

Friends of the Western Buddhist Order

Newsletter

FWBO Newsletter 24

Autumn 1974

Editor: Upasika Marichi

Published quarterly by the Friends of the Western Buddhist Order
1a Balmore Street, Archway, London N.19. Tel: 263 2339

President: Venerable Maha Sthavira Sangharakshita

Chairman: Upasaka Subhuti

Secretary: Upasika Dhammadinna

Treasurer: Upasaka Lokamitra

SUBSCRIPTIONS: We regret that it has become necessary to
raise subscriptions to £1.50 per year, £2.00 overseas.
Cheques and postal orders should be made payable to FWBO.

ABOUT THE FRIENDS OF THE WESTERN BUDDHIST ORDER

The Friends of the Western Buddhist Order was formed in 1967 by the Venerable Maha Sthavira Sangharakshita. It is a charitable organisation, whose aims are threefold:

1. To foster interest in, and understanding of, the teaching of the Buddha, and to propagate that teaching in a form and manner appropriate to the conditions of present day life in the West.
2. To provide facilities for the dissemination of that teaching, and for those wishing to practise it. To this end, the FWBO holds retreats and seminars, public meditation classes and lectures, publishes literature on Buddhism, and undertakes other projects as considered necessary for the furtherance of these ends.
3. To act as the supporting organ and matrix of the Western Buddhist Order, and to help individuals in this Order in the furtherance of their work in any way considered necessary.

The Friends of the Western Buddhist Order is governed by a Council which holds regular meetings to determine policies and organise events.

The Western Buddhist Order was founded by Venerable Sangharakshita in April 1968. It is a community of men and women who have, by taking the Upasaka Ordination, made a personal commitment to practising the teaching of the Buddha in their own lives. The Order now numbers over forty members, most of whom work in or near London, yet it also has an increasing number of members living in the country and abroad, notably in Finland and New Zealand.

Venerable Maha Sthavira Sangharakshita is English by birth and was born in Streatham, London, in 1925. At the age of sixteen he went to India, where he made contact with the living traditions of Buddhism, studying its philosophy, scriptures, and languages, practising meditation, and meeting many great teachers from India, Burma, China, Ceylon and Tibet. He has been initiated into the three major traditions of Buddhism, and his teachers include several eminent masters of meditation and doctrine.

In 1950 Venerable Sangharakshita founded a monastery in Kalimpong where he remained for fourteen years, studying, writing and practising meditation. In 1957 he published A Survey of Buddhism, which has now become a standard and widely acclaimed textbook on Buddhism. In 1966 he returned to England and settled once more in London, where he founded the FWBO in the spring of the following year. His other writings published to date include The Three Jewels (1967), Buddhism and Art (1956), and Crossing the Stream (1972). He has also given over eighty public lectures on Buddhism, and written numerous poems and essays.

Sangharakshita is now living in Norfolk, where he is continuing his writing and teaching activities.

Chairman's Report

REPORT TO THE COUNCIL OF THE FWBO FOR THE YEAR SEPTEMBER 1973-4

In a movement such as our own, growth and development is the keynote. This past year, the seventh in the existence of the Friends of the Western Buddhist Order, has manifested a marked degree of both. During the course of the year all of the previous office holders have left, to continue their work in other and new centres. The majority of present council members have been ordained since the last Annual General Meeting, and several of these are now devoting themselves full time to the work of the Friends. Expansion or change have not been without their strains but everyone has risen admirably to the call for increased efficiency and effectiveness.

This is the first full year that the Ven. Sangharakshita has not been in London in day to day contact with the affairs of the movement, a situation which has left him free to concentrate on more directly spiritual matters and which has, by placing full responsibility on the Council, demanded a greater and greater degree of maturity and initiative from its members.

The work of the FWBO Council has grown considerably so that fortnightly meetings are now necessary. Three committees deal with the main areas of concern. The New Centre Committee is organising the search for a new Centre in London and the raising of funds to that end. The Publications Committee administers the printing press and oversees the various publications the FWBO produces. The Retreats Committee arranges for and organises a greatly increased number of retreats. Worthy of mention also is the work of the Treasurer who ably deals with a doubled turnover, the Secretary who administers what is fast becoming a full time office with the Centre open throughout the day, the Publicity Officer and his assistants who are gradually raising the standard and effectiveness of our advertising.

There has been in this year quite an emphasis on the creation of a viable organisation but not at the expense of the spiritual work with which we are engaged. Activities at the Archway centre have continued and expanded. Yoga and Karate and beginners' meditation class, taped lectures, and weekly Order meetings have been supplemented by an additional meditation class, by a more advanced evening of meditation study and puja and by a fortnightly women's group meeting. Three twelve week

introductory courses on Buddhism have been held with great success and more are planned for the coming year. The centre is now in use every night of the week and attendance at all activities is high. At most times during the day someone is using the shrine room for meditation, chanting or yoga.

During the winter period a series of lectures was given at the Centre, another 'first' in that each lecture was given by an Order member other than the Ven. Sangharakshita. Wesak, Dharmachakra Day, Padmasambhava Day, and Sangha Day, together with the triple festival of the foundation of the Friends, of the Order, and the Buddha's birthday have all been well celebrated. And in general, the Archway Centre has been the focus of a lively and increasingly dedicated local community of Order members and Friends.

An important function of the Friends is the organisation of residential retreats, since these afford people the opportunity to experience the benefits of the Dharma in a fairly concentrated form. Two large mixed retreats have been held most successfully at the Old Rectory, Tittleshall, and at Four Winds in Farnham. However the emphasis has been on smaller, more intensive men's and women's retreats and a number of these have been held. A retreat for the Order was held at Four Winds and proved so successful that one or more will become part of our annual programme. It is becoming increasingly apparent that we need a permanent centre at which more retreats can be held catering for a wider range of needs and some movement has begun towards the fulfilment of this objective.

Ven. Sangharakshita has held three seminars of ten days duration for the benefit of Order members and these are to be continued during the next year, with possibly one to be held each month.

The quarterly newsletter received a change of editor. Upasaka Ananda's work on the first 21 issues should be remembered with particular gratitude. With the new editor and a feeling of increased responsibility for the publication by more people the Newsletter has begun to change. It is now more factual and less personal and it is to be hoped that the visual presentation, style of reporting and so forth will continue to develop. The function of the Newsletter is an important one in that it maintains contact with people who cannot regularly attend our activities.

The last three issues of the Newsletter have been printed on our own offset litho printing press now installed at the Aryatara community. The press should fulfil two functions - first of all providing some income for the movement and secondly printing our own publicity and publications. The first function has not yet borne fruit though some work has been done for outside concerns and though the printers are gaining in experience and skill. The second function has seen the publication of the Newsletter, publicity material, and a pamphlet entitled 'An Outline of Buddhism for Schools'. The Venerable Sangharakshita's 'Path of the Inner Life' now in preparation will be the press's first large undertaking. It is very important that the major capital investment in the press begins to show return during the next year.

Ven. Sangharakshita's five talks entitled 'The Essence of Zen' were published early in the year, and the book is selling steadily. More talks and all the seminars are to be transcribed and prepared for publication. Publications in the future will be a very important part of our activities and great emphasis must be placed on the establishment of an efficient and solvent publications department.

The bookstall at the centre, besides stocking our own publications sells a wide range of books on Buddhism and has expanded considerably during the year, and a mail order service is now offered.

The tapes department, which deals with the sale of the Ven. Sangharakshita's tape recorded lectures has also changed hands during this year. Some new equipment has been purchased and more advertising engaged in, and there has been a marked increase in sales as well as in quality. Steps have already been taken towards the eventual autonomy of the Tapes department, all profits are now to be ploughed directly back into the purchase of bulk stock and equipment.

Several branches of the FWBO have been formed during the year. At Ealing Upasaka Vangisa has formed a group which meets each week for meditation and discussion and puja, and successfully held a series of three lectures given by Order members. In Truro Upasaka Manjuvajra has regular meetings two nights a week with a nucleus of dedicated attenders. Upasika Karuna has held weekly meetings with two or three Friends in Exeter. Gary Stoloff has been holding regular meetings with interested neighbours in Wales and a retreat has been held at his farm.

Upasaka Buddhadasa has recently gone to Brighton in connection with the Brighton Buddhist Society, and will shortly be opening the FWBO (Brighton).

Two other autonomous centres now exist in Glasgow and at Aryatara community in Purley. This sets the pattern for the future in which a branch of a particular centre will form with one or more Order members. When the number of Order members is five or more the branch will become a centre, legally autonomous though bound to the fabric of the movement by the existence of the Order itself.

Ven. Sangharakshita has visited Holland where Nel in't Veldt is enthusiastically trying to establish the FWBO, and also Finland where Upasaka Vajrabodhi and Upasika Bodhishri have made a promising start with a few committed regulars.

Upasaka Ashvajit has recently left for New Zealand in order to prepare the ground for Ven. Sangharakshita's visit in November. Two groups have been formed in Christchurch and Auckland and the intention is to set them on an even firmer basis during the coming year.

The most important event of the past year has been the purchase of a small retreat centre at Castle Acre in Norfolk which functions as the Ven. Sangharakshita's headquarters. His accommodation difficulties have affected the whole movement and the month or so during which he has been settled at Castle Acre has already had a stabilising influence. Much gratitude is due to the anonymous individuals who donated the necessary funds and who made available a large loan.

This note of gratitude should be further extended to all those who helped our movement during the year, owners of houses where retreats have been held, people who have given or loaned us money, yoga and karate teachers, cooks, organisers, designers, distributors, and general labourers.

During the year to come we can expect expansion to continue with our regular activities continuing and growing. It seems to me that we should direct our attention to six main objectives:

1. The finding of a new London Centre: Archway has a distinct air of desolation and decay and a feeling of insecurity pervades those who work at the centre. This objective is of the utmost importance.
2. The raising of funds: a noteworthy start has been made in this direction. Without this nothing can be achieved.
3. The continued movement towards, and establishment of, greater organisational efficiency and effectiveness.
4. The establishment of an efficient and profitable publications department, both to handle the large number of books, talks and essays which Ven. Sangharakshita has prepared, and to provide an income for the FWBO.
5. The establishment of a centre in the country at which regular retreats can be held and which functions in a semi-monastic form as a place for intensive meditation and study.
6. The establishment in London of an Order house, where Order members can live and for Order members and other members of the Sangha to stay whilst in London.

With the fulfilment of these objectives, our movement will undeniably have a more or less unshakeable basis for further growth.

SUBHUTI
FWBO Chairman

BUDDHIST SOCIETY GOLDEN JUBILEE

The Buddhist Society is holding its Golden Jubilee Celebration and Reception at 7 pm on Thursday 21 November at the Great Hall, Caxton Hall, Westminster, S.W.1. Speakers will include Christmas Humphries (founding President of the Buddhist Society), the Ven. Maha Thera Saddhatissa, Alfred Vial, and the Ven. Lama Chime Rinpoche. There will be an exhibition of Buddhist works of art and treasures from the Society's archives, and all are welcome.

Retreats & Seminars

SEMINAR ON D.T. SUZUKI'S "OUTLINES OF MAHAYANA BUDDHISM"

This recent seminar, attended by eleven upasakas, was held at Sulocana's house in Norfolk and lasted ten days. The Ven. Sangharakshita came over every day from his home in Castle Acre, a few miles away.

'Outlines of Mahayana Buddhism' is one of Suzuki's earliest books, and from the beginning it became obvious that it is one which is coloured by vague emotion and subjectivity. Suzuki equates the spiritual with the emotional rather than the rational while also pointing out the dangers of either functioning alone. In the text he represents the Hinayana as cold and intellectual while the Mahayana is hymned for its emotional warmth, apparently a subjective split projected onto these two vehicles of the Dharma. At this juncture it was pointed out that the balance of the emotional and the rational is a psychological objective rather than a spiritual one. Suzuki's careless use of language produces rhetoric which reifies and even deifies concept: the Dharmakaya for instance appears as a cosmological principle endowed with its own will. Ven. Sangharakshita took this opportunity to stress the vital importance of the exact use of language, inadequate though it may be, so that the Dharma is not misrepresented.

Suzuki equates karma with conditionality and seems to be unaware that it is merely one out of five different orders of conditionality. The doctrine of karma is perhaps the most misrepresented subject in the book although many other passages are even more misleading because Suzuki's considerable enthusiasm for his subject is unchecked by the careful use of language. There are many useful passages also which restate simply and accurately what has previously been eulogised into the fantastic. Ven. Sangharakshita said that reading this book many years before had been very useful to him.

Finding so many shortcomings in the admittedly early writings of so renowned a scholar as D.T. Suzuki raised the question of the value of the general reading of books on Buddhism. It was agreed that there is very little that one can recommend to the beginner and that this should be preferably of an inspirational rather than purely doctrinal nature. At the same time many newcomers to the practice of Buddhism are already widely read on the subject and their needs must be

met, perhaps with clarification. We have, as Sangharakshita pointed out, many hundreds of texts and books on Buddhism at our immediate disposal so that there is a massive job to be done in sorting out what is useful to the West and our own developing school of Buddhism.

SUMMER RETREAT AND ORDINATIONS

The Summer Retreat this year was held at Four Winds Temple, a Sufi farm near Farnham in Surrey; the programme blended the customary ingredients of meditation, yoga, taped lectures, puja, communication exercises, and, by no means least, work.

The central point of the retreat was the ordination by Ven. Sangharakshita of six new members into the Western Buddhist Order. In the middle of the second week of the retreat Bhante unobtrusively arrived, his berobed figure walking in the grounds lending a timeless quality to the afternoon. In the evening, in the context of the Sevenfold Puja, the ordinees went out, one by one, into the darkness, to a small hut in the grounds nearby, where Bhante waited by a specially prepared shrine to give the private ordinations.

The following evening, ringed about by all those on the retreat, including about a dozen members of the Order, the six received their public ordination. A particularly pleasing feature was the ordination of two Friends from the Glasgow Centre. This was a milestone in the development of the FWBO, as these were the first ordinations of Friends from a Centre other than London.

Kay Turpie from Glasgow was given the name Mallikā, which means "sweet smelling Jasmine".

John Angus from Glasgow is now called Uttara, which means "supreme" and also signifies the northern direction.

Margaret Stapeley, an old friend of Bhante's from Hastings, became Sanghamittā, "friend of the Sangha". The historical Sanghamitta, the daughter of Asoka, was a nun who was instrumental in taking Buddhism to Ceylon.

Ray Fricker from Cambridge became Sona, which means "gold" and suggest incorruptibility.

Debie Lobstein of Archway is now called Khemā, meaning "patience" in the sense of the kind of patient rapport which an artist has with his materials.

Lastly, Tony McMahon from Archway was named Vessantara, which traditionally was the name of the Buddha in the life before the one in which he became enlightened, and means "he who has everything within".

ORDER RETREAT

The Summer Retreat was followed by a week's retreat for the Order, also held at Four Winds. This provided a valuable opportunity for a large number of Order members to come together, together, and for the six new Order members to feel they had fully "stepped over" into the Order, and to get to know their new brothers in the Sangha. A feature of the retreat was a number of study periods based on the transcript of the study seminar in the Bodhicharyavatara of Shantideva, which took place earlier this year. In this way the information gained from the seminar was disseminated to many members of the Order who has not attended the seminar, and the transcript provided the basis for much lively discussion.

The culmination of the retreat came on the last evening, when Ananda and Devaraja led a ritual recitation of the text of the Bodhicharyavatara. The shrine had been elaborately and beautifully prepared by Devaraja and, in the course of the recitation, thirty seven different kinds of offerings described in the text were made. Before the recitation the more conservative of those present were estimating that it would take about four hours, in the event the recitation lasted for more than six. This proved, for most of those present, a tremendously uplifting experience. Borne along on the wave of Shantideva's devotional fervour and vision, we were strongly impressed with the Bodhisattva's aspiration, to be "a tree for the wearied world journeying on the road of being".

The Order Retreat as a whole was felt by all to be a very valuable experience, and it is hoped to hold one, for two weeks instead of one, next summer (provided that the recitation is not also doubled in length).

LECTURE

Ananda recently gave the first of a series of four lectures, covering aspects of basic Buddhist teaching, to an audience gathered under the auspices of "Contacts" whose aim is to bring people of different faiths together informally. The next talk in the series, "The Path of Transformation", about Buddhist meditation will be given on Saturday 16 November, and will be followed on December 7 by "The One who has Awakened", and on January 18 by "The Two Pillars of Enlightenment". The meetings are held at 53 Cromwell Road, S.W.7. at 7 pm, admission free.

EXCERPT FROM THE 'BODHICARYAVATARA' SEMINAR TRANSCRIPT

Shantideva's great subject is the Bodhisattva: whoever, whatever the Bodhisattva may be, and that is the heart and centre of the whole Mahayana. If you understand what the Bodhisattva is, then you've understood practically everything. I think you can speak of the Mahayana in terms of the Buddha, the Bodhisattva, and the Bodhicitta. There is really only one Buddha, with all these different archetypal forms and aspects of the one Buddha nature just to make it richer and clearer; in the same way there is only one Bodhisattva in which human beings, as it were, participate in varying degrees; also there is only one Bodhicitta which manifests through different receptive individuals, in different degrees. We shouldn't take this literally - so many individual Bodhisattvas in the sense that you have individual people. They are individual experiences, but they are also all aspects of the Bodhisattva, which you could say is the Buddha nature under the form of time or at work in the temporal process.

Q. Even people are not really individual people then ?

A. They have the potentiality, one can say, to transcend their individuality. They can function and seem to function as individuals, whereas they are actually beyond that. But some just are individuals, they experience themselves as individuals, however others might see them. Even though someone might say, "No, I'm not enlightened, I don't want anything to do with Buddhahood or Buddhism", they've a perfect right to do that. What they say is correct.

If you insist on seeing them as a Buddha, all right, but you mustn't insist upon it as your will against their will, otherwise you will just put their backs up and they become less receptive than ever. It's like the Bodhisattva in the Saddharma Pundarika Sutra who went about saying, "I salute you because you are a Buddha." People got really annoyed and upset at being told that they were Buddhas. I wonder whether he was really doing a very wise thing.

Q. Do you think that as an attitude at least it could be very useful ?

A. Yes, surely, especially if it's something you keep within yourself, but I think you have to be careful about communicating it to people, because you don't want to give them the impression that you are telling them what they are or how they should be, which you have no right to do. It's a rather tricky point of difference - you've got the right to see them as you see them, and they've got the right to see themselves in the way that they see themselves. You mustn't assert your way of seeing them over or against their way of seeing themselves, even though you think yours is right, or even though yours is right, because if you insist on it in a personal way then you will only create resistance and take them further away from realising what you think or even know that they really are. So it won't be helping them if you say, "You are a Buddha - I don't care even if you do think you're a Christian." In that case you wouldn't be really seeing them as potentially enlightened, you would just be putting across your point of view, which is no better than their view. It's not a real spiritual insight that you are expressing. You are just trying to put across your point of view in a rather heavy way. We have to be careful of that too and keep these more sublime things a bit to ourselves, and try and feel them and experience them rather than put them across. Otherwise we just use these quite sublime teachings almost as a means of asserting ourselves.

GESHE RABTEN

Ven. Sangharakshita recently gave a small reception at Aryatara Community in Purley for the Ven. Geshe Rabten, a Tibetan teacher and scholar from the Gelagpa tradition, attended by members of the Order and their Mitras. The Geshe gave a talk, through his interpreter Gonsom Tulku Rinpoche, which stressed the importance of getting back to basics, building a solid foundation, and moving on to the path of regular steps, a teaching very much in agreement with those of Ven. Sangharakshita.

THE WESTERN BUDDHIST ORDER

What is the Western Buddhist Order ? It can be said to be the heart and centre of the FWBO. It is an inner community of those who have explicitly committed and dedicated themselves to the Three Jewels - the Buddha, the Dharma, and the Sangha - by having taken refuge in them and by having taken the ten Upasaka precepts: abstention from taking life, from taking the not-given, and from sexual misconduct; from false, harsh, useless and slanderous speech; from covetousness, animosity and false views. Ordination involves a deep commitment not only to the Three Jewels, but also to the propagation of Buddhist ideals through the Western Buddhist Order and in association with the FWBO. In this way it is possible to allow the inner commitment to find an outward expression. The nature of this expression may be different for each individual Order member. It may entail taking classes, administrative duties, writing, painting, lecturing and so on, or perhaps a combination of a number of things. The form of the expression is not important. What is important is that the expression is made and finds a suitable outlet, thus bringing the inner and outer life together.

Ordination into the Order is open to anyone who feels ready to make this commitment or who already feels it. Until the beginning of this year there was no intermediate stage between being a 'Friend' and becoming a member of the Order. This stage now exists in the form of the Kalyana Mitra system. Anyone who is seriously considering the possibility of ordination now asks two Order members to be his or her Kalyana Mitras (or spiritual friends). A simple ceremony is then performed which establishes a link for the Mitra (the Friend) through the Kalyana Mitras with the Order and thereby the whole Buddhist tradition. It is then the responsibility of the Kalyana Mitras to maintain contact with their mitra in order that the mitra can come to a full understanding of the significance of ordination. The Kalyana Mitras, if and when the time is ready, will then at the request of the mitra, propose to the Order that he or she receives ordination.

The Order was founded in April 1968 in London by the Venerable Sangharakshita and it is to him as head of the Order and as spiritual teacher that commitment is also made. Until the end of 1972 the Ven. Sangharakshita was present in London continuously for contact with all those who sought his guidance. Now, as the Order has grown in size and strength,

All things conditioned are instable, impermanent,
Fragile in essence, as an unbaked pot,
Like something borrowed, or a city founded on sand,
They last a short while only.

They are inevitably destroyed,
Like plaster washed off in the rains,
Like the sandy bank of a river -
They are conditioned, and their true nature is frail.

They are like the flame of a lamp,
Which rises suddenly and as soon goes out.
They have no power of endurance, like the wind
Or like foam, unsubstantial, essentially feeble.

They have no inner power, being essentially empty,
Like the stem of a plantain, if one thinks clearly,
Like conjuring tricks deluding the mind,
Or a fist closed on nothing to tease a child

From wisps of grass the rope is spun
By dint of exertion.
By turns of the wheel the buckets are raised from the well,
Yet each turn of itself is futile.

So the turning of all the components of becoming
Arises from the interaction of one with another.
In the unit the turning cannot be traced,
Either at the beginning or end.

Where the seed is, there is the young plant,
But the seed has not the nature of the plant,
Nor is it something other than the plant, nor is it
the plant -
So is the nature of the Law of Righteousness, neither
transient nor eternal.

All things conditioned are conditioned by ignorance,
And on final analysis they do not exist,
For they and the conditioning ignorance alike are
Emptiness
In their essential nature, without power of action

The mystic knows the beginning and end
Of consciousness, its production and passing away -
He knows that it came from nowhere and returns to nowhere,
And is empty (of reality) , like a conjuring trick.

Through the concomitance of three factors -
Firesticks, fuel and the work of the hands -
Fire is kindled. It serves its purpose
And quickly goes out again.

A wise man may seek here, there, and everywhere
Whence it has come, and whither it has gone,
Through every region in all directions,
But he cannot find it in its essential nature ...

Thus all things in this world of contingency
Are dependent on causes and conditions.
The mystic knows what is true reality,
And sees all conditioned things as empty and powerless.

this is no longer possible or necessary. He devotes much of his time to more intensive contact with Order members so that the Dharma which is communicated through him to them, may in turn be communicated through them to 'Friends'. The Order is more and more able to fulfil its role as a medium for the Dharma; but what sort of people make up the Order, and how do they live? The following paragraph should shed a little light on these questions.

An Order Register has been prepared, listing 47 Order members. The Order on the whole is rather youthful: the average age is 33. The youngest is 20 and the oldest will be 62 in December. Twenty-four out of forty-seven are between the ages of 24 and 30. There are 34 men and 13 women: 39 English, three Irish, two Scots, two Finns, and a German. The three Irish can speak French. Jinamata who is German speaks four languages. Bodhishri and Vajrabodhi, both Finns, speak five and six languages respectively. All Order members speak English, 34 of them being only proficient in their native tongue. Ten Order members are married and twenty live in Buddhist communities. About one in six maintains peripheral contact while one in four is totally active for the movement as a whole, to the exclusion or more or less any other pursuits. The remainder involve themselves in varying degrees. Three people are given financial assistance. There is a very rich variety of skills and professions within the Order, though only one in four has remained with his chosen profession. There are nine graduates and two Ph.D's with one Upasika currently working for a Ph.D. There are five designers, five teachers and five yoga teachers. Seven people have had experience in television or radio. There are two former actors, two former climbers, one beekeeper, and two potters, one cabby and one qualified psychiatric nurse, one contact lens maker and two research chemists. The Order has not yet attracted any professional musicians, though there is a violinist and a proficient guitarist. There are two artists engaged in thangka paintings and design work of a similar nature.

These then, rather coldly, are some of the statistics which cannot convey very much of the character of the individuals who collectively are the Western Buddhist Order. However diverse the skills, temperament and qualities may be, there is a common spiritual bond which gives an inner unity and provides a basis on which the spirit of Sangha, or spiritual fellowship can manifest.

WESTERN BUDDHIST ORDER LIBRARY

Readers are reminded that the Order possesses a fine reference library of over 800 books and periodicals on Buddhism and related subjects. As many of these volumes are rare and unobtainable elsewhere, this collection will be of great value and use to those doing research for projects, books, or articles, as well as the student of Buddhism who wishes to explore aspects of Buddhism in depth. The library is located at the Aryatara Community in Purley, and will be open during the daytime to anyone wishing to use it.

The Library is constantly being expanded, and we welcome any gifts of books or periodicals on relevant subjects. If you are interested in helping in any way, please get in touch with Ananda at Aryatara.

COURSES AT THE CITY LIT. AND WANDSWORTH ADULT EDUCATION CENTRE

At Wandsworth we began with six in the class and have now grown to nine. At the City Literary Institute 41 enrolled and about 25 now attend. The courses take the form of a period of meditation followed by a talk on basic Buddhist teachings. The students cover a wide range of ages, interests and backgrounds, many of whom would never have come anywhere a Buddhist centre. Nearly all seem to have found something in the course which has interested, inspired or pleased them and a few have been meditating regularly each day since the beginning of the courses.

Adult education centres are a challenging new situation for the spread of the Dharma. People who attend are usually lively and curious, very often they feel quite a strong urge to "improve themselves" and to prevent themselves from getting in a rut. There is a fairly strong accent on discussion which means nothing easily escapes appraisal.

It is hoped that it will be possible to arrange a residential weekend in the country for these courses before the end of the year.

Regular Activities at Archway

MONDAY NIGHT COURSE

The fourth such course began on September 30 and involves nine people. The evening follows the usual programme of meditation with instruction, a talk on an aspect of Buddhist doctrine, a talk on symbolism in Buddhism, and concluding with the sevenfold puja.

The first weekend retreat of the course was held after three such Monday sessions had taken place, and the group had been acquainted with some general Buddhism and had had a limited experience of meditation. It was clear that over the two days of the retreat the teachings which were now being put into practice were having a very definite effect. Concentration increased, energy rose, friendships blossomed, faces shone and a real sense of devotion developed during the concluding pujas.

We had discussed the previous week how the Dharma, the teachings and practices of Buddhism, must be tested by each person individually to see whether or not they are conducive to growth, development and evolution - in short that the proof of the pudding is in the eating. The retreat provided an extended opportunity to experience the teachings and practices, and the ingredients, flavour and effect of the pudding were not found wanting.

The course will continue with an in-depth study of Buddhism in terms of the Eightfold Path, and hopefully will culminate in a second retreat.

* * * * *

The Tuesday evening programme of meditation and study groups continues to be very well attended by thirty or so regulars and the evening has a general feeling of commitment and seriousness. Wednesday's yoga class now has a steady core of dedicated regulars, some of whom attend two extra, more intensive classes on Tuesdays and Thursdays (in the day time). The Wednesday beginners' class brings a steady stream of new faces, many of whom stay to listen to the tape recorded lecture, or occasional short talk with discussion, which follows the meditation class, and which provides a gradual introduction to the more advanced Tuesday class. Karate on Thursdays is increasingly popular, and the Sunday beginners class is steady many people staying to the later meditation and puja, and hopefully to the new autumn lecture series (see end for details).

STUDY GROUPS

Two small study groups are now meeting weekly, one at the Muswell Hill community and the other at the Balmore Street community. The former continues to investigate 'A Survey of Buddhism' by Ven. Sangharakshita to great profit and illumination. The latter is studying the Majjhima Nikaya - 'The Middle Length Discourses' from the Pali Canon. The main difficulty to begin with has been in trying to take in the import of each sutta, lost in the complex repetitions and repetitions of repetitions as it is. We are however finding that we have adapted to, and begin to appreciate, the strange mnemonic style in which the texts have been handed down. The subject matter is absolutely fundamental to the leading of the spiritual life, emphasising over and over again the need for purity of mind and deed and for the constant watchfulness necessary to achieve this.

The study groups are playing a very important part in the lives of those who partake in them. As well as putting us in touch with the whole living tradition of Buddhism, they provide a context in which relationships are of a much higher, more 'spiritual' quality than is normally the case. A powerful feeling of fellowship, of Sangha, is generated which finds expression in the Pujas which conclude the evening.

SANGHA DAY

Sangha Day was celebrated at the FWBO Archway Centre on Tuesday 1 October, beginning in the afternoon with a special metta bhavana meditation for Order members and Mitras to affirm the bond of Sangha within the Western Buddhist Order and its Friends. This was followed by chanting from the Pali Canon and from the White Lotus Sutra which extended this affirmation into the universal Sangha beyond time and geographical location.

Later in the afternoon, when the shrine was decorated, the doors were opened to the public and food was provided and consumed in an atmosphere of fellowship. Then in the shrine room a talk was given on the significance of Sangha, followed by a metta bhavana meditation for the development of universal loving-kindness. After a solo display of Japanese dancing, mostly of the Heian period, the concluding puja was held, which in its own nature very appositely celebrates the Sangha.

OPEN DAY

The Archway Centre had an Open Day on Saturday 19 October as part of a neighbourhood festival sponsored by Camden Council, in order to give our neighbours an opportunity to learn more about "who we are and what we do".

With the usual beautiful spread of vegetarian home baking arranged by Upasika Khema, we wondered if there would in fact be anyone to eat it, but the response was good. Interest came from a complete cross section of people including local youngsters who came in for the "free grub" but whose curiosity eventually drew them upstairs to be instructed in the Mindfulness of Breathing.

The yoga class was attended by the Lady Mayor and our local Councillor. Several other visitors, enthusiastic but unprepared, disregarded restrictive clothing and threw themselves into warrior poses and shoulder stands. The Communication Exercises too took down a few barriers. There was a simple introductory talk about Buddhism, and the function of the FWBO, and a concluding puja. The day also provided a good opportunity for parents and friends of Friends to see members of the FWBO in action in a Buddhist setting. The whole event seems to have 'opened up' something for sufficient people to justify the effort entailed by an extra function in an increasingly busy diary.

NEWS FROM AN OLD FRIEND

In a recent letter to Lokamitra, Norman Needes, who used to teach yoga at the Archway Centre and on Retreats, and lived in a Friends' community, wrote of the Yoga Centre where he is living in San Francisco "...we are all poor and concerned with one another's growth. There are usually 9-10 people living here and we all have outside jobs in order to support ourselves and the Centre. However things seem to flow a lot easier here. A job comes up or someone donates to our building fund - we are building a small temple for fire ceremonies etc., in our back yard. The next project will be a country ashram in California.... I feel strong affinities with Bhante and the Friends."

AT THE BUDDHIST SOCIETY SUMMER SCHOOL

This year, for the first time, two members of the Order, myself (Devamitra) and Subhuti, took part in the annual Buddhist Society Summer School where we were jointly responsible for conducting a late evening meditation and puja. The Summer School seems to be aimed at presenting as broad a range of Buddhist teaching as is possible within a period of nine days and, to this end, a staggeringly full programme of lectures, discussions, workshops, meditation periods, sutra readings, and slide shows is arranged with remarkable efficiency. In this way 160 people are brought together annually. Forty per cent of those attending this year had never been before. For many it was their first contact with Buddhism at all; for others it was the only occasion of contact with other Buddhists during the year.

The dominant feature of the Summer School is the phenomenal number of talks and discussions and lectures. This however is balanced by about four and half hours of meditation periods, including the puja. The response to the puja seemed on the whole to be quite positive, with perhaps a hard core of a dozen or so people attending unfailingly. Many people inquired about the Friends, Bhante, and the Order, and expressed an interest in our activities. Subhuti had been invited to give a talk on the anatta doctrine in conjunction with another speaker who gave a very full outline of this particular teaching, referring to various parts of the Pali canon, while Subhuti explained the danger of interpreting it psychologically as opposed to metaphysically.

The highlight of the daily programme was the main evening lecture which almost always drew a full house. There was a tremendous variety of material presented from equally various viewpoints. The evening lectures were given for the most part by guest speakers, who would come just for that evening to give their talk and then answer questions the following morning.

I found the Summer School both an interesting and enjoyable experience, but at times rather confusing. So many different viewpoints were being presented, (perhaps by speakers who were essentially talking about the same thing) that unless one has an outstandingly clear mind, some degree of confusion must result, especially for someone who has no definite commitment

in any one direction and who is also open to the possibility of making such a commitment. It's not that any particular attitude or approach is necessarily wrong or mistaken, but when they are all brought together under one banner, with one point of view apparently contradicting another, and when there is no unifying factor in the presence of a particular teacher, or even a particular tradition, then misunderstanding, confusion and even mental congestion are bound to arise. Some of the teachings presented could hardly be regarded as traditionally Buddhist, so here was another confusing factor. One would have thought that there was a sufficient complexity and wealth of material in Buddhism itself without bringing in modern Western innovations. Perhaps when we are able to see the Dharma in its fullest perspective, new techniques and approaches may arise, having been carefully steeped in and nurtured by the tradition. To innovate prematurely will only result in failure.

An attitude which has sometimes been current within our own movement is that to have more than one teacher is a source of strength, but I would say quite emphatically that this is not so. At the Summer School, whilst listening to other teachers of experience, and perhaps even of considerable attainment, I became confused and uncertain. They were firmly based in a particular tradition and naturally expressed themselves in the particular language of that tradition. Again, it was not necessarily a question of their being mistaken, but their approach to perhaps the same goal was so different that one wondered whether one was really treading the same path. It became very evident to me how necessary loyalty and commitment to one's chosen teacher is. Listening to other teachers can only bring about doubt and conflict while one is still only a fledgling in one's pursuance of the Dharma. It is an asset and a source of strength to have only one teacher, not a drawback. Neither does it represent an attitude of narrow sectarianism or totalitarianism. Coming as it does from a single teacher, the teaching one receives has the enormous benefit of consistency.

A multiplicity of good teachers can give rise to confusion; how much more so will this be the case with a multiplicity of teachers of a more dubious nature who do not have the experience of and the commitment to the tradition which 'in their own way' they purport to interpret and represent. If one picks and chooses the choice pieces from each particular 'guru', good, bad, or indifferent, then one will merely create

for oneself a dabbler's assortment of fragments which lack any thread of continuity and which hold one back from making the genuine commitment which is the essential basis for spiritual growth.

The Summer School offers a friendly and relaxed atmosphere in which many are enabled to come together, on a social level, who would not otherwise have any contact with the Dharma, other than perhaps a book. The shop window is there, but if you become dazzled by the variety of fare you won't know where to focus your attention and your head will spin.

DEVAMITRA

TAPES DEPARTMENT

The technological wing of the FWBO has recently grown a few more feathers with the purchase of four new cassette recorders, the money for which was loaned to us by a Finnish friend who realises how important Ven. Sangharakshita's lectures are for spreading the Dharma in the West. These new recorders have also made quite a considerable difference to the quality of our cassette recordings. A little of the loan was also used for a dip into the advertising world but this as yet has met with no response. Despite this, there has been quite an increase in the numbers of orders over the past four months since the Tapes Department moved up to Muswell Hill. The two most popular series at the moment are 'The Higher Evolution of Man', and 'Aspects of the Higher Evolution of the Individual'.

A new tapes list has been drawn up with a clearer presentation than the existing one. This should be available some time in the coming month, and will be sent out on request. As from the publication of the new list, the Tapes Department will be 'christened' Dharmachakra Tapes.

Ven. Sangharakshita's recent lecture given at the Buddhist Society, 'The Path of Regular Steps & the Path of Irregular Steps', is now available on tape or cassette.

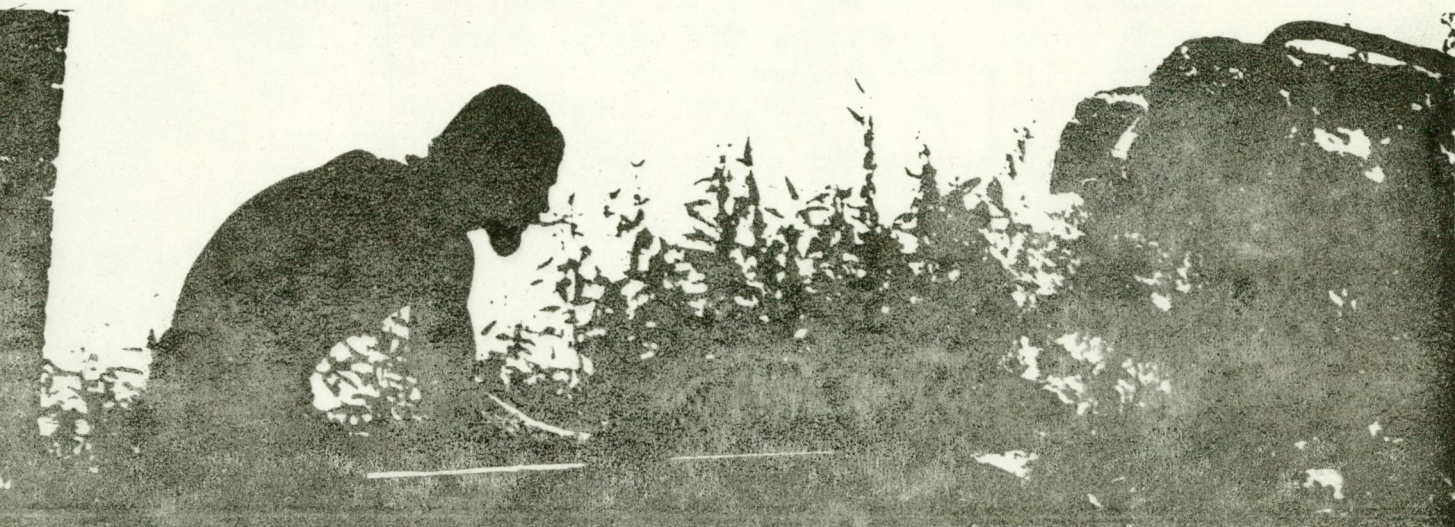
Centres & Branches

HELSINKI NEWS

The FWBO Centre in Helsinki is a year old now. We started the second autumn season by advertising the beginners' meditation class in the largest newspaper in town, and on the notice board of the local and only vegetarian restaurant in Helsinki. As a result there were eight newcomers the following week. The idea of meditation seems familiar to quite a few but hardly any literature on Buddhism is available in Finnish. There is only one recent book: 'Zen' by Alan Watts (published in England as 'The Way of Zen'). This book has become quite popular, and may be the reason why many of the newcomers express their interest in Zen. FWBO is not the only place here to give information about Buddhism, there is the long established "Friends of Buddhism", some of whose members pay a visit to us occasionally.

At present the regular activities consist of the weekly beginners' class with meditation and Ven. Sangharakshita's taped lectures with improvised translation when necessary, and of the regular class with a longer, 50 to 60 minutes, meditation, break and puja. In August six of us gathered for a successful weekend retreat in the country - see the photograph taken during the "vigorous working period" - and we plan to to have another retreat soon.

There has been a rather rainy season and one can notice the darkness of winter slowly descending. In this gloom Sangha Day brought a refreshing break. Eleven people participated, the atmosphere was relaxed, most of the people already knowing each other. Vajrabodhi gave a short talk on the significance of the Sangha, there was a variety of food, taped Tibetan music, and live concluding puja with prolonged chanting and offerings conducted by Bodhishri.



Our centre is situated near the docks in a part of the town which was previously famous for its unsettled way of life. This Punavuori, meaning Red Mountain, is not even now, after partial redevelopment a particularly good address, but FWBO fits in well with the somewhat exotic image of Punavuori.

FWBO SURREY, ARYATARA BUDDHIST COMMUNITY

Sangha Day saw the dedication at Aryatara of a second shrine room which was necessitated by the commencement of an advanced meditation class on Tuesday evenings at the same time as the Hatha Yoga beginners' class. The intermediate yoga class has been moved from Thursdays to Mondays (full programme at end of Newsletter). The Order and Mitra Days are held here once a month, and we have a heavy programme of weekend retreats.

FWBO GLASGOW

Sangha Day was celebrated during Bhante's first visit to the Centre. Between sixty and seventy people came and for many it was there first meeting with Bhante. We are actively searching for new premises - knees are touching neighbours' knees in the shrine room and more room is needed for yoga classes, vegetarian cookery demonstrations, stupa dancing, as well as for the regular weekly programme.

There is a wide age range in those who come regularly to the Centre. Retreats are mainly attended by men and are held in the Centre or at a farm belonging to a Friend. Work on a small retreat cottage on the farm is nearing completion.

Our first women's night was sparsely attended but enjoyed by those present. A speaker's class is held sporadically. There is a core of about ten people preparing themselves for ordination, and there are now four active Order members working at the Glasgow Centre. We publish a monthly newsletter, and a quarterly magazine issue called Mitra. There is also a well-stocked shop to help the funds.

The Centre is open from noon daily for meditation, the study of taped lectures and borrowing books from the library. For the weekly programme, please refer to the end pages.

FWBO AUCKLAND, NEW ZEALAND

Our first place in the city, although cheap, was above a main intersection and so we have moved to new premises in a quieter location and at the end of September opened our new home together with our new bookshop, 'The Bodhi Leaf', which Hugh Gaw, one of the group members, has kindly offered to manage. We are located on the second floor and have 2000 sq. ft. at a cost of approximately \$5500 per annum. We do not expect to recoup much of this amount from the sale of books, etc, and three members have guaranteed to back us for twelve months. Our new home has a very beautiful shrine room plus a study-lounge, a bookshop, a private study, and two other offices which we hope to sublet.

The New Zealand Justice Department earlier this year finally accepted Upasaka Akshobhya as a registered Minister of Religion and placed his lay name on the roll of Officiating Ministers authorised to conduct marriages. Two marriages have so far taken place, one of them on the same evening as the opening of our new home.

Every week for the past six months two members have visited the Auckland prison to see Alec, who requested Buddhist visitors. No difficulties have been insurmountable and Buddhist literature now is available and circulating within the prison.

Ashvajit arrived in Auckland on June 15 and stayed with Akshobhya at Mairangi Bay, his enthusiasm stirring attendance from two nights a week to four nights, his devotion and knowledge of the Dharma encouraging all to greater effort. After almost a month, having established a new order of action, he flew south to Christchurch to inspire the Christchurch movement to new levels of effort and commitment. He stayed there with Lim (the founder and organiser of the now three-year old group) in the community house. While there he gave a series of four lectures on the 'Evolution of Buddhism'. Ashvajit returned to Auckland towards the end of October to make the final arrangements for Bhante's visit, and to prepare members of the pre-ordination class for a retreat with Bhante shortly after his arrival.

FWBO CORNWALL

The Cornish Friends now meet twice a week: on Mondays for meditation and a discussion, and on Wednesdays for meditation followed by either a lecture, a discussion, or a second meditation (on a three week cycle) and to round off the evening a puja. We are at present listening to the series of lectures on the Noble Eightfold Path and using these as the basis of our discussions and thoughts in the intervening weeks. Some have also started meeting once a week to study the methods of psychoanalysis; these meetings it is hoped will give the participants another means for understanding themselves & their relationships, and at the same time help develop an experiential attitude to the higher evolution.

Over the past few months more people have come into contact, in a few cases regular contact, with our movement, and a recent "advertising campaign" may make other Buddhists and potential Buddhists aware of our presence.

Sangha Day was celebrated with a meeting consisting of a Metta Bhavana practice, followed by some readings from "The Three Jewels", and "The Jewel Ornament of Liberation"; then a tea and cakes ceremony held in a quiet relaxed atmosphere in the shrine was followed by the final Puja. We were pleased to have with us for the celebrations a representative of the Mousehole Buddhist group.

Over the past few months there has been a strengthening of the movement, with the arrival of a second Order member, Upasaka Dhruva, and an increased sense of seriousness in the approach of many individuals. One certainly has the feeling that the Buddhadharma seed has sprouted in the Cornish soil, even though it is still a tender sapling, and that with the help of the Protectors it will develop into a mighty oak. In the past this tree provided the supports that men needed to mine the rich ore from the depths beneath the Cornish soil. Hopefully the spirit of those miners will rise again to dig for riches using the Dharma as support.

EALING NEWS

We meet at the Quaker Meeting House at 7.30 pm on Mondays. We have not expanded as much as would like as we continue without a home of our own, for instance it is rather difficult to absorb newcomers without a separate beginners' class. So we are looking for a large cheap room near Ealing Broadway Station where we can meet more often and which will give us greater scope for expansion. Meanwhile the Ealing branch of the FWBO continues to grow with strength and enthusiasm.

NEWS FROM BRIGHTON

By the time this is read there is every indication that our first objective, that of acquiring a centre of our own in Brighton, will have been realised. The premises in question are two adjacent cottage shops, three floors each, just a few hundred yards east of the Royal Pavilion. If the negotiations are successful and the promised assistance is forthcoming, the conversion of these buildings into a quietly humming centre of the FWBO should be completed by the New Year.

For the time being classes are being held at 1 Knoyle Road, Preston Park, at the invitation of Jim Martin, Secretary of the existing Brighton Buddhist Society, on the following days:

- Wednesday, 7.30 pm - Meditation and puja
- Thursday, 7.30 pm - Beginners' meditation class, and taped lecture.

Contributors to this issue: Ananda, Subhuti, Devamitra, Dhammadinna, Lokamitra, Maggie Oakshott, Barbara Hickmott, Vessantara, Rantnapani, Mallika, Mangala, Bodhishri, Akshobhya, Manjuvajra, Vangisa, Buddhadasa, John Hunter, Bob Morrison.

Weekly Programme

ARCHWAY

Monday	7.0 pm	Basic Buddhism Course (by enrolment)
Tuesday	7.0 pm	Meditation, study group, and puja
Wednesday	5.0 pm	Hatha Yoga 50 p charge
	7.0 pm	Beginners' meditation class, followed by a break for tea and talk
	8.30pm	Recorded lecture by Ven. Sangharakshita, Puja
Thursday	6.30pm	Karate-do 50p charge
Sunday	5.30pm	Beginners' meditation class, followed by tea and informal discussion
	7.0 pm	Public lecture (until 15 December)
	8.30pm	Puja with meditation (approx. time)

The Centre is open all day for meditation, and enquiries

ARYATARA

Monday	7.30pm	Hatha Yoga, intermediate class 50p, students 30p
Tuesday	7.30pm	Hatha Yoga, beginners' class Advanced meditation class
Wednesday	7.30pm	Beginners' meditation class

GLASGOW

Monday	6.30-7.0 pm	Yoga
Tuesday	7.0 pm	Meditation, taped lecture or discussion, puja
Wednesday	7.30pm	Two periods of meditation, puja. First First Wednesday of each month: one period of meditation, chanting, puja.
Thursday	7.30pm	Meditation instruction & practice for newcomers
Friday	7.30pm	Preordination class (by request)
Saturday	8.0 am	Transport leaves for Lochwinnoch where help is needed in building the country retreat
Sunday	2.0 pm	Pre-ordination class

The Centre is open daily from midday for meditation & enquiries



CENTRES AND BRANCHES OF THE FRIENDS OF THE WESTERN BUDDHIST ORDER

LONDON FWBO, 1a Balmore Street, Archway, London N.19.
Telephone: 01 263 2339

GLASGOW FWBO, 246 Bath Street, Glasgow G2 6QZ
Tel: 041 332 7837

SURREY FWBO, Aryatara Community, 3 Plough Lane, Purley,
Surrey, CR2 3QB. Tel: 01 660 2542

EALING FWBO, Upasaka Vangisa, 91 Kingsley Avenue, London W.13
Tel: 01 997 4109

EXETER, FWBO Representative, Upasika Karuna, 22 Elmside, Exeter
Devon.

CORNWALL, FWBO Representative, Upasaka Manjuvajra, c/o
W.H.Thomas, Lower Carthew, Wendron, near Helston, Cornwall

NORFOLK, FWBO Representative, Upasika Sulocana, The Old Rectory,
Tittleshall, Kings Lynn, Norfolk.

WALES, FWBO Representative, Upasaka Hridaya, Tyddyn Rhydderch,
Trerddol, Corwen, Clwyd, North Wales.

BRIGHTON, FWBO Representative, Upasaka Buddhadasa, c/o Jim Martin,
1 Knoyle Road, Preston Park, Brighton.

FINLAND, FWBO HELSINKI, Punavuorenkatu 22 C 37, SF-00150 Helsinki 15
Tel: Helsinki 669 820

NEW ZEALAND, FWBO AUCKLAND, Kalyana Mitra, 442 Beach Road,
Mairangi Bay, Auckland.

NEW ZEALAND, FWBO CHRISTCHURCH, 52 Hewitts Road, Merivale,
Christchurch 1.

If you would like to contact other Buddhists in your area,
write to us and we will send you any other addresses we
receive in this way.

We are very glad to give any assistance we can to groups or
individuals who are trying to practise or study Buddhism.