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# *Buddhism and Psychotherapy*

## *Public Talk*

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*JAMES LOW*

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*Transcribed by Liz Fox*

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## Excerpts



*“...Often we have an experience in life, and not have the language to make sense of it. When this young prince Siddhartha encountered such things, what he did was to examine the phenomenology of his experience, what was arising for him. He labelled it in a very simple way and made sense of the total picture afterwards. So as he sat in meditation he was noticing that particular sorts of thoughts and feelings were arising and he would give one-word labels to them...”*



*“...The cuckoo goes into another bird's nest to lay its eggs and the ego, this self-referencing function, is like that; it will go into any nest that arises and say "This is me, this is me"! “*



*“...Ethical responsibility in the sense of a responsiveness, an openness to respond to others in terms of their actual presenting need, is probably the most pressing problem we have at the moment. I think a concern with ethics, with finding some way in which the buddhist view can support the clinical work of psychotherapy, can be very helpful. But the clinical work of psychotherapy should not to be mixed in with buddhism, otherwise one gets into some nebulous pseudo-spiritual activity....”*

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Our topic is psychotherapy and buddhism so I will start by saying something about the Buddhist understanding of the mind's mental processes, and then reflect on that in relation to psychosis, anxiety and depression. After that we can look at whether there is any contribution that buddhism might make to psychotherapy and vice versa.

## Prince Siddhartha's experiences

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The starting point for buddhism is usually suffering and when Buddha Shakyamuni came into contact with life as it is ordinarily lived he experienced some anxiety and suffering. When Prince Siddhartha, the person who was to become Buddha Shakyamuni, was born there was a prediction that either he would become a great world emperor or he would become a saint. His father, being a king and wanting to have his first-born son to follow him in succession and become a king, tried to protect him from any understanding of the difficulties of the world in case they influenced him into taking a path or religion.

The king built a special compound in which the young prince could have as much pleasure as he wanted; he had horses, he studied the arts of war, he had a very nice time but was protected within this palace compound. And having no disturbance he had no suffering. But one day he went out riding and passed out of the grounds of the compound and he saw firstly a sick person, then he saw an old person stumbling along and then finally he saw a corpse. He was quite disturbed by this, because he thought, "Well, their bodies and my body, somehow they are basically the same and if this has happened to them it might happen to me". The more he reflected on this the more he thought, "Yes, this will happen to me too". So he determined to find out about root of this suffering; "Why is it that people are born, grow old, get sick and die? Is there another way?"

This story is interesting because many patients who come into psychotherapy do so because they have had some trauma or unexpected change in their life. Maybe something has disrupted the ordinary trajectory of their life and their sense of who they are and what they are doing. Often people would have preferred that trauma had never happened and they would like to use the psychotherapy as a way of returning to how it was before the trauma occurred. In that struggle to return there is often a denial that the trauma has actually occurred.

The trauma may even have occurred many years ago but the struggle to deny the shock and the lack of control over events has made things worse. Prince Siddhartha's experience can actually be quite helpful, showing how although the world can shock us and disrupt our security, we can go into that experience and start to explore it, rather than pretend it hasn't happened. We can take control of the situation

So the Buddha left his palace and went out to meditate, and to try to examine his experience of the world, to find out why it was that he suffered. One of the things he discovered was that everything he looked at or heard or thought about was actually shifting and changing. And yet although everything was impermanent—his own thoughts were impermanent, his feelings were impermanent, the physiological processes of his body, his metabolism, all of this was in a constant state of flux and change—the tools that he had to think about these, that is to say, language, was actually promoting an idea of reification, of substantialisation, as if there were permanent real entities that were being encountered.

## Language and labelling

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This is very important, because very often we can have an experience in life, and not have the language to make sense of it. One sees this I think very often with adolescents when they come into their sexual feelings; it is very difficult for them to hang onto language as it is used in the family because it won't give them a voice to express their own experience.

So when this young prince Siddhartha encountered this what he did was to examine the phenomenology of his experience, what was arising for him. He labelled it in a very simple way, and made sense of the total picture afterwards. So as he sat in his meditation he was noticing that particular sorts of thoughts and feelings were arising and he would give one-word labels to them.

The sequencing of these words would have made no sense at all and so he had to abandon the ego's sense of maintaining an understanding, an expert status, over all that was occurring. That is to say he was just allowing the whole flux of experience to occur, and skimming over the surface, just tracking what was going on without trying to control or direct or keep a clear notion through it. That of course has some resonances with the psychoanalytic practice of free association, where by allowing thoughts and connections to arise just as they will without doing the ego's editing on them, new constellations, new patternings of meaning can occur.

What the Buddha found was that his sense of disturbance in his interaction in the world arose because of his attachment to particular patternings of arisings, just as in modern cognitive psychology, particularly in the areas concerned with perception, one is dealing with the total infinite flux of visual representations that are coming at us. The mind will constantly seek to create *gestalts*, identifiable patterns, out of this flux of experiences that are arising around us. Our brain is constantly seeking to create patterns that will provide a support for meaning and value and for continued projection into the future on the basis of the order that we've already perceived in the past. Now of course when we relax this process of ordering and constructing out of this field of arisings, there is a sense of chaos. And this chaos is very frightening because the ego wants to maintain a sense of territory, directedness, self-identity, and its own self-referencing function.

What Prince Siddhartha found was that if he was to relax this hungry desire for order and simply name this flux of phenomena he was able to feel quite open and his hungry anxious need for order just collapsed. So there was a movement there, a very significant movement, from being an involved participant in the flux, trying to hang on to a stabilised sense of identity when everything external and internal is moving, to taking up a slightly distanced, observer position which was watching the whole panoply moving on.

The Buddha, well he was still Siddhartha then, continued sitting in this way for a long time cooling his response, his urge to respond more and more and more, until eventually anything could arise and he would simply be observing. And when I say he was simply observing in that moment, when it is so cooled down there is simply the process of observation going on, almost as if in that moment he had achieved the point that Descartes speaks of, of a pure cogito, pure consciousness, a light that shines out, which never turns back on itself, which is constantly moving out and is never caught up in or disturbed by what it looks at. Though of course Descartes was seeing cogito as being the essence of what it would be to be human, what human beings needed to strive for in order to fulfil their rational potential. Prince Siddhartha, however, found that by remaining in this state his sense of self, and appropriation of the experience back to something that could be named, "I am having an experience as me", vanished since there was no basis for it.

This experience was taken up and developed by many commentators on basic Buddhist meditation, particularly the notion that subject and object, consciousness and the object of consciousness, arise simultaneously. It's not that there are real objects outside the moment of consciousness. For example, you use a watch, and you have a sense of this watch when you look at it. If I put it away so that you can't see it and ask you to think about the watch, you have some

notion of the watch. You could say that through language you have the symbolic echo or the representation of the signifier and the sign.

But the actual object itself when it is held up, there is a consciousness of this object, and when the object is not available you have a consciousness of something else, but the precise consciousness of the object in itself is linked inextricably to the object in its precise nature. One of the things that language does and memory does is to institute in the place of the watch, the echo or the trace or the memory of the watch, giving it potentially the same value as the watch itself.

I find this very interesting because what it is actually saying is that reality and fantasy are the same. The perceptual reality of the watch and the symbolic or the memory trace reality of the watch have equal value for us, because both are mediated through language. One can draw interesting parallels here between Wittgenstein's notion of language and the implications of this perceptual theory: this idea that language refers back to itself, that we are in language and we cannot escape from language, and that our sense of reality and meaning is determined by language. For Wittgenstein that meant that words can never take us to reality. Reality can hit us at certain moments, maybe through beauty or nature but language cannot do that.

In Buddhist thought it is often said that reality is beyond speech, thought and expression. This is not some vague mystical gesturing towards the transcendental beyond, because the focus in buddhism is always about a present awareness in the world. What it is expressing is a critique of that way in which we use language to support ordinary perception of subject and object running across each other.

### Non-sequiturs: mind the gap

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Meditation is a phenomenological enquiry into the patterning of the arising of thoughts and feelings as they occur. One gradually finds a sense that the seemingly seamless web of constant unbroken flow of mental experience is actually fragmented. There are all sorts of gaps, elisions and confusions arising, very much the experience again that one has in psychoanalysis where the person is talking in an open way and starts to reveal *non sequiturs*, ways in which the seemingly rational meaningful movement of their surface discourse is actually fragmented and contradicting, moving back on itself again and again. From a western analytic point of view one would see these as movements whereby the unconscious reveals itself moving into the realm of consciousness, disrupting consciousness.

In the meditation what one experiences is that by lessening the attention which one is paying to the arising, and relaxing the attentions so that it is able to flow more easily into the gap. Without attempting to appropriate the gap, and through reification turn it into something new, then the relationship between the manifestation and the gap starts to shift—instead of there being a composite picture built up by the rapid concatenation, or linking, of the moments of arising. This is a process held in place by an anxious consciousness which wants to make sure that it has an object occurring, since, as I mentioned before, consciousness and the object of consciousness arise together.

If consciousness has no discrete precise object to arise, it cannot arise. So by attending to this gap the one who is doing the attending is transformed in the very nature of his being. I mean in ordinary terms we would say that we live in the world as a self in an environment and we need to be in contact with this environment all the time. If we were all to raise our right hand

put it over our mouth and close our nose after a while we would find a certain pressure to reunite with the universe around us.

Our being is inextricably enworlded, we are in this complex system and we cannot get out of it. So to have this sense of connection is absolutely vital for our sense of survival. And yet in this moment in which there is a gap and an opening to the gap, the environment in which one might find oneself mirrored either as having a place to move out into or as having something which will come towards one and give one a gift, collapses. In opening to the gap between thoughts, opening into that spaciousness, linking to the spaciousness so that the thoughts and feelings which continue to arise do so inside the open spaciousness and not as a foreclosure of it. That moment brings about a radical new experience which is a shift in the totality of self identity.

One could put it into sort of poetic kind of language and say that in that moment the self dies and is reborn. And that is certainly a language that many Christian, Jewish and Sufi mystics use in talking about what may well be a very similar experience. However in the Buddhist terminology one would be thinking that as this ego-centred, self-centred consciousness dissolves into the movement together, subject and object come together. In this gap there is no object, so subject consciousness has nothing to cling on to and just goes out and dissolves and in that moment, the spaciousness is suffused with an awareness which is not located in any particular point of arising. So that the self referencing function of consciousness, the way in which I am always able to say this is me, this is not me, and as the field of my experience is changing,

I am still able to say this is me. Just as we can probably all remember being about five years old and the kind of things we used to do when we were five, when there's not much trace of the five year old left, all the cells have changed, everything at the physiological level has gone. What we have is an on going process of replication and regeneration taking on a similar pattern to that which was before. So something was there and is now not there but we say, "Oh, it's me anyway". So this self-referencing function is able, like a good colonialist, to keep changing its boundaries and say "This is always Great Britain. It might be called India, or Australia, but anyway it is Great Britain". It's the desire for control and survival. The cuckoo goes into another bird's nest to lay its eggs and the ego, this self-referencing function, is like that; it will go into any nest that arises and say "This is me, this is me"!

So in this moment of moving into the gap this self referencing function when it sweeps out into the world to find something, a watch or an ear or a nose, anything to hang onto, there's nothing there, and it dissolves and opens not to empty nothing but to a full nothing. Because at that moment there's not a dead absence of anything, although the moment before it the ego is very frightened of being annihilated, what happens is that awareness reveals itself. So from then on, whatever thoughts, feelings, appearances arise are seen and experienced directly as the effulgence of that open spacious awareness.

### [When the Buddha taught about emptiness, people felt frightened](#)

The Buddha's teachings are described as being like the roar of a lion, because when the lion roars in the jungle all the other animals are silenced. When the Buddha taught this notion of openness or emptiness, it was experienced as very frightening by most people, who want to hang on to their own sense of self. But the Buddha wasn't saying this to scare people. He was trying to provide them with some relief from a task that is actually impossible. Because if everything is impermanent and changing and yet our consciousness is wanting to have stability and security, then there's some kind of contrary movement there, isn't there?

Now we probably all know that human beings have an infinite capacity for self-deceit. Why endure the pain of honest truth when you can enjoy the fantasy pleasure of deceit? I am sure we all tell little lies to ourselves just to keep the wolves at bay on a cold night. But sometimes it's important to go out into the wilderness and find out if one can survive. And that's essentially this point of moving into open emptiness, because it's a point of fusion into the world, of actual belonging in the world.

Heidegger is gesturing in this direction, as I understand it, in his discussion in *Being and Time* about belonging, about taking up our full being in the world, as part of the world. There is really no question that the world will support us or not support us. Of course his construction was intellectual and conceptual. What we are talking about here is an actual experience in which one takes one's place, enworlded, supported by the world, not as a separate subject acting onto object.

The Buddha taught that all our suffering arises from the two causes of ignorance and attachment. Ignorance is this sense of not knowing where one is and making ourselves very busy constructing our existence when in fact our being is totally formed. In losing this sense of non-dual oneness in the world, one takes up the position of being a separate consciousness, a separate entity in a relationship across distance with other. And then one has attachment to the situation that one tries to develop.

In trying to maintain it against all the forces of impermanence one feels desire for those things one feels will improve one's situation and make it more pleasurable and so one tries to bring them towards oneself. And one feels fear aversion and anger towards those things one feels might harm one's situation and so one tries to push them away. Of course that is just the basic pattern, because we are so wonderfully sophisticated that we can even find some pleasure in the things that horrify us, and we can even find fear in the things that we like.

Many female patients tell their therapists that they can't find men who are able to make a commitment to them. However if the therapist offers them warmth, they run away very quickly. And we can get a sense of why this would occur, because in order to be close to someone and experience love one must have a soft sense of self, one must have the ability to be tender. For most of us the process of growing up is very hard and so we become like a herd of old goats. Our meat is very tough and hard to chew, particularly the heart. And the heart becomes tough because it's been hurt. So letting anyone near this organ, which needs to remain tender to keep working, is quite scary. If we really open to the other and allow the reality of the other's existence to impinge on us, to touch us, we must be changed. You cannot be yourself in a relationship in the sense of maintaining the same self as you would have if you were outside a relationship. But if we are so frightened about the possibility that our own fragile self will collapse or be overwhelmed by the world, then instead of being able to experience contact with another person as an opportunity to open up, be transformed and learn more about our potential of becoming, we are terrified and retreat. This is built in to the whole dynamic of being a separate entity, of having our sense as a separate subject in a world of objects.

Some post-Heideggerian thinkers, particularly Emmanuel Levinas, take up the role of the Other, the Otherness of the Other, as the only solution now to the false humanism of the self that our culture struggles under. Because we have a culture built on the humanistic notion of the centrality of the self, people come to psychotherapy wanting to find themselves. Where you

would find yourself I don't know. I mean, who is the person who is looking for themselves? But millions of dollars change hands every year, poor people looking for themselves.

## Depression and anxiety are common experiences

In western notions of mental ill health, the two neurotic forms which are very widely diagnosed in our culture are depression and anxiety. Depression is usually a sense of hopelessness which people will often describe as if they are behind a wall of glass - they can't reach out and get a handle on the world. There may be a loss of appetite, a loss of motivation and energy - no reason to get out of bed. It's as if the subject and the world of objects have lost contact in some way. There may often be imbalances in brain chemicals which are supporting this, and certainly many forms of medication can help. But I think from a Buddhist point of view we would see it as an existential issue: that in order to maintain our sense of healthy functioning in a complex world of ever changing objects, we need to use up a huge amount of energy.

If you run a business, in order to keep your business connections going you need to get information, you need to listen to the news, you need to be busy in the world. A lot of what you hear is pretty awful. There's often a sense of decline; nowadays many economies are entering a decline and it's likely that there'll be redundancies. When people lose their work they get depressed, since in many ways happiness is a social construct. When the economy was doing well and workers would have two holidays in the sun a year and a car and all the rest of it, they could feel pretty happy. If you asked them they'd say, "Yes I'm happy" as if the happiness was somehow a quality of the self, "I'm a happy person, look things go pretty well". Then the environment shifts and the ego or the self's ability to control and to create a future in the same terms as the past diminishes. The ego has lost control. At that point some people collapse into this depressed feeling. "I can't make it, I can't do it, it's not worthwhile".

For other people that sense of impossibility generates fear and anxiety and a desperate desire to try harder and make things work out. But there's also a sense that it's an impossible task, and so in its extreme forms, if I can't control the world at least I'll make sure that the light switch is off. But because every day I watch the news and the world keeps changing, may be the light switch is the same so I better just go back in the room and check once again. So we could see how both the depressed mood state and the anxiety and obsessional neurosis states, the compulsive disorders, arise basically from this misconstruing of the nature of subject and object.

But this is not a personal psychological pathology for the poor people who suffer from these disorders; from the Buddhist point of view it's an all-pervasive pathology. From that point of view here we're all mad here because we're processing the nature of what's occurring in a way that is spoilt by a basic fault. It's as if you were driving in your car in a place you didn't know and you're looking at the map and you take a turning and you keep going along this road but every time you check the map you can't quite find the connection. But after a while it becomes impossible to think of driving back because you've already gone 200 kilometres. And the anxiety of thinking about this hellish mistake you've made, just gets too much, so you repress the whole thing. And you drive on with a smile on your face, as if you were off on holiday, but you're on the highway to nowhere.

So this is the problem - that the mistake is embedded in the whole cultural matrix that we live in. Now we know that if children grow up in a family where one or both parents is suffering from a major psychotic illness they are likely to have a very difficult time, because they are experiencing madness around them and they are having to deal with it in the language of

madness because that's what they are being acculturated to. Often these children will relapse into a major collapse themselves because the struggle to maintain a sense of sanity in the ongoing face of madness is enormously difficult.

One can see that when countries come out of a period of having been under fascism or extreme forms of communist dictatorship, there's often a sense of terrible confusion. "When all that I believed in is now revealed to me as a murderous delusion, who on earth am I? I must be mad. What can I believe in?" So the struggle to move out of this misconception, or misconstruing of the world is very difficult. However as long as one does not engage in the task of enquiring into the nature of how we exist in the world, then we condemn ourselves to a diet of culturally constructed fantasies.

### Psychosis is an experience considered out of the ordinary

Anxiety and depression are things that we all have, albeit some people have them to a debilitating degree. Psychosis however is usually thought of as a situation in which a person is having a set of experiences that are radically different from ordinary experiences. In the psychotic situation where the classic symptom is hearing voices, either feeling that voices are arising inside one's head or that one is being spoken to from an outside transmitter such as a television, language is intruding on one's world in a way that disrupts the sense of continuity of self.

Freudian psychoanalysts talk of a fragmented self, the self had somehow cracked and never been able to come together again. Lacanian analysts take the idea that psychosis is a disorder of language, and that one is disrupted in one's being in the world because one's ability to use language in an ordinary way has fallen apart. From a buddhist point of view it's the outcome of the impossible struggle to continuously order the world: we are socialised, born and educated into the notion that there is a true valid pattern of meaning constructed and moving through all our interactions. These meanings come to us as if they were natural and inherently existing, existing *sui generis* instead of *ad hoc* reformulations that change through time. In meditation many people will experience psychotic events but they generally don't become psychotic.

As I was saying earlier, when there is all the chaos of mental arisings and the ego is trying to control and direct it, then the struggle to order the unorderable has to be given up. But society insists that we control our experience and behave as if it is all orderly and meaningful, when in fact what we have to endure is often hellish and incomprehensible. From the buddhist point of view those who, due to their karmic traits, have rather a weak hold on their sense of self and the complexity of the world, are going to collapse. So from a buddhist point of view one would see these people as representing an extreme form of what happens when the ego tries to control the uncontrollable.

Now most of us, when we encounter madness, want to back off from it and get on with our ordinary lives, to leave it to the professionals, to put these people into hospital. Madness is enormously important and by attending to madness, madness in others and our own madness, we can start to make an enquiry into the boundary of madness and sanity.

To go back to the beginning, that day when Prince Siddhartha went out on his horse and he saw the sick person and the old person and the corpse, he could have turned the horse around and gone back into the palace and said, "I'm never going out of that door again". But although the tortoise can pull its head back into its shell, if the attacking bird waits long enough the head will pop out. For most of us here, if we are lucky, old age, sickness and death lie ahead, the

dissolution of the body as we know it, of memory, of friends. And when it comes it is not an accident, it was part of the deal when we popped out of our mum.

So, the relationship between buddhism and psychotherapy - in a word there's none! In general, psychotherapy in the west is about helping people get back into life, and not really about questioning the presuppositions of ordinary existence. If people come into psychotherapy because they are deeply disturbed, it is probably unethical to introduce new metaphysical values to them.

If someone wants to come into buddhism and understand it and practice, then it's good if they can do that from a state in which they have an ordinary sense of themselves and are prepared and willing to put that sense of self into question. Psychotherapy, at least many forms of modern psychotherapy, may be very useful for providing a basis for that process by helping the person to be a bit clearer about their intentions for this life, to have a more easy relationship, that is to say, to build up ego strength. But coming in to any kind of religious path, it's best to do it with your eyes open.

*[Question: There is this notion of non-continuity in the self, no ego etc. How do you connect this with the idea of rebirth. What is to be re-born?]*

Do you think it would be a thing? It's a very interesting question because it takes us exactly into language. Who am I?

It's like the person who is looking for themselves, because we imagine that when I find myself I will know who I am. And so we imagine when we die my self, my real self—if there is re-birth—will go somewhere else. There's a kind of false problem there because if we actually look into who I am we don't find anybody. But what we do find is that the process of becoming continues. And flitting across this whole process of becoming there is this self-referencing function, which will stick on little shapes, you know like these things you cut out biscuits with, and make a new self every minute. So what it is that continues is a particular inter-relationship within the flux of becoming. But it is not a thing. Hinduism has the notion that in going from one life to another, and taking on a new body, it is just like how a brahman changes his shirt every day, so the soul changes its body from life to life. This is the example hindus give. But that would not be a buddhist notion at all, because there is no idea of a permanent continuing self, what hindus call *atman*.

*[Question: He wants to ask about the emptiness. There is this empty nothingness and there is this full openness with emptiness quality. Who says there is this emptiness like openness and not the emptiness which is like nothingness. Maybe everything is really absolutely desolate and boring. How do I find it out and who tells me?]*

Well the only way to find out is to try it! The Buddha's doctrine is often described as being the middle way, and that middle way is between the extremes of eternity, of things surviving for ever and an empty nihilism in which nothing occurs. Traditionally it is said that the phrase for many yogis is "When I look into my mind, when I try to find my mind, I look up I look down, I look here, I look there, I don't find anything and yet thoughts, feelings and that whole world keeps arising." So one lives in this horizontal world. When one looks into the centre of one's being, there's an open empty space, and when one looks out to the furthest extent of the world, there's an open empty space, and so caught between these two pure forms of open emptiness, there is this illusory screen in which appearances arise, a bit like a hologram.

And what this does in a sense it condemns us to be dancers. In order to live in this open possibility one has to be playful. People who are determined to have security, determinism and the ability to predict the future would find this option very terrifying. Many of the meditation practices that lead one towards this experience were developed in the cemeteries, in the caves, in the wilderness.

## Transference and countertransference

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*[Question: You said buddhism and psychotherapy don't have anything in common, there is nothing in common between them, but what it means to you personally? You are working as a psychotherapist with people who have problems, or have difficulties?]*

One of the problem areas or technical opportunities in the kind of psychotherapy that I practice, psychoanalytic psychotherapy, is in the area of transference and counter-transference where one is working with the unconscious projections that the patient puts onto the therapist, and one's own response to these. I notice that the more sense of self one has and the more complex that sense of self, the more difficult it is to work out what is coming from the other person, what one is putting into the other person and what is coming from oneself.

I find that doing meditation and reflecting on the nature of one's own mental processes makes it much easier to distinguish these processes. It seems common to be nice to patients who have a positive or erotic transference to oneself and a somewhat hostile attitude towards patients who have got a negative transference. So by practising meditation, becoming more relaxed and open, this slows down the need to construct whole fantasies about myself on the basis of these momentary experiences —they like me, they don't like me, this that and the other— and the easier it gets.

I find that meditation provides a very good basis for compassion, because usually in the world when we are kind to people we are engaged in the economy of the gift. I give something nice to you so you give something nice to me. And there's some kind of trade-off. The more open and relaxed we are we are not concerned with getting things or giving things, so it opens a space of true responsiveness. It keeps alive the whole notion of an ethical responsibility towards the other, which is not about a colonial incorporation of the other inside one's own worldview. Nor is it an abandonment of the other to say, "Well, make of your life what you will, it's up to you, be autonomous".

## Ethical responsibility

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Ethical responsibility in the sense of a responsiveness, an openness to respond to others in terms of their actual presenting need, is probably the most pressing problem we have at the moment. As I was suggesting earlier with the watch, when the watch is there and when the watch is not there, we continue the notion of the watch through language, and that helps us to avoid the reality of the impermanence of the phenomena that we live in.

That use of language to maintain the lazy stupidity of our own self-security is not simply a personal thing. It presents itself as ideology on a political level. When there is a gap, in which people don't know what is going on and don't want to pay attention to the difficult micro-interactions of being with another, they stereotype certain groups in the community, whether it is old people, mad people, immigrants, coloured people, whatever, without attending to the particularity of their existence. Having been lumped into a group they can then be deposited

somewhere, where they are out of sight and out of mind Many of the patients who come to psychotherapy have been the victims of this kind of oppressive rejection.

And so I think a concern with ethics, finding some way in which the buddhist view can support the clinical work of psychotherapy, can be very helpful. But the clinical work of psychotherapy should not to be mixed in with buddhism, otherwise one gets into some nebulous pseudo-spiritual activity.

So, thank you all very much for coming.

