





The Friends of the Western Buddhist Order
president

Ven Sthavira Sangharakshita

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Newsletter 11

April 1971

edited by

Stephen Parr

published at

Sarum house 3 Plough lane Purley Surrey

01 660 2542

Editorial

With exactly three months to go to the launch date of the New Sakura, our available energies are channelling themselves into the effective realisation of a three year old dream: the dream of having enough space and facilities for us to be able to give you the full benefit of our teacher's dharma.

We are ready poised to swoop on any property which becomes available at a moment's notice; but we do not yet have nearly enough finance to utilise our readiness. In this issue is a letter from our president to explain the why's and way's in which you can still help our project.

If this issue seems sparse in comparison with the previous ones, we are able to offer no apology save that we are forced to economise on printing and mailing costs. If there is any doubt as to the necessity of doing this, it will be instantly dispelled by a look at the breakdown of the cost of the last issue (included for that purpose) towards the end of these pages. We continue to hope that subscriptions will flood in to offset this substantial loss.

Meanwhile, our work goes on. It often seems to those closely involved in the struggle to get done what has to be done that 'mundane' considerations are becoming increasingly paramount in what is often called the 'spiritual life'. Endless organisation, correspondence, and general getting things moving inevitably take their toll on the consciousness of those most dedicated individuals in our midst. Yet perhaps we make the mistake of assuming that the spiritual life is something other than such necessary involvement in worldly affairs; but surely the error in this line of thought is obvious: we are human beings, not minds divorced from the physical world; and as such, we have to work out our way to enlightenment within the very real context of the surrounding world. It is relatively easy to be serene and composed if one never has to face the challenges of relating to other people, and to the world in general.

A Soto Zen text used by one supremely endowed Zen teacher in the west begins with the question: 'why are training and enlightenment differentiated, since the truth is universal?' and further in the same text: 'to live by Zen is the same as to live an ordinary daily life', and: 'when the opposites arise you have almost lost the way to salvation'; it is very difficult in normal human life to retain this clear consciousness which eschews all ideas of 'spiritual' and 'mundane'; very often, one is tempted to give up with the cry, 'my work takes up so much time and energy I simply never have any time even to meditate for ten minutes, let alone follow a high spiritual path such as Buddhism demands!'

But every act is a spiritual act; the hand that draws water to scrub the floor is the very same hand that bestows countless blessings on all sentient creatures: it is simply a revelation of pure Buddha nature. The voice that bemoans forever the lack of time to follow a spiritual path is the very voice of Buddha himself. It is only our habitually adopted viewpoint that makes a difference appear.

"when the opposites arise...." yet, they do arise, constantly, and we all have to cope with their having arisen; and our coping with them in our own particular way is the very spiritual practice whose lack we bemoan so frequently. If we make friends with duality when it manifests, maybe it will be able to teach us more than a whole temple full of sutras! Then maybe, like the traveller who encountered the ferryman, we will shout with wonder and joyful incredulity, 'is THAT all?'.

Ananda Upasaka.

NEW YEAR RECEPTION

Old and new friends of all ages met together at Sarum House Buddhist Community on Sunday January 24th for one of the more strictly social events in the calendar. Some brought along home made cakes and other good things to share as we sat and talked, and exchanged news and views, ideas and information about our separate existences. Others brought pendants, candles, Tibetan boots, paintings and prints and other handicraft items to sell for the new Centre Fund. We were especially pleased to welcome those who had come from York, Birmingham Cambridge, Hastings and Brighton. More than sixty people gathered in the shrine room to hear Sangharakshita talk about how he came back to England from India, how he felt that the future of Buddhism lay in the west, and how the FWBO first began. He went on to outline the present need for a place in London where meditation, lectures, pujas, yoga and communication could be carried on, and where people could come at any time of the day to meet Buddhists and make contact with others of a similar mind.

BUDDHIST ARTS AND CRAFTS SHOW AT PURLEY

This spring will see our first full and comprehensive display of Buddhist art and traditional crafts associated with Buddhism. The exhibition will open at 10am. on Sunday May 22nd., and will continue until late in the evening. It is being held at Sarum House, the home of many FWBO activities over the past three years. The show is being organised by, and will be under the direction of Smudge (Upasaka Chanda), a resident of the community and member of the Order.

The show will include a display of rare Tibetan thankas (iconographical painting) ritual objects, and Buddhist images from all over the east; Asian music and dancing is also to be included, together with demonstrations of Hatha Yoga, aikido (the Japanese art of self-defence), pottery, candlemaking, and jewellery. Ven. Sangharakshita will be present all day to meet visitors, and the Tibet Society has kindly agreed to loan us some valuable pieces for display.

The aim of the show is twofold: to raise money for our new Centre in London, and to concentrate in one place, perhaps for the first time ever in this country, a comprehensive range of traditional art and practices from all over the Buddhist world. We hope it will be an event to remember in the history of English Buddhism, as well as a great opportunity for interested people, both within and without the Buddhist faith, to meet and get to know each other.

Refreshments will be available throughout the show, and books, candles, paintings and many other items will be on sale.

Admission is by ticket only, price 50p., and these are now available, either by post from Sarum House (SAE please) or from Sakura, Monmouth Street, or direct from Smudge. Please telephone 01.660.2542 for any further information. Cheques payable to FWBO and postal orders may be sent with all requests for tickets.

THE NEW SAKURA: THE SEARCH CONTINUES

The long search for the new central London Buddhist Centre and headquarters of the FWBO, continues, like Jason's quest, to inflame our minds, almost to the exclusion of everything else in our daily routine. With three months to go (precisely) before 'B' day, we have our conversion charts well in hand.

But what exactly have we been doing about it?

The primary area of our search covers some six square miles of central London. This area has been divided up into sections, and each section allocated to a 'volunteer' who then explores in detail the section given to him. It is rather like an army exercise, though we hope with radically different motivation. The 'volunteer' has the responsibility of contacting agents in the field and obtaining as much information as possible from them. This method ensures that

we shall know immediately about any buildings which may come on the market in a 'marked' area. Estate agents have been circularised about our needs; a fund has been set up to raise money for the first year's rent, which now stands at a promising £300. But we still have to raise the balance of £700 within three months.

How can you help? Generally, in three ways: most important, fund raising; either by direct donation or by organising fund raising activities such as coffee mornings and jumble sales. Secondly, by joining in the search for property if you live in the London area; thirdly, by giving us publicity in every place you can think of: your local library, place of work, or just a poster in your front window may do the trick. We believe that what we are doing is not only right, but necessary, and we shall continue to take every opportunity to foster that belief in others.

TALKS TO SCHOOLS

In December, the Whitgift school for boys in Croydon asked Gotami (Brenda Fernay) to speak to their sixth form discussion group on 'The relevance of Buddhism for the West'. The half-hour talk was followed by a lively discussion with such questions as: 'what do you meditate about?', 'why sit crosslegged?' 'what about God?', and 'what is karma?'. One of the boys came to Sarum House recently with another sheaf of questions, and asked for instruction in meditation.

In January, a lunchtime talk was given to the Church Commissioners at London's Millbank by the Thames. The talk was about the relation between Buddhism and Christianity, and about twenty five people attended, who afterwards asked questions about the Buddhist attitude to sin, whether both religions were aiming at the same goal, and expressed the feeling that, although they themselves felt the need for God's help in their personal evolution, perhaps the church should make practical helps such as meditation more available to the average church member.

After Easter, a talk is to be given on Buddhism to the Brighton College.

CHRISTMAS SEMINAR

A two day seminar-retreat was held on the 26/27th December at Sarum House. About twenty people attended, including Bhante and many members of the Order. In spite of a very heavy snowfall (or in some cases because of it) the retreat was very well attended, some people travelling many miles through difficult road conditions to be with us on this occasion, and many also stayed on well after the official programme had finished. Lively and informed discussions with Bhante, and chanting in the specially decorated shrine room, were the highlights of the occasion.

SARUM HOUSE EXPANDS

Sarum House, the community in Purley founded by four members of the Western Buddhist Order in August 1968 is now a thriving family of eleven, plus two children and four cats. Recent members include two families, David and Diana Brazier from Cambridge, and John Carroll and Janet Millar from Faygate. Although the house is fast approaching its theoretical capacity limit, and guests are threatened with kipping in the toolshed, the library and shrine-room remain, as ever, open for the use of friends and visitors at all times.

TELEVISION

Associated Television transmitted a programme on 6th February called 'A Buddhist looks at London' in which Ven Sangharakshita talked about the place of an eastern faith in a modern western city. The programme went out as one of a series in the well-known Epilogue programmes.

THE ALTERNATIVE SOCIETY

Towards the end of November, Bhante addressed a group in the crypt of the Hampstead parish church on 'The Alternative Society'. This meeting was organised by Wilfred De'ath and was part of a series on the subject. After he had given a forthright exposition of his views, maintaining that the alternative society would be a society of individuals, not a rearrangement of non-individuals, Bhante answered questions from the audience, and a frank and lively discussion ensued.

THE TWENTIETH CENTURY AND CHANGE

At the beginning of December, Bhante paid a visit, his fourth in as many years, to the borough road College, Isleworth, as the last speaker in a series on 'The twentieth century and change'. His contribution to the series, which was for first year students, took the form of a dialogue with Dr. Howard Marratt, head of the divinity department, who had interviewed him on television a few years ago.

EDINBURGH VISIT

Early in the new year, Ven Sangharakshita paid a visit to the Royal City of Edinburgh at the invitation of the Edinburgh Buddhist Group, and delivered a lecture on Buddhism under its auspices at the premises of the Theosophical Society. About a hundred people were present at the lecture, which roused considerable interest.

In addition to enjoying the warm hospitality of Scots Buddhist friends, Bhante visited Edinburgh Castle, the Palace of Holyrood House, and John Knox's house. Within the walls of the last, he reflected that a lot of water must have flowed under the bridge for it to be possible for him to preach a heathen religion in the city of the 'Hammer of the Reformation'.

Bhante also had the happiness of meeting Armin and Jessie Davies (as well as Moreg, Catherine and Alistaire) whom many of our readers will remember as the hospitable wardens of Quartermaine at Haslemere.

LET'S COMMUNICATE'

In the third week of February, Bhante conducted two more courses in human communication for the benefit of members and friends. The first was held at Sarum House on a Tuesday and Wednesday evening, the second at the Napier Hall, Victoria, on a Saturday and Sunday afternoon.

The mid-week course was meant principally for those who are not normally free at weekends, and was attended by fourteen people. The weekend course, which lasted from 2 to 6pm each day, was attended by thirty-four people. Experience at the Napier Hall, which is more spacious than any of the halls previously

used for the exercises, seemed to indicate that a little more elbow room is definitely a help to communication.

At any rate, Bhante was quite pleased with the way things went, and further courses are planned (see below); if you have not yet done the exercises, we strongly urge you to try them, and to bring your friends along too. Most people are in need of the energy boost which a few of these sessions can give.

COMMUNICATION SEMINARS PLANNED

A further weekend of communication is being planned for the spring, and several more are hoped to take place in the late summer and autumn. The date of the first is Saturday/Sunday May 1st and 2nd. The programme will be along the lines of those already established. The later ones it is hoped will take place at Quartermaine school, Haslemere, and will be residential. This school owned by the Ockenden Venture and run as a centre for refugee children, is set in ideal surroundings for such a venture as communication, and the courses should prove very fruitful indeed. Full meals will be provided, and the residential nature of the course should provide much more opportunity for exploration of the possibilities opened up by the previous exercises. Full details of these weekends will appear in our next issue.

BUDDHISM AND ART

At the end of February Ven Sangharakshita addressed the Reading University Buddhist Society on 'Buddhism and Art'. This was his first visit to Reading in a year and a half. Though the University scene is naturally a changing one, he was pleased to recognise a number of familiar faces in the audience.

POETRY READINGS

Two poetry recitals have been held recently under the auspices of the Friends, and both have been very well supported. The place was Centre House, Kensington, the home of our popular lectures for several years. Bhante read his own work on both occasions, and was supported by friends and fellow poets, including Terence O'Regan (who also read Bhante's poem 'On Glastonbury Tor') Bill Wyatt, Rick, Geoffrey Webster, and Stephen Parr. On the second occasion, the readings were augmented by a sitar and tabla recital by two friends. The poetry and the music combined to produce a very intense atmosphere, which was lightened by Terry's reading of his own: 'when life hangs heavy on your hands, create a moral' and 'trial of words under a bare bulb simulating insanity', the recitation of these titles alone giving rise to extended and uncontrolled mirth.

MEDITATION CLASSES

Weekly meetings at 14 Monmouth Street continue to be well attended, with the beginners' class on Tuesdays still claiming the greatest attendance. The Thursday meetings, now attended by more established members of the Order comprise readings and study of texts, chanting and visualisation practices.

No charge is made for any of these classes, and all are welcome to come and meditate with us at the Tri-Ratna shrine room, 14 Monmouth Street wc2.

'ON GLASTONBURY TOR'

This poem, written by Bhante in 1969, has now been printed in a special de-luxe edition of 100 copies, with a beautiful hand printed cover, and illustrations by Rick Caston. Copies are available by post from Sakura, or from Sarum House, price 45p. (please include return postage when ordering by post).

THE DIVINE HEALER

Bhante's series of lectures on the Lotus Sutra ended on the 12th of March with a talk on the Archetype of the Divine Healer, in ancient western and Buddhist mythology. In the talk he explored the symbolism of Egyptian and Greek healing cults, and the mysterious relationship between religious worship and the ideal of perfect health. The talk was the conclusion of a very popular series which comprised a comprehensive exploration of the parables and symbolism of the Saddharma Pundarika Sutra.

TAPES

The above series of talks is now available on tape, either on standard 7" reels or cassettes, price £2.00 each, from Sarum House. Single talks on 5" spools can also be supplied at £1.50 each. Please include money with order. Many other lectures are available on tape for immediate delivery to you: please see attached leaflet for full details.

PARINIRVANA CEREMONY

On the evening of Friday February 13th, some members of the FWBO held a short ceremony to commemorate the Parinirvana, or passing of the Buddha into nirvana. It was held at Centre House, Kensington, and comprised a talk on the meaning of the Buddha's parinirvana, given by Bhante, readings from the songs of Milarepa by Mr Terry O'Regan and Mr. John Cooper, and a reading on 'right speech' by Smudge. The ceremony was concluded with the recitation of the Sevenfold Puja of Shantideva.

EASTER RETREAT

Our retreat this year is being held from the third to the twelfth of April at Keffolds, Bunch Lane, Haslemere, Surrey. As usual, it will be under the personal direction of Ven. Sangharakshita, and the daily programme includes yoga, meditation, lectures and group awareness exercises. The course is fully residential, and vegetarian meals will be provided. You are welcome to attend any part of the course, but please phone up before coming, as booking is very heavy. (0428-2038). It is important that you bring bed linen and towels with you, as we cannot provide them.

RESULTS OF OUR APPEAL

Our appeal in the last issue produced a healthy rise in the level of the fund, but in proportion to the total number of questionnaires sent out (800) the response was considerably below what we had hoped to receive. The appeal so far has brought in just over twenty pounds, and several offers of help with fitting and furnishing the Centre when it finally appears.

We thank those who troubled to return our questionnaire, and in particular the following people for their donations: Jim Martin of Brighton, K.M. Smith of Penzance, Mr. Brian Niblett of Abingdon, and Alan and Vera Jackson of London.

TALIESIN COMMUNITY

Taliesin is a group of six people sharing the same ideals of universal spiritual awareness; they have produced a magazine called 'vishtaroonne' whose purpose is to reflect the ideals of Taliesin. They are a charity whose immediate aim is to obtain an ashram as a spiritual retreat for people of all ages interested in spiritual awareness (they define an ashram as 'a creative, living, learning environment based around a central tradition or theme; in their case, the theme is spiritual awareness.') Taliesin are producing posters, paintings, and

kindred craftwork, the profits from which will be donated to their charity. Ideas, publicity or donations would be greatly appreciated: please contact B. Edwards, 10 East Street, Bridport, Dorset.

NEWSLETTER STATISTICS

We will let you in on a secret: the newsletter is eating your money at the rate of £40 an issue! Here is a breakdown of the cost of the last one:

Average cost per issue over last four issues: £42.75

Last issue:	paper: 20 reams	£17.00
	stencils	2.35
	offset printing:(including spare)	27.00
	mailing:	<u>17.17</u>
	total cost:	53.50

Circulation*(at October 1970) 750

(*rising at the rate of 6% per annum)

cost per copy: 7.13 np.

number of subscriptions received over last 12 months: 16

which, in money received, amounts to: £2.00 per issue

therefore loss on last issue = £51.50

This loss was borne by general dana contributions. If 300 people on the mailing list gave regular subscriptions, the newsletter would pay for itself. As we are trying to raise money for our new London Centre, we do not wish to use up precious funds to inform you of our activities! Therefore, we appeal to you now: if you wish to continue receiving this publication, please contribute towards its cost; if you do not wish to receive it, you would be doing us a great favour by writing and telling us so!

Finally, we apologise to those inevitable few who do contribute regularly, for all this verbiage, and also to those who are getting this without even having asked for it, and to those who repeatedly ask for it, and never get it! All we can say is: keep trying, and never despair.

COPY FOR NEXT ISSUE

Now that the practice of epistolic communication has been resumed in this country, we would like to reiterate our plea for your ideas, articles and letters. We will print - subject to space, legibility, and our financial situation - anything that is not totally irrelevant to our aims, or libelous, or both. Please type contributions if possible, and sign all copy. MSJ will be returned if a SAE is enclosed.

In particular, we would like to hear lone and lost voices out of the wilderness, notably, from half-submerged Buddhist groups in such outlandish districts as Glasgow, Edinburgh, York, Liverpool, Nottingham, Birmingham, Reading, Hastings and Brighton. We know you're out there, somewhere, but we would be pleased to have some evidence of it. Buddhists in this country- maybe it is so everywhere - tend to be very isolated individuals, and there is no justifiable reason why this should be so; remember that the Buddha told Ananda, his foremost disciple, that 'spiritual fellowship is the whole of the holy life', not merely a part of it. This is the Age of spiritual uprising, and uprisings only occur when there is good communication among those who share common ideals.

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COMMUNICATION: 1st/2nd May. At Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, Holborn.

EASTER RETREAT: Last weekend (10/12th.) now fully booked.

THE HYMN OF VAJRASATTVA

a poetic interpretation of the Hundred Syllable mantra

OM! Bond of the adamantine Being!
 Protector of my essential nature
 May your unshakable wisdom be my surety:
 Your diamond nature ever stands at the seat of my being.
 Be strong for me in times of conflict and self-doubt;
 Let me realise the joy of effort directed with a pure motive;
 Let me realise the bliss of your unstained nature, which is no nature;
 Let me realise the great love which ever flows throughout the Universe;
 Let auspiciousness attend all that I do,
 Let your perfect nature arise spontaneously within me,
 Let there be no thought of separation or impurity.
 Let the chain of past thoughts be broken forever!
 Let my mind realise at once its perfect beginningless purity.

The laughter of the unchained mind echoes forever!
 Everything is blessed with Buddha Mind!

Liberate me, O you diamond centred and jewel adorned!
 Encompass me, O you who are beyond all space and time!
 Believe in my sincere efforts
 Destroy all doubt
 Dispel all ignorance and darkness
 With your diamond centred light!
 O great hero of the universal bond
 Let all fear be destroyed!

Ananda.

a single star caught me
 when I wasn't looking
 and laughed at my ignorance

the snow dances cold
 around my face
 mind in my belly feels good

love is a song
 we once wrote together
 now it is but a nursery rhyme

I am but a blade
 of grass to you my love
 forgetting the flowers we once planted

debbie
 lobster

I reached for you
 but you were gone
 like a breeze on a summer day

hidden beneath sodden boughs
 O willow tree part
 let the sun shine in

THE WAY OF TRUTH

A new translation of the Dhammapada by the Ven. Sthavira Sangharakshita

The Pali Dhammapada is a collection of 423 verse aphorisms arranged according to subject in twenty-six sections. Most of these verses are found elsewhere in the Pali Tipitaka; some are original to the Dhammapada. However, all represent, according to tradition, the Buddha's teaching to his disciples on various occasions. The present version is an attempt to reproduce, in modern English, something of the terseness and directness of the original, avoiding the stilted diction and obsolete expressions that have sometimes characterised previous translations

VI. The section of the Spiritually Mature

- 76 Should one see a man of understanding who, as if indicating a (buried) treasure, points out faults and administers reproof, let one associate with such a spiritually mature person. To associate with one like this is good, not evil.
- 77 Let him instruct, let him advise, let him restrain from uncivilised behaviour, (and the result will be that) he will be dear to the good and detestable to the bad.
- 78 Do not associate with evil friends; do not associate with low fellows. Associate with spiritual friends; associate with Overmen.
- 79 One who has imbibed the Truth lives happily with well-seeing mind. The spiritually mature person delights in the Truth made known by the Elect.
- 80 Irrigators draw off waters; fletchers straighten arrows; carpenters shape wood: the spiritually mature discipline themselves.
- 81 As a solid rock cannot be shaken by the wind, so the spiritually mature person is unmoved by praise or blame.
- 82 Hearing the Truth of Things, the spiritually mature win insight like a deep lake (suddenly) becoming clear and undisturbed.
- 83 True men give up everything; the righteous do not speak wishing for sensuous pleasures. Touched now by pleasure, now by pain, the spiritually mature show neither elation, nor depression.
- 84 Not for one's own sake, nor for the sake of others, should one desire sons, wealth, or territory; one should not desire success for oneself by unrighteous means. He (who behaves in such a way) is virtuous, spiritually mature, and righteous.
- 85 Few among men are those who go to the Further Shore. The others, the (ordinary) people, chase up and down this shore.
- 86 Those people who conform themselves to the well-explained Truth of Things and who are desirous of (reaching) the Other Shore, they will pass over the Realm of Death, so difficult to transcend.
- 87 Forsaking dark ways, the spiritually mature person cultivates the bright. Coming from home to the homeless (life), he (abides) in solitude (which is) hard to enjoy.
- 88 Giving up delight in sensuous pleasures the spiritually mature person, the man-of-no-possession, should purify himself from (all) mental defilements.
- 89 They whose minds have cultivated to perfection the Factors of Enlightenment and who, free from clinging, delight in the giving up of attachment, those bias-free radiant ones are 'Nirvanised' (even) in this world (this life)

(words in brackets represent explanatory additions by the translator.)

DIARY

for further information on the events below, please contact Sarum House, 3 Plough Lane, Purley, Surrey, Tel. 01.660.2542

Please include a SAE with all bookings and orders

Easter Retreat

3rd/12th April at Keffolds, Bunch Lane, Haslemere, Surrey
Tel. Haslemere 2038 (booking essential)

Buddhist Arts and Crafts Exhibition

22 May at Sarum House

Tickets available now from Sarum House, price 50p.

Communication seminars:

1st/2nd May at Conway Hall, RedLion Square, Holborn.

25/26 September, at Quartermaine School, Haslemere

30/31 October and 27/28 November, also at Haslemere

WESAK

Sunday 9th May

(further details to be arranged)

Summer Retreat:

14/30th August, at Keffolds.

MEDITATION CLASSES (UNTIL JUNE 30)

at Sakura, 14 Monmouth Street, London WC2

Tuesday 6.30pm Beginners

Wednesday 7.00pm Regular

Thursday 7.00pm Order

CONTRIBUTIONS

This newsletter relies for its continued existence on your regular donations: please do not wait for us to remind you! If you do not want further copies please tell us so! Subscriptions: 50p minimum for four issues.

Subscriptions, editorial copy, and relevant correspondence to the Editor, at Sarum House. All other enquiries to the Secretary (Brenda Fernay) also at Sarum House. Donations for the New Sakura Aquisition fund to the Hon. Treasurer, FWBO, 14 Monmouth Street, London WC2. All cheques payable to FWBO.

NEXT ISSUE: JUNE 30. COPY DEADLINE: JUNE 12th.

For further information in this regard, please refer to the report of the Committee on the subject of the same.

The Committee has also received information from the same source that the same has been forwarded to the appropriate authorities for their consideration.

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