written down...

RW It couldn't work because it would be different to somebody else

P1 And it would depend on the reader how they understand it.

RW They would only read it to their understanding and would not be reading to what the writer wrote. But in this way it can be tailored to any individual to any given point in time, to meet their need at that moment in time, and that way truth is always there and because of this way, not the content of it, but the nature of it that is there which people respond to. So it is the nature of things rather than anything else.

P1 Because you could hear many people say exactly the same thing but one will ring true and another won't.

RW Well sometimes you will say black is white to one, and, white is black to another. But it's the same message.

(*Laughs*).

Which it is. Peoples' understanding goes in different ways, and from different angles and you have to meet each of those but it doesn't really matter if it is contradictory to what yours is provided the truth lies with it and you pick up your truth out of it, even though it is the wrong way round.

P5 It's right in that conversation.

RW Exactly, it's the rightness that matters, not the content of it, and that's what you pick up for yourselves.

P8 It makes you wonder if parts of the Bible where Jesus talks and says... if you believe what the Bible says, he'll say one thing to one person and in another part of the bible...

RW It will tell you something else.

P8 Yes. He was obviously talking to that person, and then to that person, so to one he might say turn the other cheek but to someone else he might say something else.

RW Some people don't know their right from their left, and if you are giving directions to a person of that nature to come along a path which has got potholes, "turn left", or "turn right", "do this" or "that", you probably give the opposite one to this one as you might to that one and they probably still get across safely.

(Laughs).

We've got a circular mat here in the middle of the room, and if that were a cartwheel with spokes on it, and it represents totally different paths up a mountain, so if you come in on that one as opposed to this one, you can't see one another because the apex is up here and you can't see over it. So you come up 100 feet on that side and 100 feet on the other side. Now suppose you were able to communicate with one another, "I can see this, or this, or this", but they are not the same, but you have both achieved 100 feet, but the experience is totally different, from one side to the other. You cannot communicate without confusion until you reach the top, and then "oh I see that path leads to this and it all works the same.

This is one of the things with people starting off meditation, someone says "I had such an experience", and they think "I ought to have that because that one has had it." No. Your way is different to that one therefore your experience will be different. It is only later when you get more seriously into this business that you begin to realise it is the same thing. You see the front of the house and you see the back of the house and you describe them differently, it's a different place. But it's not a different place, just a different way of looking at it. Then you realise the back and the front are different, the left and the right are different, but it's OK. So it is not a question of "I should be having that (experience)" or "you should be having this (experience)", it is not like that at all. The way you see it, that is the way it is. That is what makes it confusing, trying to compare notes too early, later of course you can compare notes once understanding is made, and it helps you then, but until then it is more confusing.