

FRIENDS OF THE WESTERN BUDDHIST ORDER · NEWSLETTER 30



Weekly Programmes

PUNDARIKA (ARCHWAY)

Monday	6.00 pm	Hatha Yoga course (by arrangement)
Tuesday	7.00	Double meditation and puja
Wednesday	5.00	Beginners' Yoga class (50p)
	7.00	Beginners' Meditation Course (by arrangement)
Sunday	6.30	Beginners' meditation class
	8.00	Live talks
Daily	7.30 am	Meditation and puja

SUKHAVATI

Wednesday	7.00 pm	Hatha Yoga class (50p)
	9.00	Puja
Thursday	7.15	Recorded lecture, puja
Daily	6.30 am	Meditation
Saturday	5.00 pm	Course on Buddhism (by arrangement) 3 hours

ARYATARA (SURREY)

Monday	6.30 pm	Hatha Yoga for beginners (50p)
Tuesday	7.30	Meditation, study, puja
Wednesday	7.30	Beginners' meditation class
Thursday	7.00	Advanced yoga class

BRIGHTON

Monday	7.00 pm	Beginners' meditation class, and recorded lecture
Tuesday	7.00	Hatha Yoga class (50p)
Wednesday	7.00	Meditation, recorded lecture, puja
Thursday	7.00	Dharma study (by arrangement)
Saturday	10.00 am	Hatha Yoga (2 classes, by arrangement)

MANDALA (WEST LONDON)

Monday	7.00 pm	Recorded lecture, meditation
Tuesday	5.30	Hatha Yoga (50p)
	7.00	Hatha Yoga
Wednesday	7.00	Beginners' meditation class
Thursday	7.00	Regular meditation

TRURO

Monday	7.00 pm	Dharma study (by arrangement)
Wednesday	6.00	Beginners' meditation class, discussion
	7.30	Meditation

GLASGOW

Telephone 'Bridges' (041 - 344 3193) for the latest details.

NORFOLK

For the time being classes in Hatha Yoga are being given in Norwich and Fakenham. Please contact Upasaka Devamitra (Norwich 52622) for details of these and other activities which will hopefully soon be organised.

Contributors to this issue: Ven Sangharakshita, Abhaya, Padmapani Mangala, Annie Leigh, Liz Stobart, Bodhishri, Ian Waddell, Anoma, Lokamitra, Vessantara, Devamitra, Manjuvajra, Nora Gritton, Kamalashila, Ashvajit, Subhuti.

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President: Venerable Maha Sthavira Sangharakshita

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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 seventy 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 Stockwell, 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 settled in Kalimpong where he remained for fourteen years, studying, writing and practising meditation. In 1957 he founded there The Monastery of the Three Ways, and in the same year 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 published writings include Buddhism and Art (1956), The Three Jewels (1967), Crossing the Stream (1972), Path of the Inner Life (1975), and the first volume of his memoirs The Thousand-Petalled Lotus (1976). He has also given over a hundred tape-recorded public lectures on Buddhism, and written numerous poems and essays.

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

EDITORIAL

The third annual convention of the Western Buddhist Order ended yesterday. For four days about forty-five upasakas and upasikas from all over the United Kingdom sat together in a large circle while the Ven. Sangharakshita presided over the discussion of subjects which ranged from 'the unity of the Order: class and nationality' to 'the place of vows in the spiritual development of Order Members'. The way in which points were raised, the manner in which consensus seemed spontaneously to arise, without argument or personality conflicts, gave me the feeling that we could have tackled anything, resolved anything; that a meeting of the spiritual community is unlike any other meeting.

One topic we considered was that of commitment. 'Commitment' is a word we use very frequently. It is constantly appearing in the Newsletter - usually with the implication that it is a 'good thing', and that if there is some of it around, then all must be well. But what is it? People gave their suggestions: 'openness to change', 'being prepared to change', 'being able to keep going even when things are difficult', 'being prepared to throw out of the window anything that gets in the way', 'being committed is to have a window', and so on. One thing that most people acknowledged was that a commitment usually demands more of you than you ever originally expected. In a way, commitment to the Three Jewels, the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha, can only demand of you what you are incapable of expecting, for in making a commitment to change, growth and higher evolution, who can tell what he will become? There is no way of knowing what your needs are going to be, what kind of difficulties you will face, and how, in time, you will want to function. By practising the Dharma we grow out of old habits and patterns, and when that happens we must be prepared never to shrink back from acknowledging that growth by acting on it, by allowing our external life to become a more harmonious manifestation of our inner change - no matter what the resistance from outside, or even from within, for there is always a part of us that wants to lag behind.

The spiritual life is for heroes, since it is the heroes who are willing to explore and conquer unknown territory, where every step forward is a step away from the 'home comforts', and out into - well, out into what? This is why we remember that our commitment is a very special one. It is to the Three Jewels, it is Going for Refuge. It is not just a movement 'away' from the patterns, the conditioned; not just a general bull-doing away of the forest, leaving a cold empty wasteland. It is movement 'towards' Enlightenment, towards wisdom, compassion, perfection. The wild tangle is cleared, and as we go forth beneath the clear blue sky, we are scattering the seeds of beautiful flowers onto the rich uncluttered earth.

Nagabodhi

SKILFUL LIVING

It may only be the very few who cross the threshold of Buddhism in order to escape from God, out of breath, so to speak, and only too ready to slam the door on a Hound of Heaven, hot on the scent! Yet there may well be more than a few of us who have reached that threshold, or gone beyond it, further into the interior, closer to the heart of true Refuge, still very much conditioned, for the most part unconsciously, by the traditional Christian moral outlook, with its roots still watered by an Old Testament God out for an eye or tooth. Or wearied by the moral strictures of God or church, newcomers to Buddhism may secretly be wondering, "If I do decide to take it up, what will I be allowed to do; what will be forbidden?" It is an awful business to be morally troubled and one that a goodly number of people in the West will have to come to grips with if they wish to progress along the Path. This applies, I suspect, not only to those who have been reared in strictly practicing circles of whatever denomination, but to many more, perhaps of a certain temperament, suffering from over-exposure to the Puritanical element in our culture. Unless this factor in the Western make-up is identified, clarified and worked on, there is a constant danger of the spread of that weird mutation, the would-be 'Christian-Buddhist'.

It might be argued that over the past two decades much has changed in this respect, that the severe authoritarian bite of the Christian ethic in vogue from a hundred years ago and so evident in Victorian moral values (especially with regard to sex) has now lost a lot of its sharpness. The present generation of children growing up, and the young whorecently became independent of their parents, may well be relatively free of moral hang-ups and in far less danger of seeing Buddhism in exclusively Christian terms. All to the good! But the lamp of the Dharma shines for all, and the conditioning to be overcome by those aspiring to be truly individual varies, in particular respects, from generation to generation.

In the Christian ethic, the words 'right' and 'wrong' are common, and the concept of sin is to the fore, sin being an offence against God; God the rewarder of Right and punisher of Wrong. Tradition has it that God gave his judgement on the matter of sin in the Old Testament form of the Ten Commandments, later corroborated by the New Testament - ten famous Thou Shalts/Thou Shalt Nots which need not be repeated here. With these as the basis from which to judge the morality or otherwise of his actions, the Christian need have no doubt about the difference between good and bad, or right and wrong. It is all there, so to speak, in black and white. In the Roman Catholic tradition it is spelt out even more clearly with the added distinction between mortal and venial sin. One disadvantage of this whole emphasis on sin, on right versus wrong, on good versus bad, varying in degree from sect to sect, but with God always as the final arbiter, is that it can so easily lead observers of the moral code to sully the motivation for their ethical behaviour with with an element of fear of punishment or desire for reward. This distinctive moral flavour has saturated, through the ages, the social systems of family and school alike, this syndrome of 'act-

and-be-judged' (by God the Father, father, by the headmaster). If in fact it does happen that people do certain things and avoid others simply or mainly because they are afraid of what would happen if they did otherwise, then the impulse behind the action is negative, not positive. This is not to suggest that the Christian moral tradition leads exclusively to such doubtful motivations, but that there is that element in it which can colour the life-style and quite definitely hamper the further development of those well advanced into so-called maturity.

What then, in contrast, is the Buddhist emphasis in this sphere? What is the Buddha's approach to directing men in respect of how or how not to act? In place of the words 'sin' or 'right' or 'wrong', the canonical texts make use of words which are more accurately translated as skilful and unskilful. Skilful actions and states of mind are conducive to contentment, eventually to Enlightenment, unskilful actions and states of mind lead to unhappiness and spiritual blindness. As Buddhists, it is we ourselves who are responsible to ourselves for our own actions and our own states of mind. In the words of the Dhammapada:-

"Unskilful mental states are preceded by mind, led by mind, and made up of mind. If one speaks or acts with an impure mind, suffering follows him even as the cartwheel follows the hoof of the ox. Skilful mental states are preceded by mind, led by mind, and made up of mind. If one speaks or acts with a pure mind, happiness follows him like his shadow".
(Trans: Ven. Sangharakshita)

This emphasis on skilful and unskilful, in place of right or wrong, takes all desire for reward and fear of God's punishment out of the acting and puts it on a more practical basis of cause and effect. Viewed in this light, hankering for reward and fear of punishment are themselves unskilful states of mind. This is not to say that by acting skilfully one cannot expect happy results or that acting unskilfully does not sometimes lead to a certain kind of fear. It can lead to a fear which is in a sense healthily based, a fear that results from seeing quite clearly the inevitable consequences of our actions in terms of the suffering caused. And the happiness following from skilful acting is not a smug, rather childish self-congratulation at having snatched a merit, but a genuine rejoicing in positive fruits.

Another advantage of preferring the words skilful and unskilful to refer to our behaviour is that their denotation is comprehensive; they naturally embrace the whole of our lives, seem somehow less exclusive than their Christian counterparts. Whereas the Commandments might appear to refer to chunks of our lives, as if cordoning off certain areas as out of bounds, the Buddha's exhortation to skilful living applies to all areas of life all the time. The effort to be skilful does away with the limitation of simply avoiding, and puts a premium on positive action. We have therefore as genuine followers of the Path, to steer clear of the complacent attitude of assuming that keeping the precepts to the letter is enough. The precepts are not commandments (for who is there to command?) not to be broken, but

signposts to the ending of suffering, guides to skilful living. Let us always keep the positive counterpart to each precept in mind. Thus the precept "I undertake to refrain from taking the not-given" has the positive corollary of undertaking to practice giving things, giving time, giving things, giving energy, giving ourselves, in other words, of undertaking to practise the First Perfection.

It is interesting to note that examples of uses of the word kusala meaning skilful, listed in the Pali Dictionary refer to all sorts of activities, both physical and mental, as well as to the specifically ethical, which we have been discussing. The same word that is used in 'skilful means' is used to denote a skilful potter or a skilful teacher, skilful musician, and so on. This reinforces the very practical emphasis already placed on the word in the scriptures. If we practise more and more skilful action, devoting less and less energy to the unskilful, our lives in time will, looked at from the aesthetic viewpoint, become more beautiful, drawing closer to an accurate expression of our true spontaneity. At first our efforts in the direction of the skilful might be very laboured and have a bit too much of the 'nitty-gritty' about them for our comfort - this due no doubt to our backlog of unskilful behaviour. But eventually fresh avenues of approach will open up, making the whole endeavour more interesting. For constant repetition of skilful acting leads to an accumulation of what the original texts designate Punna (Skt: Punya). Now this word punna is usually translated by the English word merit, which unfortunately has the association with 'credit' as opposed to debit and is therefore more akin to the 'moral' words which we have been trying to play down. It might be more helpful to think of punna, not as so much stuff which we accumulate, but rather as having the effect of a sort of aura which we create around ourselves by repeated efforts in the direction of the skilful, an aura which acts like a gravitational field, effortlessly attracting the skilful to itself and repelling the unskilful. The opposite of punna is papa (usually translated as evil), the gravitational field set up by the constant repetition of the unskilful, attracting more of the unskilful to itself and thus increasing its own pull.



The Way of the Buddha has been aptly called the Path of Transformation. This transformation is effected by avoiding the unskilful and practising the skilful, of weakening the gravitational force of papa and strengthening the the pull of punna. One of the symbols of transformation in Buddhist literature, a poetic expression of the dynamic effect of punna, generated by the heroic and skilful living of the Bodhisattva, occurs in an account of the Life of the Buddha. Just before the Enlightenment of Sakyamuni, the vicious slings and arrows of Mara's bombardment, representing the negative energies arising from the unconscious and threatening destruction, are miraculously transformed, being absorbed into the Buddha's aura as a halo of beautiful flowers.

Abhaya

HELSINKI AND POINTS SOUTH

Upasaka Vajradaka recently returned from a four month stay in Helsinki during which time he also visited Buddhists in other European countries. On his return he talked to Nagabodhi about his visit:

Nagabodhi: What is Helsinki like?

Vajradaka: It's not a very large city, there are only about a hundred thousand people living there. So anywhere in Helsinki is quite 'central'. Architecturally it is fascinating because there are many different styles. I really liked the old 'Germanic' buildings looking like gnomes' houses with big thick arches, round towers and slit windows. There isn't very much modern stuff, and what there is I did not find very spectacular. Public facilities - the trams, trains, street cleaning etcetera - are very well organised, very cleverly thought out, but food and things like that are very expensive. Finland is a bilingual country. All the street names are in two languages, Finnish and Swedish. The Swedish-speaking Finns are financially and culturally a powerful minority.

The Helsinki FWBO Centre is a two-roomed flat in a large block which dates from the beginning of the century. It is just near the docks which you can see from one of the windows. One of the rooms is a bit larger than the other - it can take twenty seven to twenty eight people - and that is the shrine room. It's rather nice. It has a yellow ceiling with a blue stripe around the edge, white walls, and also a blue stripe around the skirting board. The windows are two shades of red with paper screens. It's simple but the red windows give it a great deal of life. There is a very simple shrine which is basically a red box on top of a maroon box with a golden cloth. There is a Buddha rupa made of plaster. The shrine is portable, it has handles so that we can carry it in and out. It's not there in beginners' classes. The shrine room is a very warm and welcoming room. Everybody likes it.

Nagabodhi: What are the people who come like?

Vajradaka: There is quite a wide variety of people coming now, on the whole slightly more women than men. Finland has a very good academic record so many of the people who come have degrees and are very well educated, and quite highly trained professionally.

Nagabodhi: Why do you think there are more women coming along?

Vajradaka: I get the impression that in Finland women are generally more open than the men, they seem to be more receptive to new ideas and in a sense, change in themselves. I think on the whole that the men are a little more rigid in their view of themselves, what life is, and what they want. Nearly all the women have careers, everyone works, men and women, and Finland is one of the few places in the world where the women die at the same age as the men.

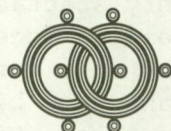
Nagabodhi: Why do you think people come ?

Vajradaka: I think that generally they come because they've seriously thought about it. They've seriously thought about whether meditation is going to be good for them. I think that

it's not often that a Finn would just come to a centre because he wants peace of mind, or he wants to be calmer and is just willing to try it and see. But he or she will think and think about it for a long time, generally, before coming, and so will be pretty sure that they think that meditation will be quite good for them.

Nagabodhi: They come for meditation, not for Buddhism?

Vajradaka: Oh certainly nearly everyone comes for meditation. There are really very few people who even know anything about Buddhism. Usually they are basing their thinking on our publicity, and what we have said meditation is - the development of certain qualities, the expansion of consciousness, and so on.



Nagabodhi: Do you think that the Finns have a different approach to things than people say, in London or Glasgow?

Vajradaka: Yes. I think that people are much more evolution-conscious in Finland. In their culture and in their society, change plays a very important part. Everything is very fluid. In Britain things happen very slowly, but in Finland things move very, very fast, politically and socially. It wasn't so long ago that Finland was an agricultural country, and then, all of a sudden, just before the war, it became industrial, and this makes the Finns very aware of growth - in this case technological. Also things have changed very drastically politically over the past hundred years. So they are very aware of the processes of change and of evolution. Yet, in a way, it's quite a conformist society. People can accept that things are changing, but sometimes find it difficult to accept that different people may grow and develop in different ways. You very rarely see people doing things that are unusual. To see someone with long hair, even, is very rare. There is an interesting tension between change and conformity. A fairly new and encouraging development at the centre is that people are beginning to feel that it's okay to come out of themselves, okay to talk, and the classes are becoming quite outward-going.

I really like Finland and the Finnish people. They have a directness and an honesty - as a national characteristic - which makes it very refreshing to be there and communicate with them. I feel I made a lot of friends.

Nagabodhi: What about the rest of your travels?

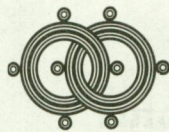
Vajradaka: I first went to Stockholm, where I met an old friend of Bhante's, the Ven Amita Nissata. Through her, I met some good people, but on the whole, I did not find much happening there, and felt more confident making contacts in Copenhagen, for example. Then I went down to the south of Sweden where there are a number of people who came on the Summer Retreat last year. We held a one

day retreat for about twenty-five people, which was a very great success. A number of people have kept in touch with a Friend called Giordano. He has just started a small meditation class, doing the Mindfulness of Breathing and the Metta Bhavana, and also doing other things like Gestalt therapy. It's not really a Friends centre, but they are very close to the spirit of the Friends and very friendly to us. In a way they are poised for an Order Member to go over. (Giordano Renard, Ellehamsvagen 11, Vaxjo, Sweden.)

When I first arrived in Copenhagen, I found a place called the 'Active University', which is really a kind of very free youth hostel, where no membership is required, no booking in, etcetera. It's run by the people who are staying there, and by a professor from the University of Copenhagen. He invited me to come to the University and give a talk on the expansion of consciousness. I went there and gave a talk on the Five Spiritual Faculties. After hearing that he asked me to give a lecture at the Active University.

Then I went to Holland. We held a retreat for twenty-five people, and nearly all of them had been on a retreat before. It was nearly the whole contingent of Dutch Friends who had been on the European Retreat. Although they had not been in much contact with each other in the meantime, they managed to rally to the call and come to the retreat, where we did a lot of meditation, consolidating what they had learned in the Summer.

On my way back to Britain I stayed in a place called Osterade in North Germany, and there I met a group of about thirty people who meet once a week to practise meditation. They are not alligned to any particular group or school, they are just, in a sense, 'Buddhists'. They are open to anything in that line. They asked me to give a talk, which I did. I felt them to be very open and friendly, and I was pleasantly surprised to meet so many people interested in the Dharma in such a small place; there were people there from all over Germany.



Nagabodhi: What kind of response do you feel you got in Europe to what you were doing, and to the Friends in general?

Vajradaka: On the whole, I think it was very favourable. For many non-Buddhists the image of Buddhist is very alien, so the response to what we were doing was one of pleasant surprise. Many of the Buddhists were followers of the Karmapa, and were generally very friendly.

Nagabodhi: Do you see any tendencies towards 'Western Buddhism' among western Buddhists?

Vajradaka: Oh yes. There is definitely a form of Western Buddhism evolving, as people are taking the basic principles of Buddhism

and applying them to their own lives, rather than merely transplanting Tibetan or Sinhalese Buddhism into their own cultural context. I did find, however, that many of the groups I met seemed quite confused as to the kinds of practice that they should do. They all seemed to be on the path of 'irregular steps'. Some groups were starting off with quite complicated visualisation practices. Some people felt that this was not quite right, and wanted to start with something simpler, so not knowing about the Mindfulness of Breathing, or the Metta Bhavana, they would do 'just-sitting'. There seems to be a general lack of perspective as to what people need now, a tendency to jump into advanced practices, and then feel dissatisfied later on. Yet it all shows a basic attraction to the Dharma.

Nagabodhi: Where do you think is the most likely place for our next European centre?

Vajradaka: Amsterdam. It is a very large city with a lot of spiritual, or so-called spiritual groups happening. But most of them seem to lack any real impetus. There is a place called the 'Cosmos' which started off as being quite a meditative centre, with Yoga and meditation classes, but now it has lost its potency. It's a bit like a bazaar with people selling clothes on the stairs, Zen meditation going on in one room, Tai-Do in another and Rock music in another. There are one or two groups who have tried to break away and get into something more serious, but I did not see anything of them. They seem again to lack perspective. People feel they are on the 'path', but they don't have a very clear understanding of their relationship to the path, or what the path really is. A lot of people talk about the "Path" when they are really talking about a sequence of events in time - their life - but they are not really talking about the path.

To start any centre you would need a handful of Order Members and Mitras. If such a handful are going to go anywhere, it would be best that they go to somewhere that is central and most effective for the whole of Europe. Amsterdam is very well placed in this way.

The Thousand Petalled Lotus

1st Volume of Sangharakshita's Memoirs

THE THOUSAND PETALLED LOTUS. An English Buddhist in India.
by Maha Sthavira Sangharakshita (D.P.E.Lingwood), published by
Heinemann, London 1976. pp.318. £5.25.

In a summary of his life preceding arrival in India, the author of The Thousand-Petalled Lotus writes: "After reading two of the greatest Buddhist scriptures - the Sutra of Wei Lang (Hui Neng), and the Diamond Sutra - I knew that I was a Buddhist and always had been". This conviction, strong from the start and unshakable throughout is the inspiration of this essay in autobiography, as

it was in the first place the driving force of the adventure itself. The book covers the first five or six years of Sangharakshita's twenty-year stay in India. It begins with the young soldier, on a posting to Colombo as a wireless operator in the Signals Unit, knocking on the door of the local branch of the Ramakrishna Mission. This is the first link in a chain of contacts which leads to journeys and sojourns of varying length. Apart from accounts of a brief army posting to Singapore, an abortive attempt to study the Dharma in Ceylon and a short tour of Nepal after ordination, the greater part of the action takes place in south and north eastern India.

Association with the Ramakrishna Mission and the Maha Bodhi Society does not lead the young aspirant to the desired contact with the Dharma, so he and a friend resolve to make their way on foot from Cape Comorin, the southern-most tip of the subcontinent, to the Himalayas, a distance of some two thousand miles. Soon finding, however, that days of strenuous walking under the Indian sun are not conducive to progress in meditation, they choose to settle for some time at a deserted ashram in southern India. From there they eventually make their way to the famous Buddhist places of pilgrimage and the climax is reached with their sramanera ordination at Kusinara. The story ends with Sangharakshita's arrival in Kalimpong, in the foothills of the Himalayas.

One of the prominent features of these memoirs is the information they yield about Hinduism, information distilled from Sangharakshita's wide experience and deep reflection. It was with Hinduism, the religious and social soil from which Buddhism developed, that the author first became familiar in his wanderings. He makes it clear that no allowance should be made for the false view that Buddhism is just a branch of Hinduism and that there is in effect no difference between them. The root of the difference is the Hindu's acceptance, either with open support or connivance, of the caste system, which cannot in any sense be reconciled with the primacy of Compassion in the Buddha's Teaching. It comes as a shock to read in an account of a visit to the ashram of the much revered guru Ramana Maharshi that at meal times the brahmins are segregated from the untouchable mass. Remarking on the effect of the operation of the caste system on the individual personality, the author writes of his friend, a professed Buddhist, "like all English-educated caste Hindus, the depth of his emotional commitment to Hinduism was so great that he belonged to it even when he rebelled against it".

The reader is treated to numerous fascinating accounts of meetings with Hindu holy men and women at varying levels of spiritual attainment. There is the Blissful Mother, Anandamayi, whom the author perceives indulging in a certain amount of what he calls 'spiritual flirtation' with her rabidly devotional disciples. One self-styled guru claiming to have realised the Truth, having given way to anger in the course of discussion, exclaims that anger is an illusion! Then, there is the eccentric, one-eyed guru, reputed to be 600 years old, who insists on cleaning his disciples' shoes. One deduces

from the tone of these accounts that the young anagarika or wanderer, being mindful enough himself to avoid the trap of spiritual inflation, was adept at spotting false gurus, anyone blatantly in the throes of spiritual self-aggrandisement, or cherishing a subtly refined sense of his or her own spiritual eminence.

Emerging from the fabric of the story as we read, unobtrusive yet clear, is the author's own integrity. His ever-deepening commitment to his avowed spiritual ideals never permits him to compromise, not even in crises which give rise to physical danger - always a good test of resolution! Late in the story, when his own life is in danger in rather dramatic circumstances, the author refers to his "rock-bottom obstinacy that made it utterly impossible for me to retract or disown any opinion which I genuinely believed to be true even to save my life..." There is no trace of the crudely sensational in the descriptions of the various psychic and spiritual experiences which come his way; they are introduced, in fact, quite casually. This adds to, rather than detracts from, their force.

Readers familiar with the author's other writings will not be surprised to find that there are flowers and gems of insight into Buddhist teaching and practice to be culled from these pages. The style for the most part flows easily to the inward ear, and the writer's sense of place is everywhere with some felicitous poetic touches.

Memoirs as a literary form do have their longueurs, usually attributable to the writer's reluctance to get far enough out of his own light to notice when he might be boring his readers. I found no evidence of this particular defect in The Thousand-Petalled Lotus. Indeed, judging from the wealth of interesting material and the absence of any tendency to flesh out a lean passage, one has the impression that the writer's problem in planning the book, if any, may well have been what to leave out. Incidentally, although it will be known by anyone at all familiar with Buddhism, the significance of the thousand-petalled lotus of the title might well escape many readers, since it is not, so far as I recall, mentioned or referred to in the text.

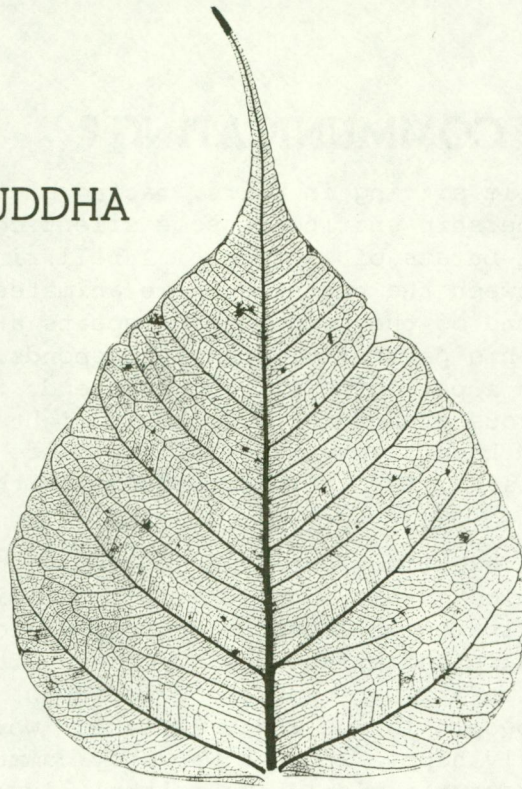
The interest of many readers of the Newsletter in this book is sure to be well primed even before they start reading, either because they know the author personally or on account of their association with the Friends of the Western Buddhist Order. These it is sure to please. Yet these memoirs should attract, certainly deserve to attract, readers from a much wider public, those with a taste for good travel books, those who have an interest in India.

Abhaya

THE THOUSAND-PETALLED LOTUS

...is now available. Newsletter readers in the U.K. may like to know that they can order their copy from the Windhorse Bookshop, 19 George St, Brighton, Sussex, who will send it post-free. It costs £5.25.

THE BUDDHA



Lean, strenuous, resolute, He passed His days
Trudging in dust-stained robes the forest paths;
Stood as a beggar at the beggar's door
For alms, and more than kingly, spoke with kings.
Only when blue-black elephants of heaven
With bellowings filled the vast plains of the sky
Sat He aloof, and listened, heart at ease,
To the soft thunder of the rain on leaves:
Else was He as the sun unwearying
Full five-and-forty years, and as the sun
Shed upon all the beams of truth and peace.
This did He out of love for all that lives.

They carved Him out of sandal, chipped from stone
The Ever-Moving, cast in rigid bronze
Him Who was Life itself, and made Him sit,
Hands idly folded, for a thousand years
Immobile in the incensed image-house;
They gilded Him until He was sick with gold.

And underneath the shadow of the shrine
They sauntered in their yellow silken robes,
Or, lolled replete on purple-cushioned thrones,
In sleepy stanzas droned His vigorous words
To gentle flutterings of jewelled fans...

Arise, O Lord, and with Thy dust-stained feet
Walk not the roads of India but the world!
Shake from the slumber of a thousand years
Thy dream-mazed fold! Burn as a Fire for men!

WHY PRACTISE COMMUNICATING ?

A room full of people sitting in pairs, facing one another. Total silence, each partnership sharing in some silent communion, punctuated by occasional bursts of laughter. A bell rings, there is some discussion between the partners, some animated, some desultory. Another bell, and one of the partnership repeats a commonplace sentence, to which his partner vigorously responds. The casual onlooker (were such a person permitted to attend, the spiritual life being treacherous ground for onlookers) might be forgiven for feeling that he had been transported into an Alice in Wonderland English language class. But these of course are the Communication Exercises....

'A series of simple exercises designed to improve human communication and release blocked emotional energy': this is the most commonly-used description of these exercises, discovered by the Ven. Sangharakshita in India, and now practised often on retreats and from time to time at most centres of the FWBO. However I suspect that most people in the West, if asked, would profess themselves relatively happy with the way they communicate. So what is meant by 'communication'? We talk glibly nowadays about high speed communications, communication satellites, and communicating to a mass audience. What we fail to consider is that as communication becomes increasingly general it also becomes increasingly impersonal and diluted. As Ven. Sangharakshita points out this is true even with regard to the Buddha's teaching:

"The Dharma is the Buddha's Enlightenment objectified, and therefore falsified", and again, "The Buddha taught and influenced people far more by what he was than by what he said."

If we refer to the time of the Buddha, virtually all communication was direct and verbal. Nowadays we turn on the radio, the television, tape recorder, or record player; we even dial a telephone number and get a recorded message. So now we take the mere conveying of information as communication. We should soon feel this level of communication to be very unsatisfying were it not for the fact that modern society replaces quality with sheer quantity.

This unsubtle and all-pervasive overdose of modern 'communication' has created in most people a confusion between what they know and experience, and what they have been told but have not confirmed for themselves. The trade in second-hand thought is the largest and most flourishing in the West. We are bombarded by people telling us what to think and what to feel. If such stimuli went in one ear and out the other it would be relatively harmless. But too often it goes in one ear and straight out of our mouths. And what is the result of the process? The result is that we do not experience our own creativity, our own individuality, our own life.

So if most of what is labelled communication in the West is mere pseudo-communication, or at least a pale ghost of the real thing, then what is real communication, and how are we to experience it? Communication is a mutual giving of energy, an opening of oneself

to another which modifies both people. For this reason, perhaps, it has been said: "One cannot communicate with more than one person at a time."

The Communication Exercises are a way of getting us back in touch with the joy and awareness which is the natural result of communication in this true sense. From the above it should be clear why they are done with people in pairs. We begin by giving our undivided attention to just one other person. This is a new experience in itself for many people - to just really look at someone else. All too often we do not look at the person with whom we are trying to communicate, do not fully acknowledge them. The Spanish have a saying that the eyes are the windows of the soul. Whilst this is not a very Buddhistic expression, it nevertheless contains a certain truth. Seeing eye-to-eye, or "I-to-I", is essential to real communication. It prevents us from making facile judgements based on externals of clothing, uniform or age, cutting through our standard reactions to stereotyped figures. So, a drop-out may look at a bank manager, a councillor at a clerk.



Having established a basic awareness of one another, we then move on to verbal exercises. A commonplace sentence is repeated and affirmed. At first the tendency is to play with words and intonations, but the rational meaning is quickly exhausted, and drops away. Thus the phrase becomes a pure vehicle for feeling, for expressing what one truly and deeply is. Most words take us away from our experience. We often use them to show fancy intellectual footwork around one another, to build barriers around ourselves. But here all intellectual meaning counts for nothing. Indeed, the exercises would be good for meetings of different nationalities as anyone able to repeat six words of English could participate.

So if one is not talking about anything, what are we communicating, you and I sitting here, together? The best and simplest answer is 'ourselves', or just 'energy' - not that we have energy and communicate

it, but that essentially we are nothing but energy. So when two people fully open to one another, really communicate, the result is a mutual transmission of energy, a kind of "energy massage", in which both are stirred, enriched, and vitalised.

One could take as a working hypothesis the idea that there are essentially two elements in life: energy, and a situation "large" enough to contain it. For most people our life situations are too limited and constricting; social pressures lead us down narrow canyons so that increasingly the rich flow of our energy becomes stagnant and torpid. The Communication Exercises are a situation large enough for us to be able to really express our energies, a limitless container into which we can pour ourselves wholeheartedly. In them we begin to glimpse paradoxes: that the more we give of our energy in such a situation, the more we have; the more we lose ourselves in communicating with another person, the more truly we experience our own individuality. To do them enhances a feeling of respect for our common humanity which highlights the uniqueness of each individual.

Having said all this, the Exercises are not an end in themselves, as so often becomes the case with exercises used by so-called 'Growth Groups'. They are merely a training ground, a very pure experiment in awareness and communication under ideal conditions. The aim is to make all one's communication in life as direct and wholehearted as in the exercises. Indeed our normal and diluted conversation will feel pale beside the sheer delight of fully expressing one thing at one time to one person.

Communication occupies a central place in Buddhism. It is no accident that, of the ten precepts taken by members of the Western Buddhist Order, no less than four are concerned with speech. If, as the Buddha stated to Ananda, spiritual community is the whole of the spiritual life, then clear, direct, communication, which is the life-blood of the community, is essential if we are to grow and develop spiritually.

I trust that if nothing else this article will have highlighted the difference between firsthand experience, which we feel in our nerves and in our blood, and mere 'knowing-about'. To stop at just reading this article and feel that one knows about Communication Exercises without having done them, will be to fall into the same old trap once again. It will also mean missing a very real opportunity to grow and develop through a true meeting with other people.

Vessantara

* All quotations from Sayings, Poems, Reflections of the Ven. Sangharakshita, available from FWBO centres, price 30p.

Mangala goes to Belfast

I have just returned from a quite lengthy ten-week stay in Belfast and thought that a short article on my impressions might be of some interest.

Firstly, you might ask, "Why go to Belfast in the first place?" Surely that would be the last place on earth anyone would want to visit; certainly at the moment anyway. While for the majority of people this would be the case, my reasons for going there were not merely for a visit. I had hoped to be able to do a solitary retreat over there, and also to take a driving test (which can be arranged there within about two weeks, compared with six months in London.) These two factors, plus the fact that most of my family live there, made the trip seem worthwhile, so off I set for Stranraer, to catch the ferry across to Larne, a small seaport about twenty-one miles north of Belfast.

Belfast is a Victorian industrial city, with just under half a million people, and not dissimilar to some cities in the north of England. Indeed, with its huge neo-classical City Hall, Marks and Spencers', 'Woolworths', 'Boots', etc, one could almost think one was in Leeds, Manchester or Liverpool; that is, apart from the fact that things seem a bit dead. There isn't quite the bustle of English cities; there doesn't seem to be the same prosperity and affluence, in fact the place seems quite depressed and a bit empty, rather like a shop window during a sale. Of course, by now one will have noticed that there are groups of soldiers dotted about throughout the city centre, and barricades through which one cannot pass without being "frisked"; and imagine having to open your bag and be searched every time you wanted to enter a shop. No, surely this could not be Manchester or Leeds. The nature of the trouble here is not that of overt, continuous, violence, but consists more of the occasional burst of gunfire, explosion and assassination. So it is not as if the place is in a state of constant turmoil, the prevailing mood being more one of dullness and depression, occasionally shattered as a bomb goes off, or someone 'opens up' with a machine gun.

Anyway, finding myself in this situation, and with time on my hands, I thought I would try and spread the Dharma a little. I was fortunate in having a friend who lectures at the Ulster Polytechnic and through him I was able to arrange a talk on 'Meditation and Buddhism' which was attended by about thirty students and a few members of staff. Both staff and students all seemed very interested and several stayed behind after the talk to ask questions. This talk was followed by a series of three talks on different aspects of Buddhism, this time addressed to more mature students occupying another annexe of the polytechnic, and although the audience for these was relatively small, I felt all concerned were quite stimulated and got something from them. My only regret was that I had to leave and was therefore unable to consolidate and develop the interest shown, by meditation classes and other FWBO activities.

I was also able to visit all the city's main bookshops in the hope of selling some of Bhante's works. Most of the shops did not think there would be any interest and so declined to buy any, but one shop was keen to have them and bought several copies of six FWBO publications, while another took some on a sale or return basis. So at least the seed has been planted.

There has in fact been a small Buddhist group in Belfast in the past which existed for a few years but this is now defunct. Belfast at the moment seems pretty 'stony ground' as I don't think too many people have much time for the spiritual life at present, and religion being what it is over there, some elements might in fact be rather hostile.

Still, despite all the troubles and depression I enjoyed my stay over there and although I was unable to do my solitary retreat, I did at least have the consolation of passing my driving test. Three sadhus please.

Mangala



Tangled Knots

The symbolism of tangled knots, like a skein of wool that has become all mixed up, is very interesting. If you are faced with having to untangle a skein of wool, with which, perhaps, a kitten has been playing, you find that the more you pull at the threads the tighter the knots become, and the more confused the problem. Finally, in a state of despair, you are tempted to throw the lot away. This, however, solves nothing. But if you can change your tactics, patiently and gently loosening the knots and tangles one at a time, you will find that the whole skein gradually loosens. In time it is possible to straighten out the threads into one continuous piece of wool which can be used and satisfy some real purpose.

If we think of ourselves we can see that our inner state, full of tensions and blockages, fears, worries and misunderstandings, is very analogous to the tangled skein of wool, and here again, the more we struggle and panic, the tighter we are held in the grip of our problems. One way to loosen and untangle this situation is to practise basic relaxation, Yoga movements and meditation exercises, gently quietening and stilling our neurotic conditioning. If we persistently continue in this way, we shall gradually be able to see into small difficulties and put them straight. In time we will be able to see through more and more difficulties and problems until we are able eventually to untangle the whole of our personal knotted skein, and feel free to live a more satisfying and purposeful life.

Nora Gritton.

SUKHAVATI

When we first began work at the Old Fire Station some nine months ago, what was most in our minds was the building work. There was and is so much to do to turn this near derelict building into a Buddhist centre. The immediate emphasis was on the creation of an effective building team. The leader of this team, now a member of the Order, was really the only person with any previous experience in building beyond the handyman stage, though since then one or two more experienced workers have joined the workforce for a time. The foreman has been a qualified carpenter for some 12 years with extensive experience in all fields of building. He has been able to pull together from twenty men, willing but green, a team which is able to tackle every aspect of the work. Though people are quite slow, the work is getting done in an efficient manner and to a good standard. An effective management team also had to be formed so that work was planned in advance, materials were available when required, and all the appropriate officials were contacted and consents obtained. We expect that by the time we reach the ground floor, enough experience will have been gained to complete the work to the very high standard which we require.



About three months ago the name of Sukhavati was decided upon for the new Centre. The 'Pure Land' or 'Happy Land' of the Buddha Amitabha in the Western Quarter is a realm in which all conditions are favourable and encouraging for spiritual development. Whilst our Sukhavati has several obvious deficiencies - for instance it is situated on a busy road in a rather bleak part of London - it is the most 'total' environment the movement has developed so far.

There are three principal aspects to Sukhavati as it will be. Firstly it will be a centre in the sense to which we have grown accustomed. Secondly it will house a large residential community and thirdly it will operate a number of small businesses. The centre will be administered and its activities led not only by members of the community at Sukhavati, but by Order members and Friends from neighbouring communities. Sukhavati will house the headquarters of the Friends of the Western Buddhist Order; Archway will become a new centre, FWBO (North London).

The community will occupy the top four floors and house up to twenty people who will be meditating and studying together as well as running the centre and working in any of its attached businesses. The centre will provide for them a sort of training with four or five mitras and order members working closely together and after one or two years moving on to form a new centre elsewhere. Ven. Sangharakshita will have a small self-contained flat within the community where he will spend up to half of each year.

Whilst the decoration and design of the community will be simply functional, the public rooms and shrine rooms will have no expense spared. In this and like projects a new era opens up for western art, without any preciousness or selfconscious search for relevance. The paintings and sculptures, murals and reliefs, will all serve a sublime purpose so that simply to enter the door of Sukhavati will be to experience a higher realm of existence. The plan at the moment is for an arched entrance at the side of the building leading into a small garden in what is now the drill yard. In the midst of this garden will stand a gateway after the fashion of the four gates to the Stupa at Sanchi. Thence the way will lead through double doors into a vestibule, probably painted with the Wheel of Life and the five Dhyani Buddhas. The main reception room will be painted with murals representing a happy 'natural' landscape. The main shrine room will be simple, with a large Buddha figure modelled at Sukhavati. At the moment work is being done on a small shrine room in the pinnacle of the roof. Since we have to restrain the exuberance of our symbolism on the floors where newcomers will be received, this attic shrine room will be richly decorated with the four main Bodhisattvas in bas relief at one end with offering goddesses processing along the walls towards them. These plans are, of course, only what we have in mind at the moment. No doubt much more will take shape on walls and ceilings throughout the building.

At present some twenty men live in the building, ten of these being Order members, and coming from a variety of places. We

have had one Japanese Nicherin monk helping us for some time and an Indian ex-Theravada bhikkhu also. We have two Australians, one American, two Scots and assorted Englishmen. Brighton, Glasgow, Pundarika, Aryatara, and Norfolk have all contributed workers to the community. Everyone is conscious that Buddhism is the background and basis of his presence in the community, but not in a selfconscious way. We meditate together regularly, perform Puja daily and study together every week, and we all work in various ways at the common task of building Sukhavati. The atmosphere is relaxed and cheerful, but for the most part fairly quiet. It seems that when people live and work together on the basis of a common interest or commitment to their own development actual talking becomes less and less necessary. This certainly does not mean there is less communication; people seem to be much more aware of each other in quite subtle ways which make speech unnecessary. The importance of work, particularly of physical work in this case, cannot be underestimated in the bringing about of this kind of atmosphere. When you are working at something which is obviously and concretely of relevance to your own progress and to that of others, and more particularly when that work is being done in conjunction with other people, you cannot help but feel energised and contented.

Recently the community at Sukhavati has reached a new high point, first with the month and a half stay of the Ven. Sanharakshita, and then with a week-long retreat in the country which everyone attended. As the culmination of this retreat, three mitras were given the upasaka ordination, and four Friends became mitras. Richard Huson was given the name Atula, which means 'invaluable', Colin Ferguson was given the name Aloka, meaning 'light', and Graham Carter was given the name Punya, meaning 'merit'.

CENTRES and BRANCHES

PUNDARIKA (ARCHWAY)

One of the most important current developments at Pundarika is contact with other branches and centres of the FWBO, and also with other Buddhist groups who are interested in what we are doing. This sort of contact is nothing but an extension of the principle of spiritual fellowship, and therefore always inspires and enthuses those involved. Several of us have visited Brighton and Aryatara, attending classes there, and recently mitras from Brighton came up to London for a day as the guests of Pundarika and Sukhavati. There are plans for Friends from Aryatara and West London to do likewise. Contact with others within the spiritual community helps one to know oneself better and to appreciate oneself as a spiritual being, thus accelerating one's growth. The same seems to be true, to some extent at least, of contact between members of geographically separated spiritual communities. The importance and value of spiritual fellowship

seems to be appreciated by all those who come into contact with us. A number of Buddhist groups throughout the United Kingdom are keen to establish some meaningful association with the FWBO. Several of us intend to visit some of these groups within the next few months.

The series of ten short talks entitled 'Approaches to Meditation', and given by different members of the Western Buddhist Order, was very successful and those who attended seemed to find them very helpful. Next session we are following it up with a series of five talks entitled 'Buddhism as Evolution'. These are designed primarily for the newcomer to Buddhism, but should be of interest to regular Friends with more experience of the Dharma.

On 15 February Vivienne Thumpston received the upasika ordination from the Ven. Sangharakshita at a retreat in Suffolk. She was given the name Anoma, which means 'not inferior' and thus 'perfect'.

FUND RAISING

As most of you are probably aware, we have now raised about £21,000 towards the cost of renovating and repairing Sukhavati. The situation at the time of writing is that we have approximately £2,000 left and we need up to another £23,000 to complete the job! The £2,000 and the money received from the recent Work-a-Month and Sponsored Walk etc will probably be sufficient for work to continue at Sukhavati for the next two or three months, but then things will start to get difficult, unless we succeed in raising a substantial amount towards that £23,000. To give you an idea of where the money will be going, here are a few items from the cost estimate. Transport, including repairs, petrol, tax and insurance: £1750, timber: £1500, carpets and lino: £2,000, ventilation: £3,000, and so on and so on.

We now have a fundraising team based at Pundarika, headed by Lokamitra, with Richard Hutton, who came up from Brighton especially to help, Christine Roisetter and myself. We work in a small office upstairs, and although space is somewhat limited, we are working well together and gathering strength all the time. The team will soon be joined by another Mitra, Dawn Inkster, on her return from solitary retreat.

We have been preparing various appeals, suitable for Buddhists and non-Buddhists, and also a Sukhavati Newsheet, which will keep everyone in touch with progress and plans for Sukhavati. We have also been writing to several individuals, trusts and companies (the addresses and information having been gathered over a period of several months), hoping that they may be sympathetic to our ideal and our efforts towards it, and will wish to contribute towards Sukhavati. We are hoping to see more people personally, next session, and hopefully to encourage them to come and see for themselves what's happening at Sukhavati, both in terms of work, and the community itself.

As I mentioned above, this session we have had another W.A.M., and a very enjoyable sponsored walk on Hampstead Heath. It was a beautiful day, almost like summer, and Lokamitra's route uncovered parts of the Heath by which even those of us who know it well were surprised! We were also accompanied by Kato, a Nicherin monk currently living in the area, who added to the atmosphere of the afternoon by chanting and banging his hand-drum all the way. Quite a number of people have committed themselves to giving on a regular basis, which is very helpful since however small the individual amounts may be, it all adds up - forty people giving 25 pence a week for a year adds up to £500. Next session we are having two jumble sales, a further W.A.M. in June, and another sponsored walk and a Flag Day. Possibly we shall also be holding a film evening, a concert and a Yoga demonstration.

Sukhavati, as those who have recently visited will know, is already developing into something quite exceptional. If we are ever tempted to feel that fund-raising is 'not very spiritual', we should just think of what Sukhavati is and will be: a total, positive and inspiring environment for people who wish to make the effort to develop.

If you have any ideas for events, people to approach, or any inspiration to offer, please get in touch with us. We shall be very pleased to hear from you.

Anoma

Editor's Note

IF 200 PEOPLE WERE TO GIVE £100 EACH RIGHT NOW WE WOULD HAVE £20000! SURELY THIS IS POSSIBLE.



FESTIVALS

The festival of Wesak, which marks the anniversary of the Buddha's Enlightenment, falls this year on May 13, and the celebration of His first discourse given in the Deer Park at Benares falls on July 11. These occasions will be marked by festivities at most, if not all, of our centres and branches, and any readers of the Newsletter will be most welcome to attend. FWBO Surrey will be celebrating Wesak on Sunday 16 May with a programme of meditation, talks, food and puja.

MANDALA (WEST LONDON)

FWBO Ealing has been meeting and meditating for the last two years in a small rented room. Before every class chairs and desks had to be moved and carpets swept, before a shrine could be set up, and again everything had to be dismantled afterwards. So a great deal of the energy at our meetings had always to go towards providing an acceptable environment.

Obviously we needed a centre of our own and for the past year we have been looking for one. A year ago Vangisa was running everything singlehanded; in June Jitari joined him and from then the search for a centre really got under way. It was not until November that we realised that we should be looking for a centre, not only for Ealing, but to serve the whole of West London. This gave new possibilities for our searches. In December we found the basement in Lillie Road, Fulham, which, three months later, has become the new West London Centre.

It has taken those three months to get vacant possession. Meanwhile we have been drawing together more as a group in anticipation of the move to West London. We now have our own administrative council with treasurer, secretary and chairman; also a bookshop which until recently was kept in a custom-built suitcase between classes; yoga classes have been started, and these have been introducing many new people to the meditation classes.

The new centre is to be called 'Mandala'. It is well situated to live up to its name - geographically as a centre for West London, and also as a basis for integration and growth. Classes have already started in a small way, and we hope to build up gradually, with perhaps a grand opening and shrine dedication in a month or two's time.

Kamalasila

BRIGHTON

It is all too easy to write reports on FWBO activities that are almost interchangeable with one another, or that sound like some transcendental scorecard: inspiring Pujas - 16, successful fund-raising events - 6, attendances at classes - high. All this is common to most Friends' centres; after all, the Truth cannot but attract, create enthusiasm, happiness and commitment. So what is special to FWBO Brighton? Firstly a very good environment, with a centre within five minutes easy walk of the sea, so that during breaks in activities one can go for a walk along the promenade, or sit and count waves rather than breaths. Secondly there is a heterogeneous collection of people attending the centre. Some arrive at our classes in suits, straight from the office, others come in their work clothes direct from the large local building-site. We have students from Sussex University, and many married Friends, and we are slowly feeling our way towards providing suitable facilities for children.

At present there are two Order members, Ashvajit and Vessantara, and a dozen Mitras, supplemented by a steady stream of visitors from other centres. Our most noteworthy recent visitor was the Ven. Sangharakshita, who came down for a public reception for the first volume of his memoirs: The Thousand Petalled Lotus. The evening was a great success. A hundred and fifty people came to see Bhante show his slides of India, which provided a colourful backdrop to the events and places described in the book. After this, Bhante was presented with a large dictionary, which we hope he will use in the writing of many more volumes as interesting as The Thousand Petalled Lotus.



Also in Brighton

I have just completed giving a series of five sessions of meditation and talk constituting a 'course' at Prior House, near the Windhorse Bookshop and meditation centre, in Brighton. It is a local government sponsored non-residential community of young people, mostly women with children, drawn together by a desire to expand their awareness of, and skill in, the arts and crafts, and to generally broaden their horizons. Within such a context, in a second floor room, lit on one side by a large window, commanding a fine view of Brighton, the course proceeded on Fridays from ten until twelve noon, with a coffee-break half-way through, and a charge of 30p per session. I had been invited to take this course by a young woman who attends our regular Monday beginners' class at the Centre. The attendance at Prior House varied from six to nine.

We began with instruction and practice of Mindfulness of Breathing, allowing sufficient time for questions, the allaying of any fears and difficulties, and the generation of a positive attitude towards, and enthusiasm for, the meditation. After coffee, which provided the opportunity for making healthy relationships, I began my first talk, which was on the Four Noble Truths. This was unscripted, and somewhat to my surprise, proceeded fluently and more or less uninterruptedly for three-quarters of an hour. The final questions and looks of sustained interest on the faces of the participants

revealed that the first session had been a success. Incidentally, I took along with me a selection of FWBO and other Buddhist publications, which provided an additional small income for the Friends.

The following three sessions were devoted to more practice of Mindfulness of Breathing, and Metta Bhavana, followed by talks on the emotions in Buddhism, the Foundations of Mindfulness, and the Six Perfections. The last session was left entirely open for questions and answers, and this provided an opportunity, not only for putting across more of the Dharma, but for getting in quite a few words about the Friends and their activities. The level of talk seemed to rise quite naturally from such matters as food, to Karma and Rebirth, Bodhisattvas, Buddhas and Enlightenment.

All in all, the experience was a thoroughly pleasant and rewarding one for me, and I can only hope that out of the several thousand words spoken, some were pearls of wisdom, if not jewels of enlightenment, which hopefully will one day help bring the realisation of their own potentiality for Buddhahood.

Ashvajit

GLASGOW

Since we moved from the Bath Street centre we have been physically scattered, with our office in the Bridges centre, and our classes spread variously through the city. All the classes except the beginners' class which we stopped publicising, continued to be well attended. Throughout this two month period Bridges has been of great value, housing the library and bookshop as well as the office, and providing us with a focal point. However, the limited space that Bridges could offer has made personal contact more difficult, and 'office work' is sometimes a little claustrophobic.

The day before we left Bath Street the local council offered us a 'temporary let' house. They managed to overlook the fact that two people already lived there (!), but it was a nice house, and the lodgers were looking for a new home, so we moved in and intend to use the house as a centre when the couple move out. Already the new shrine room has been dedicated and is now in regular use. The house, in Nithsdale Road, is thirty minutes from the city centre, so it's a bit less accessible than Bath St was, but this is offset by the space and silence which this grand old suburban house offers us. One encouraging development has been an increased initiative and feeling of commitment, stimulated by the tensions of our situation, and expressing itself, especially, in fund-raising work. Now that the process of gathering our energies has begun again, the beginners' class has joined the office in Bridges, while the study class and the Tuesday class meet at Nithsdale Rd. We can appreciate more freshly now the advantage of having our own shrine-room, where meditative and devotional energies can build up undisturbed. The coming weeks will see this process continued and consolidated.

Retreats have become a more regular and more established part of our activities, and took on an added significance during this transition period, as a situation which allowed Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday nighters to come together. In future, weekend retreats will be more or less monthly, so get in touch if you are interested in coming on one, and we'll let you have the details.

ARYATARA (SURREY)

The past three months have seen some very encouraging changes at FWBO Surrey. Whether it is Spring-time that makes the people of the area more gregarious and spiritually-inclined, whether it is the bright new colour scheme at Aryatara which creates a more welcoming effect or whether it is simply the fruit of months, if not years of care and effort, the fact is that our classes are becoming fuller and fuller. Hatha Yoga, generally the major attraction, continues to draw people in three times a week, still in the usual numbers, but is now fighting with the beginners' meditation class for its position in the popularity stakes. For some time now we have been giving classes to upwards of twenty people who seem to come to Purley from places as far apart as Croydon, Guildford, Horsham and Reigate. Interestingly, we seem to attract a very wide cross-section of the community, all ages, all types.

Whether we like it or not we are having to become far more money conscious. The house and centre are not cheap to run, and the bills insist on getting bigger all the time; and of course there is Sukhavati not too far away, for which we would like to raise some funds. Partly with this in mind, we recently held a ten-mile sponsored walk in the surprisingly rural countryside immediately surrounding Purley. About twenty-five of our Friends joined us for the walk on a day which could only be described as perfect. To the surprise of some at least, we all managed to complete the journey without anyone getting too seriously lost, and raised about £150. We hope to hold another walk later on in the Summer.

In the coming months we look forward to the celebration of the Buddha's Enlightenment, a jumble sale, several retreats and some other more social events. There are to be some changes in the resident community, when Aryamitra and Phil move with the printing press to Sukhavati. In all there will be three free places in the community, and we are hoping that some of these may be taken by our new Friends.

TRURO (CORNWALL)

Since Christmas the group here has been quite active. We have held a public talk on 'The Evolution of Man: The Path of the Buddha', a series of one day retreats, and a very successful jumble sale, as well as our regular classes. The talk drew some twenty people, half of these being newcomers. Interest was shown, and there were some good questions in the discussion period that followed the traditional refreshment break. The last Sunday of each month

is the day on which we hold our day retreats. The programmes have included meditation, taped lectures, discussion and communication-exercises. The general feeling is that these days prove most valuable. On the third weekend in February we held a jumble sale. Everyone who came and who helped enjoyed themselves, and the day was very successful financially as well.

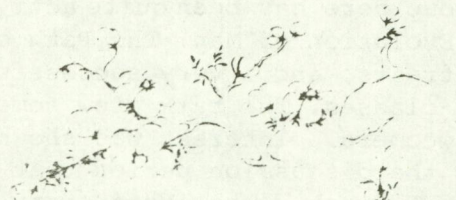
Of the two classes we hold, the beginners' meditation class has thrived, but the 'regulars' meeting has fallen rather slack. Some of our Friends have felt a conflict between the demands of family life and of the spiritual life, the former, they feel, requiring precedence at the moment. Others have realised that they do not want to become too deeply involved at the moment, and prefer to return to the beginners' class. In the very near future we are holding a special festive evening to celebrate the Buddha's birthday, as well as the birthdays of the Western Buddhist Order and the FWBO.

NORFOLK

The activities of the Norfolk FWBO got off to a successful start in mid-February with the establishment of three Yoga classes - one in Hempton near Fakenham, and two in Norwich - with an average of about twenty-five people attending each of them. Many of those coming along, having had a taste of our activities, have expressed an interest in our intention to establish a full-time FWBO centre in Norwich.

On April 4th we held our first specifically Buddhist event with the threefold celebration of the anniversaries of the FWBO, the WBO and the Buddha's Birthday. In spite of the fact that publicity was only by word of mouth approximately forty people turned up, a number of whom travelled the twenty-five miles from Norwich to Hempton where we had hired a hall for the occasion. So generous were our Friends in providing food and flowers for the festival that much of the food remained at the close of the evening and the hall was a profusion of daffodils and tulips. The programme included a talk on the significance of the celebration, an introduction to meditation and a reading from The Light of Asia.

Although for three months we have been looking for suitable premises for a centre in Norwich, nothing quite right has yet turned up, but with persistent effort we hope that before too long a centre will be found which will act as the nerve-centre for our activities in Norfolk and provide our growing number of Friends with inspiration to follow the path of the Buddha.



Publications

Preparations are now well under way for the production of four new books. Over the coming months we hope to publish new editions of The Essence of Zen and Crossing the Stream. We now have the rights to The Three Jewels and plan to publish our own edition of this work as soon as the money is forthcoming. It is now more than a year since this book has been available in Britain, so we consider this project to be one of our top priorities. Also under preparation is The Religion of Art, a selection of essays by the Ven. Sangharakshita on the relationship between art and the spiritual life.

Over the past year the books and booklets that we have already produced have been selling steadily and have managed to recover the cost of their production already. Indeed, when there are four new titles on our list, we shall feel free to be far more adventurous in the field of distribution. However, in order to be able to publish these new books, we really do need some help. The Essence of Zen is to cost about £250, Crossing the Stream £350, The Religion of Art £350, and The Three Jewels about £500. If any readers would like to consider sponsoring, or part-sponsoring, one of these productions with a gift or a loan, that would be a very tangible way of helping us to make the Dharma in general, and the Ven. Sangharakshita's teaching in particular, more widely available. If you are interested in this idea, please contact me at Pundarika.

As you will have read elsewhere in the Newsletter, the printing-press is moving from Aryatara to Sukhavati on the 1st June. Over the past year the press has been getting quite busy, although there is always room for yet more work, while the quality of the work done has improved immensely to a point where it is on a par with professional standards. Three people are now trained to operate it, which is a very good development. Once the printing department is established at Sukhavati moves will be made to improve and expand the facilities. Perhaps there are some readers with off-set printing equipment to dispose of, or who know of a place where it can be purchased cheaply. If that is the case, could they contact me? We are also well on the way to establishing a photographic/design studio. We still need some items in the photographic line, and we could always use another drawing-board or two...and an IBM typesetting machine would be a great help.... Certainly there are still some gaps in our technology, but as one by one those gaps are being filled, FWBO Publications, or 'Windhorse Press' as we now call ourselves, is becoming an increasingly significant and effective aspect of the FWBO's activity.

Nagabodhi

Newsletter Subscriptions

This Newsletter is paid for out of the same funds as those from which we hope to finance our future publications. One way in which you can help us is by being sure to pay a subscription, so long as

you are able to. Once you are on our mailing list we shall continue to send you the Newsletter, whether you subscribe or not, but we would be very grateful if you could keep up to date with your subs.

For about a year the Convenor of Mitras has been editing and publishing a magazine called Mitrata. Based on the Ven. Sangharakshita's lectures, writings and study seminars, Mitrata is a very comprehensive, down to earth 'manual' for people who are actually trying to commit themselves to the practice of Buddhism, covering such topics as morality and meditation, the hindrances encountered along the path, spiritual community, and so on. Until now the circulation of this magazine has been restricted to Mitras, but as from now Mitrata is to become available to a wider readership. If you think that you would like to receive this magazine please write to me. Subscriptions will be £3.00 p.a. Mitrata will be issued once every two months. In a few months we shall be publishing a small book which will constitute a condensed version of the first twelve issues.

Book Reviews

Calling Home the Prodigal Son

THE BRITISH: THEIR IDENTITY AND THEIR RELIGION. By Daniel Jenkins. SCM Press Ltd, London 1975. Pp. xi 201, price £3.95.

THE WAY OF ALL THE EARTH. An Encounter with Eastern Religions. By John S. Dunne. Sheldon Press, London 1973. Pp. xi 240, price £2.95.

Both these books are written by Christian academics, and both have a thesis to propound. Indeed, despite their origin on opposite sides of the Atlantic the non-Christian critic may be forgiven for seeing both of them as part of a defensive-offensive rearguard action waged by a traditional Christianity uneasily surviving in a post-Christian society.

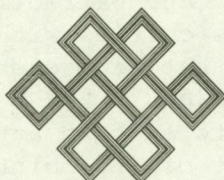
Daniel Jenkins is a British, more specifically a Welsh, Presbyterian, and was until recently Chaplain and Reader in the University of Sussex and Visiting Professor in the University of London. His thesis is that the malaise of communal life in modern Britain calls for a fresh look at ourselves and our institutions, and that such a look reveals that our national consciousness and our religious heritage are more closely related than it has been customary to suppose. This is true not only of Britain as a whole but also, more particularly, of the constituent nations of Britain, i.e. the English, the Scots, and the Welsh. Any attempt to restore the vision of Britain must therefore take into account the fact that church loyalty and national loyalty are closely linked, and that the problems of national identity in relation to Christian faith cannot be honestly faced in English terms alone. This leads the author into

a survey of the 'Matter' of Britain, of Scotland, and of Wales, followed by a much lengthier study of 'The English and Their Churches' in the course of which he appeals for the recognition of a distinctively Scottish and a distinctively Welsh national identity in a way that deserves consideration not only by English Christians but English Buddhists as well.

Committed English, Scottish, and Welsh Buddhists alike, however, will hardly agree with what he has to say about Eastern religion, very briefly discussed in the concluding paragraph of a section on 'Other religious groups in England'. Indeed, they may well find his attitude towards them no less patronizing than he finds the attitude of the English towards the Scots and the Welsh. One would have thought that Professor Jenkins would have known what it was like to be a member of a religious minority! 'It is fashionable at present,' he observes, 'among some self-conscious people to say the Western tradition is bankrupt and that the inherited values of England, those of her religion and patriotic loyalty and family life, must be repudiated. This carries with it a new interest (it can hardly be much more than that at present) in Eastern religion, notably some forms of Buddhism, and in the view of the world associated with it. One could not look to such an attitude for a renewal of the English vision, since part of its point would be to deny the validity of such a vision.' (p.122) What this English vision is the author does not tell us, though since he is at pains to distinguish England from Britain we must assume that it is not quite the same thing as the British idea, which in a chapter on 'The Community of Britain' he finds to consist in a tension between the 'Cavalier' and 'Roundhead' elements in our tradition, as well as in the qualities of respect for privacy, modesty, fair play, and moderation - an ideal that plainly has its limitations, as he himself admits.

We must also assume, no doubt, that the vision is a Christian vision. But if this is the case, then surely the (absolute) validity of the English vision is denied not only by the self-conscious people who are 'interested' in Buddhism and other Eastern faiths but by hundreds of thousands, perhaps millions, of people in these islands who have not even heard of Buddhism! Professor Jenkins rebukes John Cowper Powys for invoking the ancient pre-Christian Brythonic God instead of 'the Christian God, who is the Father of us all.' (p.53) What he fails to realize is how many there are to whom the Christian God is as unreal and as remote as the Brythonic God is to him. However much we are all agreed that Britain is spiritually sick, and that a national renewal is possible only on the basis of a religious renewal, it therefore by no means follows that the renewal has to be - or even can be - a Christian one. The fact is that the majority of people in Britain are no longer Christian. They do not believe in the Christian God. Indeed, in his concluding chapter, 'Jerusalem and Albion: The Christian Community', Professor Jenkins admits that 'the chief reason why the British Churches are weak today is that they do not believe enough in the Christian God whom they profess to serve.' (p.18)

Those who do not believe that religious renewal is possible on the basis of Christianity because they do not believe in Christianity are therefore faced with two alternatives. They must either give up all hope of any renewal or they must look for the vision that will bring it about outside Christianity. To Professor Jenkins of course, the second alternative is unthinkable. For him all the viable options are within the Christian faith. The reason for this shortsightedness is to be found partly in the fact that his original point of departure is communal life in modern Britain rather than the individual in modern Britain. It is in fact the main weakness of Professor Jenkins' book that his thesis assumes too much. Our national consciousness and our religious i.e. Christian heritage may indeed have been closely linked in the past, but before considering how the churches can help bring about a renewal of the communal life of Britain we must surely ask ourselves how acceptable Christianity itself still is to the individual Briton.



John S. Dunne is currently Professor of Religious Studies at Yale University, and has been hailed (by Newsweek) as 'the only foreseeable successor to Paul Tillich.' As befits one who has studied at Notre Dame University in America and at the Gregorian University in Rome, he has written a subtler and more scholarly book than Professor Jenkins and one that is **seemingly** more liberal. His thesis is that what seems to be occurring in our time is a "passing over" from one culture to another, from one way of life to another, from one religion to another, and that this "passing over" is followed by an equal and opposite process of "coming back", coming back with new insight to one's own culture, one's own way of life, one's own religion. The holy man of our time is not a man who could found a new religion, but a figure like Gandhi, a man who passes over by sympathetic understanding from his own religion to other religions and comes back again with new insights to his own. According to Professor Dunne, this passing over and coming back is the spiritual adventure of our time, and it is an Odyssey that takes one not only through the wonderland of other religions back into the homeland of one's own religion, but also through the lives of prophets and divine incarnations back into one's own life. After beginning his odyssey by passing over into the life of Gandhi, and his renunciation of sexuality and violence, he therefore goes on to pass over into, and come back from, the lives of the Buddha, Krishna, Jesus, and Mohammed.

In all this there is much that the Western Buddhist, whether American or British, will find acceptable. "Passing over" is in fact something that is very well understood in Buddhism, especially, perhaps, in Mahayana Buddhism. Indeed, Santideva's great teaching of paratma-parivarta or 'Transference of the

Other and the Self' can well be regarded as the classic, and most radical, statement of this process in all spiritual literature. Whether Professor Dunne himself really succeeds in passing over into the lives of prophets and divine incarnations is however doubtful. In the case of the Buddha he certainly does not succeed very well. Though seeing clearly that 'The remarkable thing about Gotama the Buddha was that he walked alone, without a friend, even without a God' (p.29) he is still able to ignore the testimony of the Pali texts and say, 'Gotama did not deny the existence of God or the existence of the soul (although his refusal to talk about the soul has ordinarily been interpreted in this way); he simply refused to offer any teaching on them.' (p.30) We are therefore not surprised when, some pages later, he finds that 'In our effort to re-enact the life of Gotama we have found it necessary to try passing over to a standpoint of providence or universal care,' and triumphantly concludes, 'We might have suspected that God would figure somehow'. (p.60) Indeed we might! For all his protestations, Professor Dunne does not really pass over from his own religion at all, but in fact carries his theistic assumptions with him into non-theistic Buddhism. He even finds the Buddha's description of the middle way in terms of the Eightfold Path 'unhelpful', having apparently not "passed over" into the Buddhist scriptures sufficiently to discover the meaning of right view, right resolve, and the rest of its constituent factors.

Despite some illuminating comments on the Four Sights, and on the Buddha's "four confidences", one is therefore left with the overall impression that in reality there has been no passing over at all, not even in thought, and that Professor Dunne has engaged in the performance of an elaborate exercise - not to say a skilful piece of play-acting, or even a conjuring trick - the purpose of which is to return the Western reader safely to his Christian base after a carefully conducted tour of world religions. That this is not just a construction arbitrarily imposed upon the book by the ill-natured non-Christian critic is borne out by what another Christian academic, Geoffrey Parrinder, writes in the introduction. 'It is often thought that acquaintance with other religions will weaken our own. One of the chief merits of Professor Dunne's book is his evidence that the opposite can happen. Far from faith being undermined, it can be enlarged and strengthened by wider studies and by looking at our own religion from other angles.' As a general principle few Western Buddhists would wish to dispute this. What they would strenuously deny was that, as all three Christian academics seem to assume, one's 'own' religion is necessarily the religion that one was born into. Such an assumption gives far too much importance to cultural factors. Neither Professor Jenkins nor Professor Dunne faces up to the fact that times have changed, and that an individual Westerner now may, in all seriousness, commit himself to a religion other than the one into which he was born and which forms part of his national heritage. For this reason Professor Jenkins is unable to envisage a spiritual renewal for Britain except on the basis of Christianity. Similarly, Professor Dunne is unable to imagine anyone passing over from Christianity

and staying there. Professor Jenkins indeed goes so far as to say, 'Those who know the love and power of the Father can be confident that, in due time, the prodigals will come to themselves and want to return'. (p.195) What both Christian academics fail to realize - is that some of the prodigals, at least, have gone for good, and whether in peremptory or in dulcet tones it is no longer any use trying to call them home.

SANGHARAKSHITA

ALSO RECEIVED:

An Introduction to Tantric Buddhism. By Shashi Bhusan Dasgupta. Routledge and Kegan Paul. £1.95 paperback.

The Leap of Reason By Don Cupitt. Sheldon Press. £4.50 cloth.

Mysticism in World Religions. By Geoffrey Parrinder. Sheldon Press. £4.95 cloth.

Thomas Merton on Zen. By Thomas Merton. Sheldon Press. £4.95 cloth, £2.50 paperback.

The Method of Zen. By Eugen Herrigel. Routledge and Kegan Paul. £1.20 paperback.

What is Life? An extract from the Western Buddhist Order Convention Summer '75

Sangharakshita: To give the complete Buddhist teaching on conditionality, you should give the Wheel of Life side by side with the image of the spiral. One should talk not simply in terms of 'stopping life', but in terms of developing life to higher and higher levels. This would seem to be not only a more acceptable approach but one which is at the same time more in accordance with Buddhist tradition. It must be emphasised that this is not just some 'adaptation' of Buddhism to satisfy the Western mind. It is getting back to the real Buddhism itself, where this progressive, positive, spiral teaching definitely is found, but rather lost to view is some Eastern Buddhist circles.

Question: There is the question of stopping the 'Wheel', but does this mean stopping 'Life'?

Sangharakshita: Well, what is Life? This raises quite an important question, because in Eastern philosophy, and in Indian philosophy generally, both Buddhist and non-Buddhist, there is no word for 'Life'. You have got 'jivitendriya' which is, sort of, 'life faculty' in a very limited sense; you have got 'prakriti', which is 'nature', but you have not got 'Life' with a capital 'L', as it were. Some years ago in India, a group of bhikku friends and myself talked about this, in connection with Mr Christmas Humphreys' statement that "All Life is one". You cannot translate that into Pali or Sanskrit. It represents an entirely different mode of

thinking and expression. So if one were to say that Buddhist practice aims at stopping 'Life', this would not really be quite correct. The 'Wheel of Life' as we translate it, is the 'Bhava Chakra', the Wheel of Becoming. One could say, if one wanted to use the word life, that there are two kinds of life, a life which is cyclical, and a life which is spiral and progressive, and one's goal is to get away from the cyclical and reactive kind of life, into the spiral and creative kind of life. You could say that. But if you made the blanket statement that Buddhism aims at stopping Life, the Western listener will not just think in terms of 'reactive life', he will think that you are including a denial of creative life too. That would be a very serious misunderstanding.

The ideal state of affairs is when everything in a lower form of existence attains a higher form of existence, but even then, even in traditional Buddhist terms, this does not just mean annihilation. There is the progressive attainment of higher and higher levels, as it were, by everybody.

Question: It doesn't stop there, does it? It goes on?

Sangharakshita: It goes on. And remember that Buddhism does regard evolution, if you like, and human development, as going on to levels of consciousness and even existence which do not come within the scope of modern science.

Question: So, presumably, the logical conclusion of the cessation of grasping, ignorance, and so on, is the annihilation of biological life as we know it, but not of spiritual life?

Sangharakshita: Yes, one could say that. Some people, however, put things in this rather extreme form, "Suppose everybody became so highly developed that there was no reproduction of the species, well everything would die out". But no, not at all. Because what is behind this reproduction of the species? Energy. So if the species no longer reproduces, it does not mean that the energy dies out: the energy has assumed a higher and subtler form, and is operating and producing on that higher level. You cannot just block it; you can lead it to higher and higher levels. It can go lower too, of course. It can only go higher once it passes the point of no return.

Question: In order to develop spiritually, do you not need to be human?

Sangharakshita: Well, we are human, this is our starting point, and luckily it's a good one. Rebirth on a higher level of existence may mean that your development could become retarded if the rebirth has been due to the accumulation of good action and merit without much wisdom and understanding. But if there has been wisdom and understanding too, then, in that higher state, there will be a recollection of the purpose of the whole process, and so you will press on, instead of just enjoying the higher state itself. For example, some human beings enjoy the human state because it is healthy and happy, and do not think of going further, but others not only enjoy the human state, but realise that this state is meant, as it were, to lead to something higher. No doubt on the

deva level the danger of settling down and enjoying is greater, just because the enjoyment itself is greater, and certain difficulties which attend human existence are not found there; but if during the human life one had developed a definite aspiration, a conscious aspiration, then that would persist even during the birth on that higher level.

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SUMMER COURSES and RETREAT

There are to be two one week courses designed specifically for newcomers. They will take place during the weeks 23-30th July, and 30 July - 6th August. If you would like to come on one of these, please contact the organiser at Pundarika.

From the 6th of August until the 20th, there is to be a two week retreat, open to all-comers, again organised by Pundarika. This retreat, like the courses, will be held in a large house in the Surrey countryside, near Farnham. Please contact the retreat organiser at Pundarika for information and a booking form.

RETREATS

Over the coming months quite a few weekend retreats have been planned in the London area. Here are details of some of them:

<u>Pundarika:</u>	15-16 May	Beginners retreat (£5)
	29-31 May	Three-day general retreat (£7.50)
	26-27 June	Beginners retreat (£5)

<u>Aryatara:</u>	29-30 May	Beginners retreat (£5)
	16-17 July	General retreat (£5)

<u>Brighton:</u>	12-13 June	General retreat (£5)
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(All weekend retreats begin on Friday evenings.)

EUROPEAN RETREAT

One of our Friends in Holland is currently organising another European retreat. As was found last year such a retreat provides an excellent opportunity for people to come from all over the continent to gain some experience of FWBO practices and activities. The retreat will begin on the evening of Thursday 29 July and will finish on the evening of Sunday 8 August. It will be held at "Theresia Hoeve", Dominicanerstraat 24, Lorgenboom, Netherlands. There will be room for approximately twenty-five people so be sure to book soon. The cost will be 250 dutch guilders. To book, write to Jarik Oosten, Juffermansstraat 39, Oegstgeest, Nederland.

FRIENDS OF THE WESTERN BUDDHIST ORDER
CENTRES AND BRANCHES

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London E.2. Tel: 01-981 1933
Mandala (West London Branch), 86d Lillie Rd,
Fulham, London SW6. Tel: 01-385 8637
- GLASGOW FWBO: c/o Bridges, 102 Byre Road, Glasgow
Tel: 041-334 3193
- SURREY FWBO: Aryatara Community, 3 Plough Lane, Purley,
Surrey. Tel: 01-660 2542
- BRIGHTON FWBO BRANCH: 19 George Street, Brighton, Sussex.
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- CORNWALL FWBO BRANCH: Upasaka Manjuvajra, c/o W.H.Thomas,
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