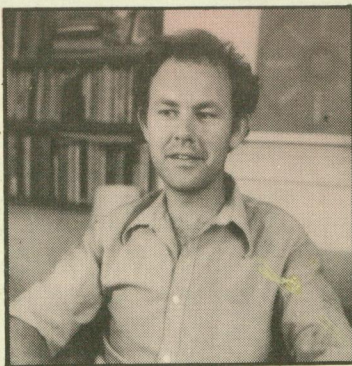
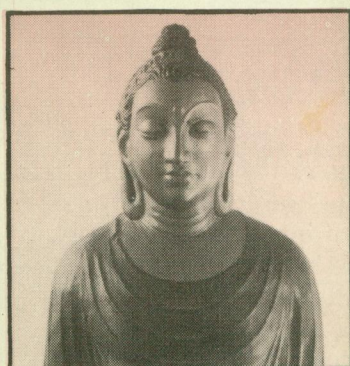


# Friends of the Western Buddhist Order

## Newsletter 31





## Weekly Programmes

### PUNDARIKA (ARCHWAY)

Monday	6 - 9.0 pm	Hatha yoga (two sessions, by arrangement only)
Tuesday	7.00 pm	Meditation, puja (variable programme)
Wednesday	5.00	Hatha yoga (50p)
	7.00	(September 15th for 7 weeks): Introductory course in Buddhism (by enrolment)
	7.00	(November 3rd for 8 weeks): The Sutra of Golden Light - series of live lectures by Ven. Sangharakshita (60p)
Sunday	6.30	Beginners' meditation class
	8.00	Talk or recorded lecture

### SUKHAVATI

Wednesday	7.00 pm	Hatha yoga
Thursday	7.00	Hatha yoga (50p each session)

### ARYATARA (SURREY)

Monday	6.30 pm	Hatha yoga (50p)
Tuesday	7.30	Meditation, puja
Wednesday	7.30	Beginners' meditation class

### MANDALA (WEST LONDON)

Monday	7.00 pm	Beginners' meditation class (from mid September)
Tuesday	5.30 & 7.	Hatha yoga (50p)
Wednesday	7.00	Beginners' class (until mid September), then Series of live talks (from mid September)
Thursday	7.00	Double meditation and puja

### HERUKA (GLASGOW)

Monday	7.30 pm	Beginners' class (at Bridges, 102 Byres Road, G11)
Tuesday	7.30	Meditation, lecture, puja. (Meal at 6.00) At 257 Nithsdale Road, G41.

### BRIGHTON

Monday	7.15 pm	Beginners' meditation
Wednesday	7.15	Meditation, study, puja
Thursday	7.15	Hatha yoga (by arrangement)
Saturday	10.00 am	Hatha yoga (by arrangement)

### TRURO

Wednesday	7.30 pm	Beginners' meditation class Regular meditation, discussion At People's Palace, Pyder Street, Truro.
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### NORWICH

Tuesday	7.30 pm	Beginners' meditation (all classes from September)
Thursday	7.00	Beginners' meditation
	8.30	Tape recorded lecture



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## FWBO NEWSLETTER 31

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SUMMER 76

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## EDITORIAL

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'The spiritual life'... how easily that term rolls onto the page, slides off the tongue, bringing to the inner ear yet more words that beckon and allure. Words like 'peace', 'contentment', 'tranquillity', 'bliss'. Whisper them to yourself. Enjoy them, and let them draw you towards a hint of what could be, what might be. The spiritual life... Ah, but go further in, allow yourself to be drawn in - with body, speech and mind - and then marvel at what a savage and slippery thing, what a maddening game of hide and seek, it turns out to be! Sometimes it is a rolling grassy meadow, all softness and fragrance. At others it is the very lion's mouth. At times it is giving you more and yet more of everything, while at others it is stripping you bare of all that you ever possessed. Sometimes it is 'nothing special' sometimes it is downright amazing.

Can all this equally be the spiritual life? Can it still be the spiritual life even when Vision seems almost to have faded away for a while? The goal hovers, at best, on the very horizon of possibility, held there perhaps by nothing more or less than our trust. Can it still be the 'spiritual life' when confidence suddenly turns, for no apparent reason, into doubt, populating the distant vistas only with mists and monsters? I don't want to start defining what I think is meant by 'spiritual life'. I don't want to round things off nicely with a few well chosen words that demonstrate how the joy and the exasperation, the thrill of excitement and the dull ache of confusion are really all the same. I just want to express the gratitude I feel for having been shown a path. Have you ever walked along a narrow road at night when it is so dark that you cannot even see your hand in front of your face? If you are not familiar with the place then all you can do is listen to and feel your feet on the ground, knowing that you'll be okay so long as you are still on the road. Your progress might be slow, but at least you don't have to worry about falling into a ditch, or getting completely lost. The spiritual life is confusing: set with traps and unexpected turnings. I, at least, certainly find it so. But there is a path, something to feel our way along. What a priceless gift! We could count ourselves lucky were we to be given nothing more than a couple of signposts or even a few inspiring words to help us on our way. But we have so much more than that. We have the Dharma. We are being shown the path that the Buddha discovered two and a half thousand years ago. For two and a half thousand years countless individuals have kept that path clear and visible, and now it is being revealed for us. Do we realise how lucky we are?

Nagabodhi





## SECRET WINGS

We cry that we are weak although  
We will not stir our secret wings;  
The world is dark - because we are  
Blind to the starriness of things.

We pluck our rainbow-tinted plumes  
And with their heaven-born beauty try  
To fledge nocturnal shafts, and then  
Complain "Alas! we cannot fly!"

We mutter "All is dust" or else  
With mocking words accost the wise:  
"Show us the Sun which shines beyond  
The Veil" - and then we close our eyes.

To powers above and powers beneath  
In quest of Truth men sue for aid,  
Who stand athwart the Light and fear  
The shadow that themselves have made.

Oh cry no more that you are weak  
But stir and spread your secret wings,  
And say "The world is bright, because  
We glimpse the starriness of things."

Soar with your rainbow plumes and reach  
That near-far land where all are one,  
Where Beauty's face is aye unveiled  
And every star shall be a sun.

Ven. Sangharakshita 10 december 1948



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# TALKING ABOUT COMMUNITIES

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WHAT IS A BUDDHIST COMMUNITY? WHY ARE AN INCREASING NUMBER OF 'FRIENDS' ORGANISING THEMSELVES INTO COMMUNITIES? THERE IS NO DOUBT THAT THOSE WHO HAVE CHOSEN TO LIVE IN THIS WAY ARE FINDING IT A VALUABLE BASIS FOR THE SPIRITUAL LIFE - AND ACCORDING TO SOME, THE BEST. I TALKED TO THREE PEOPLE WHO ARE CURRENTLY LIVING IN DIFFERENT SORTS OF 'FRIENDS' COMMUNITIES IN ORDER TO FIND OUT WHY THEY ARE LIVING IN THIS WAY, AND WHAT THEY GET OUT OF IT. THERE IS NO FWBO POLICY ON COMMUNITIES, SINGLE-SEX SITUATIONS, AND SO ON, SO THESE THREE CONVERSATIONS NECESSARILY INCLUDE PERSONAL REMINISCENCES AND AUTOBIOGRAPHY HELPING US TO UNDERSTAND HOW AND WHY EACH PERSON HAS ARRIVED AT LIVING IN THIS PARTICULAR WAY.





“ WE WERE GROPING IN THE DARK,  
TRYING TO CREATE SOMETHING WHEN WE  
WERE NOT REALLY SURE WHAT WE WERE  
TRYING TO CREATE ”

## DHAMMADINNA

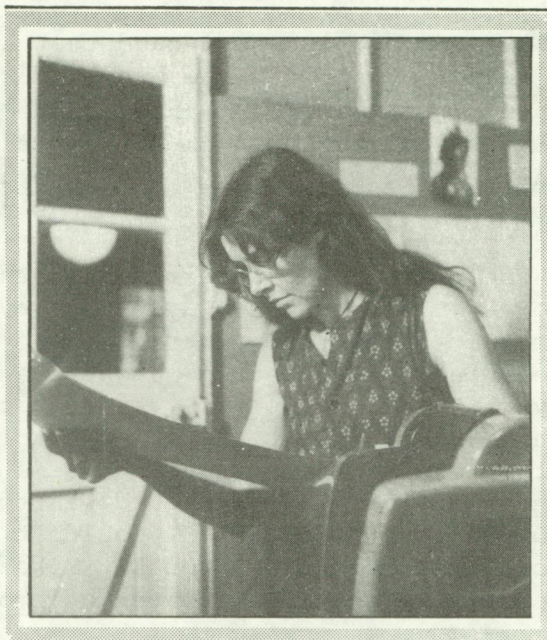
Here first of all, is my conversation with Upasika Dhammadinna. Dhammadinna has lived in quite a wide variety of ways. For six years she lived with her husband until they moved together into an already established non-Buddhist community where they lived for six months with eight other adults and two children. From there, separated from her husband, she moved on to become a founder member of the first Friends community, in the Archway area. Some years later she established a women's community and now lives with one other upasika in Balmore Street.

Nagabodhi: Why did you originally choose to move into a community?

Dhammadinna: I'd been interested in the ideal of community living for some time. I thought that marriage could go in one of two ways. It could go towards opening up to people - a social situation with a lot of friends - and then going to live with other people, or it could get more and more isolated as time went on, which seemed to happen to married couples that I knew: having children, getting more entrenched in jobs, moving to the suburbs, getting more isolated and feeling unhappy. I didn't want that to happen so I thought we should make a move in the other direction. The community we joined had been going for five years. They had come together through the 'Dialectics of Liberation' Conference in 1967, which was an anti-psychiatry thing. They felt that living in a community was some kind of answer to modern problems - like alienation, etcetera - and they were building a new sort of lifestyle which would include more and more people. They were into arts and music and children and sort of based on 'getting it together' psychologically.

N: How did you find community living?

D: Well, it was very different. Actually living with other people was more of a change than I'd expected. We had our own room but there was only one kitchen so you had to consider everyone else. I sort of liked it and didn't like it. I liked the fact that there





were more people around and that there was always something happening. I liked living with the kids. But I think that there were too many things going on in my life at the time for me to really be able to give myself to the community. Buddhism was now a strong interest and getting stronger, and no one there was really interested. I found the way they worked things out a bit 'psychological', a lot of talking, a lot of rationalisation. Looking back on it now I think they lacked a spiritual path, something that really held them together in a strong way. Also everyone there was half a couple or half of a broken marriage, and they were into being 'freely relating individuals' (laughs), and so couples were very threatened by what was in the air. It's quite hard living as a couple somewhere where there aren't any other couples, you get to experience your 'coupleness' in, perhaps, quite a negative way. Also I'd been thinking that what I needed was to be more independent and had come to the conclusion that I couldn't do that unless I was on my own for a bit. I think probably Mike felt the same. After living there for six months we separated and moved out.

**N:** So you left.

**D:** I left and started a community with some other people near the centre in Archway, the first in that area. We were all Buddhists. The idea had arisen on a retreat where, obviously, people were feeling very positive about being together. There were five of us who all needed a place to live, so we thought about getting a house together, and it was done.

**N:** How did it go.

**D:** At the beginning there was a lot of work to do on the house, so that was quite good, but we didn't know each other very well. There was a couple in the process of breaking up, there was someone who had never lived anywhere other than with his parents, I was trying to deal with being on my own after six years of being in a couple. Maybe I should have gone and lived on my own for a while. I had things to work out, and I think that was true of the others as well, so it wasn't all that positive. There were rows, and a lack of day-to-day open communication which makes it hard to work through things. We were groping in the dark, trying to create something when we were not really sure what we were trying to create.

**N:** Did you have expectations of what a Buddhist community should be like?

**D:** There are always expectations! People have an idea that everyone in a Buddhist community is going to be exuding metta, mindful, and it's going to be something amazing...and you can lose sight of the fact that it's just five people living together, trying to develop and rubbing up against each other. Some of the members moved out quite quickly, actually, and then others moved in who were not Buddhists, so it became a mixed, very loose, household, without much of a common aim and it lost a lot of energy that way.

**N:** Do you think that a community composed of Buddhists and non-Buddhists can work out?

**D:** Personally, no. It seems to be totally unviable on all levels.



When you have a mixed community, people approach things in such different ways it sometimes seems impossible to work things out, and then everything gets difficult - even the food situation. So after about eighteen months I moved next door into a new community which was made up mainly of Order members. And that was very very different. I felt I'd arrived from somewhere that was always shifting. The sort of consideration it took to get the quiet and space I needed at that time was built into the situation. All six people were very much involved in Buddhism, involved in their practices and so on, in varying ways. There was a common ideal, a common feeling, a lot of warmth.

**N:** Did you do any particular daily practice together?

**D:** No. We meditated by ourselves, but we ate together frequently, cooked for each other; we'd come back from the centre after classes and the kitchen was quite a good communal room so we'd spend time there. It was friendly. That was one of its advantages - and one of its disadvantages, sometimes maybe it was too cosy. You could spend a lot of time chatting and not do anything else. When the time came for us to all move house things were never quite the same again. Perhaps it was to do with the changes taking place in people - we didn't seem to see so much of each other, or to be so much in harmony. I found also that I was not particularly happy about living in a house with a couple; another woman there felt the same way, so we decided to try living just with women.

**N:** Had you thought about living that way before or did it just happen?

**D:** I had thought about it, but not long before it happened. Now I don't think I'll ever want to go back to living in a mixed sex community. It's difficult to say why, actually. I've never really thought about it ...it just seems more natural to live with other women if you're not actually in a relationship with a man. It's not as if I no longer see any men. I do have a lot of contact with men, but if you're not in a sexual relationship with someone, then I can't see any reason for living with someone of the opposite sex, because if you do there's always something of the sexual element there - more, I think, for the men than for the women actually - well that's my experience. It just seems to get in the way, especially in the living situation. There are dirty, untidy men, and there are dirty, untidy women, but when conflicts arise in a mixed situation it seems to be much more charged, you know. You can have it out with a member of your own sex for not washing up the dishes, but if you do that with a man it's just something else. You're put in the 'mother' role, or the 'nagging wife' role.

**N:** Life's simpler?

**D:** Yes! Basically life's simpler, and you feel freer because it's simpler. You are not cut off from men. You can go out and have a social life with men; you could have a sexual life with men, you can have friendships with men, but you don't have that around you all the time. Also living with people of your own sex when you are meditating and so on is somehow strengthening. There's nothing



being projected onto you. No one's wondering whether there's anything sexual going on. You can just be yourself, so that's very freeing and very strengthening, so when you do go out, you feel much more an individual, much stronger in yourself. You're not so swayed by what people think of you, you are more strongly based in what you know you are.

**N:** Have you experienced the various life styles as a progression?

**D:** Even from the beginning my motivation was to be more independent, more individual, to be stronger. That has been the progression. It has also been very much a progression towards simplicity. Moving into a Buddhist community was in a sense narrowing everything down. I just wanted to do one thing, and with people who were doing that too, so I lost contact with a lot of old friends and just totally gave myself to that, because that was what I'd decided I wanted to do. And then it's been a matter of simplifying things more and more, even in a Buddhist context. As for possessions, I started out with quite a lot - I've ended up with a vacuum cleaner and a saucepan, I think!

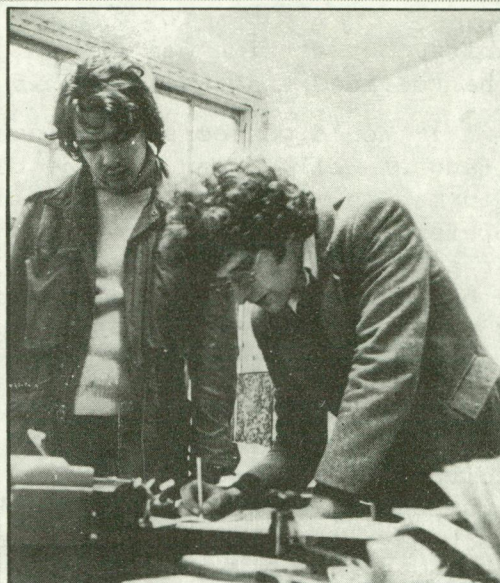
**N:** Could you say what you think a Buddhist community is?

**D:** It's a number of people living together with higher evolution, growth, as their goal. I don't think you can say anything more about it than that, because it depends entirely on how those people are going to express that - together and as individuals - so a Buddhist community, viewed externally, could be any number of things. It will work I think when people are very much in touch with their feelings about their growth and about the Dharma in a positive way, so that it's not a strain. Communication has to be as open as possible which means that you don't just show your 'Buddhist' side to people; you just are what you are, where you are. It doesn't work when there's any pretence, emotional unclarity or non-openness...but in a way that's what you're working with anyway. You could say that if there's bad communication then it's not working, but then, living in a community, you've got to work at good communication. You've got to work at being yourself. It's very much an active situation. You've got to create it. I do think that the members need to get together regularly in some way. Meditation is probably the best way, eating together is good, house meetings, of course, and probably working together is even better. Community living is very difficult. If a group of people are thinking of setting up a Buddhist community, then the best thing would be for one of them to come and live for a while in a Friends community and just feel the experience of it. Otherwise you can fall into all sorts of expectations and ideals about what it is going to be when you don't really know what you are doing and why. Maybe I've found it difficult because I came from a rather fixed situation, but for younger people who have just lived around in flats and bedsits maybe it's not so different...except that it's more positive and has more direction. But I think I've succeeded. I'm glad I took the step, the risk.



“ WHATEVER HAPPENS YOU ALWAYS  
COME BACK TO THE IDEAL ”

## LOKAMITRA



Upasaka Lokamitra, the chairman of the FWBO in north London, has lived for about three and a half years in number 5 Balmore Street, the longest running community in the Archway area, and the Friends' longest running men's community. Before that he shared a flat with two old friends but the conflict of interests and energies eventually led him to seek the company of those involved in the same things as himself....

Lokamitra: Flat sharing is very much a matter of convenience and although you may get on very well with those you are with, there is not necessarily any common ideal. If there is a common ideal, then people tend to relate to each other in the most positive way, with that ideal in mind.

Nagabodhi: Do you find that this is how it works out in practice?

Lokamitra: Whatever happens you always come back to that ideal, if you are sincerely trying to follow it, trying to live according to what the ideal requires. That doesn't mean that the other sides of can be denied. When one is trying to develop, one inevitably comes up against one's worst sides and one is always confronted by these, face to face. If you are going to develop more energy in order to go forward then it's obviously got to come from somewhere, and living in a community you cannot just cut half of yourself off. You have to be there completely, so all your sides have to come up, even if they are ugly and horrible, and that energy has to be transformed. A community provides the ideal situation in which these sides of yourself can emerge because it is so supportive. Living alone you could get swamped by these things, they could just take over, but it's not nearly so easy for that to happen living in a community of people who are committed to the same things as yourself.

**N:** Can you say how this community has developed?

**L:** This was the first community in Balmore Street. From the beginning all the members were involved in the activities of the Friends. It just happened that the first five people who lived here were men, we weren't particularly concerned about living in a single-sex



community, but as time went on we began to appreciate the advantages, and then decided that we wanted it to continue as such.

**N:** Would you consider living in a mixed community again?

**L:** (Laughs) Well, I can imagine that it's just as bad living with certain men as with certain women. I think that wherever possible I'd prefer living in a strong, men's community. It's much simpler as far as communication goes, more relaxed, which is very important since one can be in a much better state to get on with what one is doing. There is less game playing, people can be more direct.

**N:** Is it an escape?

**L:** I don't think it's an escape at all. If you have decided that you want to develop, then what do you do? You find the best, most conducive situation to do that in, so that cannot be called escapism: that is putting your energies totally into what you are doing. I wouldn't say categorically that the single sex community is the most conducive situation for everyone, but I think that for most people who are trying to develop there will come a time when they will want to live or spend more time with people of their own sex. If you look at people who are trying to develop and living in a mixed community, my experience of them is that they haven't found things nearly so easy; something gets in the way. It's a compromise, isn't it? Often they don't want to give themselves wholeheartedly to the spiritual ideal... or to the other maybe. They want a bit of both, so their energies are in conflict. In a way, that is much more of an 'escape'.

**N:** How choosy do you have to be when setting up a community?

**L:** Well, as a community develops you have to be more and more choosy, because the stronger it becomes, the more open the communication. So, on the one hand it has more to offer to someone coming in, and on the other hand it has more to lose. In a way it doesn't operate too much on choice - the ideal person usually comes along, or somebody turns up who needs a place who is obviously suited to living in the community. But if you were to choose someone, you would choose someone who could benefit from the situation, but who would not upset it, and who could make a positive contribution. At times I've resented newcomers. Not for themselves, but I think that altogether twenty three people have lived in this house, seventeen of whom are now Order members, so every time someone new comes, it's almost like moving house yourself, which at times can be a little disruptive. Obviously that also has its disadvantages.

**N:** How democratic can a community be?

**L:** I very rarely think in terms of democracy. I think in terms of accepting responsibility. So if you want something done and are prepared to take responsibility - as much as one takes responsibility in a situation, to that extent one has a say in it. That seems to me how we run things.

**N:** Do you have any idea of what the ideal community might be?

**L:** Well, I think it varies. I know that I have different needs at different times. If I wanted to do a lot of study, a lot of meditation, and if I still wanted to live in a community, then it would have to be a very different one from the community I'm living in at present.



As one becomes more committed in oneself then one's needs become clearer and clearer. At first one may just vaguely be a Buddhist, or may vaguely be meditating, and one may just come together with others who are doing the same sort of thing. But as time goes on one will want to live with people who are more clear about their commitment and going about things in the same way as oneself, because only on that basis can one really get the full fruits of community living.

**N:** What about the other Archway communities?

**L:** When I first moved here, there were two other communities in the area, and Buddhadasa living in the caretaker's caravan at the centre. There were a few other people living within a mile or two. Now there are seven communities in the immediate area of the centre and many more people living within a mile or two. This is a redevelopment area which means that there has been a lot of cheap short-term housing, which has been very fortunate for us. It has enabled people to live very cheaply so that they could give energy to the centre and to the Movement, which has been vital. At the beginning there was very little involvement in the running of the centre on the part of most Order members and Friends. Now, most members of the communities are actively involved in some way, and in many ways the centre is dependent on these communities for its support and energy. For example, several years ago, if we were organising a festival or something, those Order members around here who were most involved had to do everything, and it was often difficult to get others to help. But this year, when I was in charge of Wesak Day, everything seemed to happen as if by magic - everyone was keen to offer just what they could. It's really tremendous the way that's happened, the change in people's attitudes.

**N:** And you think this change in attitudes is due to the communities?

**L:** Very much. In a way, we have three different kinds of community round here in relation to the Friends. First we have the Order community, which is very close because many Order members live either together or near each other and have a lot of contact. Secondly we have the different communities made up of Order members, Mitras, and Friends, some of which are very strong, and thirdly we have the general community of Friends in the area. In a way, it's a bit like a little village; it has that flavour at times, and the centre is the focus for the energies of all those communities. So if you are living in a community - even if you are just living in the area - then the ideal to which you are aspiring is brought home much more. If most of your contact is with other members of the Sangha, then you are always relating in terms of the ideal, which means that people progress much faster than they could in another situation. It means that they have more energy, want to give much more, and much of this giving goes into the centre and the Movement,

**N:** Do you think that the Friends' communities have made a contribution to the area itself?

**L:** Very definitely, though it's hard to say in what way. Those local residents with whom we have contact seem to appreciate our presence. We are on very good terms with the Council. This is quite a squalid area, quite depressing to live in because houses are being



pulled down, houses are being squatted, and really horrible new houses are being put up. There is always the sound of building work, the streets are in a mess: in fact all the things associated with a redevelopment area at its worst, and I certainly think we have a softening influence. I think that it is much less harsh than it would be without us here.

**N:** What effect has community life had on you?

**L:** There's so much. I can't tell where I'd be if I hadn't been living in a community. Without this sangha, for that's what it is, I can't see how anyone unless they are superhuman can make any real progress. I would advise anyone to try to establish a community. Any coming together on the basis of the Three Jewels must be positive. It cannot but help. I just feel very fortunate and grateful for the situation.

“

I'VE SEEN A CERTAIN AMOUNT  
OF THE ALTERNATIVE AND I'VE NEVER  
SEEN ANYTHING LIKE SUKHAVATI

”

## TIM McNALLY



Tim McNally is a mitra living at Sukhavati. Unlike Dhammadinna, Lokamitra, and many other Friends who have sought a Buddhist environment in which to intensify their spiritual practice, Tim, an Australian "traveller", moved to Sukhavati simply because he needed a place to stay....

Tim: I'd been travelling for about three years. Before that I was living at home, saving for the time when I could travel. That's all I wanted to do. I had some idea about growth, but very vague. I was trying to get down to Nigeria when I ran out of money in Algeria and had just enough to get back to London. So I came back here and thought, "well, there's only one place to go, and that's Sukhavati", because I knew that I could work for my keep, and I had a brother there, an introduction. I phoned Dave who was a bit apprehensive because this sort of thing was a bit unusual, but he reckoned that it would be alright, so I went round.

Nagabodhi: Had you ever been to any Friends' activities before?

Tim: Well, I came along as a sort of observer to a jumble sale! I



had had a sort of intermittent contact with a few people in the Friends through Dave, so I'd had a bit of a dialogue with them - a very valuable one in fact - and I'd actually been round to see Sukhavati two or three times and was really impressed by what was happening here, and I thought that I'd like to be part of it, but not yet. I suffered from that pretty popular assumption that Buddhism was just another organised religion, and therefore suspect, so my interest was pretty lukewarm. I'd never given even a thought to going to any of the classes. It was something that I thought "well, I'll get round to all that some day." How could I stop travelling? That was my role at the present.

**N:** Can you say what it meant to be a traveller?

**T:** Well, a traveller is usually someone who is fleeing from something unacceptable. Life seems boring or meaningless, and he is hoping that he might fall into something, by coincidence perhaps, that was meant for him. It's a bit of a romantic view, but to me it was "at least I'm keeping my options open, moving around and not getting in a rut." It seemed a bit aimless, but at least I was still free to look around, to open myself to other paths...still looking. But I think you come to a point where you realise that you are just really escaping, living a pretty pleasure seeking existence and doing as little as possible.

**N:** So how did you feel when you got to Sukhavati?

**T:** I was a bit traumatised by what had happened in Algeria, a bit shaken, because for the first time in three years I started to have doubts about the viability of what I was doing. I came to Sukhavati feeling a bit negative with myself and feeling a bit conspicuous, because I was a traveller. I had just come through expedience, rather than giving up a comfortable scene to come and work there. I saw myself as a layman, whereas everyone else was committed - Buddhists.

**N:** Did you do the practices?

**T:** Oh yes. It was all pretty alien to me at first, especially the pujas, but I did it all through a feeling that I ought to be seen, to make myself acceptable. I don't think there actually was any pressure on me to do that. Subhuti did say that they'd expect me to take part in the activities of the community, including the spiritual activities, but I thought that was fair enough, and made an effort to do that; I thought that obviously it would help the cohesion of the community. But I wasn't really into it. I got into the work; that was something I could relate to, and slowly I started to become enamoured of Sukhavati - it started to take hold of me - and I've been here ever since.

**N:** Was there a particular time when you stopped being a passing guest?

**T:** Yes. I think the first retreat I went on was the turning point. I picked up on the atmosphere there really. It was very human; something I'd never really experienced before, and it was something that I thought I'd like to cultivate. It was a very sort of elusive quality. I'd only been here two weeks, not long, and here I was, doing something that I'd never expected to be doing, and I was actually deriving some sort of benefit from it, and not really knowing why, because I couldn't use the practices (the meditation sessions)



as much as some of the others. Up to then it has just been the work, fairly a-religious, a-spiritual, but I went to this retreat and I thought, "yeah, this is really good, I'm getting something out of it". I thought I could well afford to stay on a bit longer and not just think of getting my money refunded from American Express. The negative phase I had been going through ended and a new positive enquiring phase began on the retreat, and afterwards I was saying, "well, there are possibilities here and I'm sure the time will be well spent - I'll try and make a go of it, get as involved as I can", because I remember that after that time I didn't give much thought to anything except Sukhavati. I was really happy to be here; I saw it as an incredible opportunity. I was amazed at how lucky I was.

**N:** What did you see it as being an opportunity for?

**T:** Well, it's a working environment. It's Buddhism in action. For a person like myself I found the practices too passive at first. I couldn't just sit down and develop dhyanic states. I'm just not that sort of person. I have to pick up on the energy, distil it, refine it, and then get into meditative states. And I think that could only happen at Sukhavati. It was an opportunity to live a more total life, to be more human, and I doubt if I could have done it anywhere else.

**N:** You speak of work on the one hand, and meditation on the other. Do you see these as two poles?

**T:** Yes, I do see two poles, but I think the one reinforces the other, and both form part of the whole. I try to imagine what Sukhavati would be like without the work, and it would be a different place. I like the general activity. I like the way things are moving ahead here.

**N:** And how do you find living in a community?

**T:** I find it a way in which everybody helps each other to grow. Because there are other people here you just can't afford to back-slide, you can't afford to be selfish - because you are living with other people, you have to share things. Therefore there's this pressure, you know, a subtle pressure (laughs) on you to give, give more of yourself, give energy. With twenty people here, it's very difficult to withdraw! If you do so, people tend to notice. The fact that there are other people sending out energy communicates itself to you. The energy is infectious that way, and with twenty people it's bound to be the case that there are a few key people who are encouraging everybody else, so you are going to be falling into their influence, and in turn, influencing others. I see it as a sort of chain. Generally I have felt very comfortable in that situation. I sometimes react and think I want to do things by myself, and I feel there are too many demands. At times it makes me say, "ah, what the hell..." But these times can be helpful too. For example I find it difficult to get up and go to meditation in the morning, because I like to stay up late at night. But I've found that when I do get up, make a determined effort, I feel better for it. So often the impetus to do something may come from a feeling of outside pressure, leavened by a certain hope of enrichment!

**N:** Here's a big question: do you think that living here has



fundamentally reshaped your view of life?

**T:** Well, it has of course, but it's very difficult to say how. The first thing that occurs to me is that I couldn't go back to what I was doing before. I've seen that that was fairly futile existence. I see a lot of escapism in it which I could best afford to avoid. I would take leave of a lot of my former friends and acquaintances who I feel now were, unfortunately, probably a bit detrimental to my growth...because of what they were into, and mainly because of what they expected out of me. I find that most people expect you to conform to an image which is probably what you were maybe ten years ago.

**N:** And do you find this happens at Sukhavati?

**T:** Well no. I came to Sukhavati and nobody knew me. It was an opportunity to be reborn. I was an unknown quantity; it was a chance to start again. I could forget about all the constraints that I may have had in any other that I may have found in any other situation and I just picked up on the signposts that I found at Sukhavati. I just sort of followed what was happening here, critically at first, and cynically, but slowly I felt "yes, this is good, this is, to some extent, what I've been looking for for years." Here I found myself realising an identity that I've always had, but which was clouded by the role I've had to play, as a traveller and as an Australian, but which never had a chance to emerge. Sukhavati, for myself, for everyone, gives us the chance to get in touch with that identity, basically I think because there's an absence of other expectations.

**N:** As a traveller you've been in very free-flowing situations before, yet it's here that you've felt free to be yourself. What has Sukhavati got that other situations have not?

**T:** Well there's Padma (the internal Sukhavati newsletter). I've always had certain literary pretensions which I never took seriously, and here is a chance to use them for what I could say is some sort of purpose. The other thing is the work itself. We are working for ourselves here, and for other people who want to become enlightened, and actually living in the building, and actually seeing it transform every day, is a powerful force. There are the meditation practices, obviously, and the study groups. I find them particularly helpful because how else could I find out about Buddhism and resolve any doubts I might have? There are other things of course: the general communication.

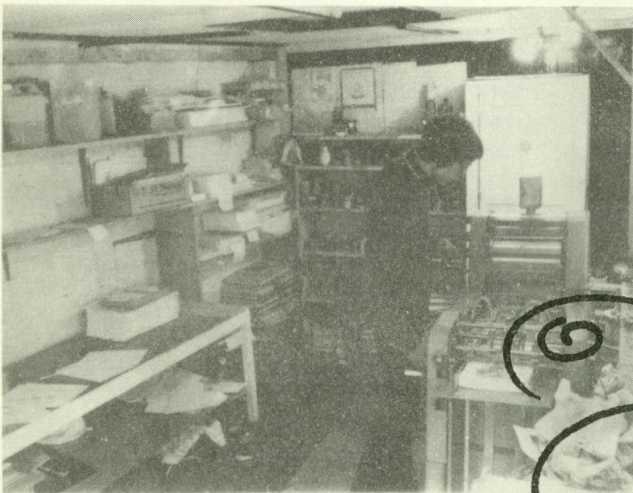
**N:** Should you already be strong to benefit from the situation, or do you think that you can develop the strength through being here?

**T:** I think it should lead everyone to that strength. The situation is here, the potential is here, and I feel very frustrated if people don't use it. I sometimes feel moved to remind people of just what they've got going for themselves at Sukhavati, and to make the most of it, because I've seen a certain amount of the alternative and I've never seen anything like Sukhavati. I think it's such a powerful way of making your energy flow - it's not a clinic where you get therapy and then leave. You carry on, you live, and you just keep progressing.



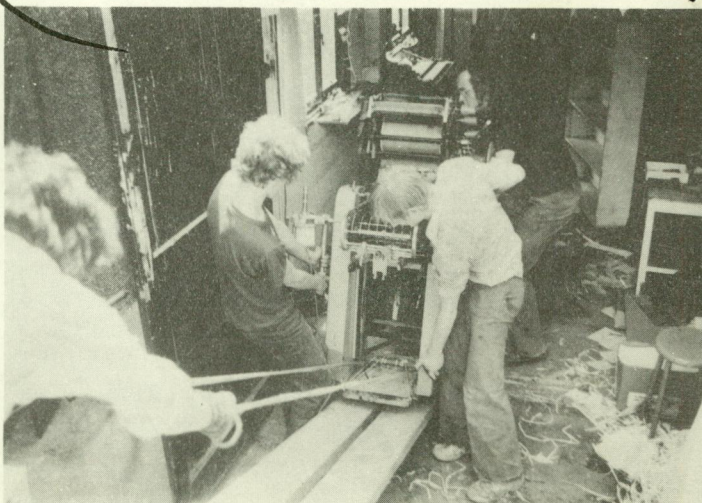
# WINDHORSE PRESS moves to SUKHAVATI

The Friends of the Western Buddhist Order printing service has recently moved to Sukhavati. Windhorse Press, as it is now called, began three years ago with the purchase of a small offset litho printing press. At that time there were no printers within the Friends so two upasakas (Ananda and Aryamitra) took employment with commercial printers where they learned the basic arts of printing. With this training behind them, the service got underway. In April 1975 the first paperback book was produced (Ven. Sangharakshita's Path of the Inner Life). Shortly after this Phil Shrivel joined Aryamitra to train as a second printer, while Ananda left to study graphic design and printing at college. With the increase in work from the FWBO, as well as other Buddhist and sympathetic groups, it soon became apparent that the converted garage at Aryatara was too small to house the press. The next step was to find new premises. What better place than 'The Pure Land', Sukhavati?



## THE MOVE

A Friend (Mike Chivers) loaned the Truck. Sukhavati loaned Punya and Andy Friends, (both well trained in the art of moving heavy objects). Together with Phil and Aryamitra, with rope and muscle, the press, the guillotine and collator were hauled onto the Truck. The paper and printing supplies were heaped into a van, and within three hours the entire printing service was on the road.

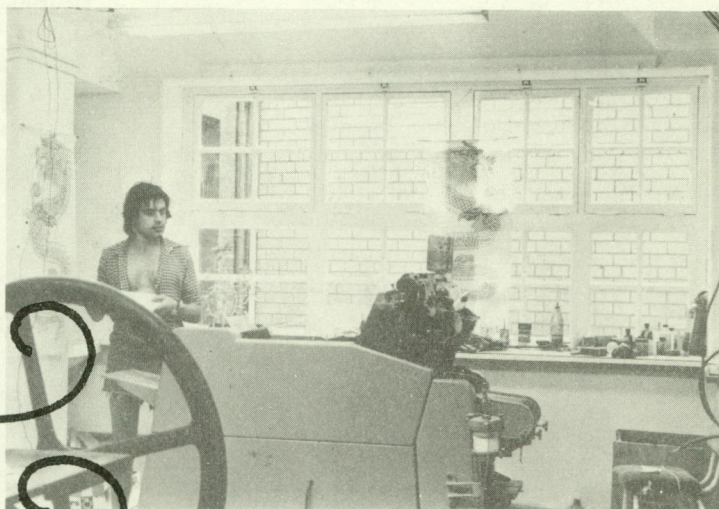




## SUKHAVATI

Moving nearly two tons of equipment into the basement of Sukhavati was not so easy. It took eight men holding the ends of ropes to lower the press through the main shriner room floor. Hearts missed beats as our expensive equipment dangled from the ropes, slipping and twisting to shouts of "To the left!", "No! to the right!", "Yes, your side!" But all went well, and within three days Windhorse Press was in operation in its new spacious premises. There are now two printers and one trainee living at Sukhavati. They have a large printshop with enough space for two printing machines, a guillotine, and plenty of work space.

There is also a large darkroom with a process camera for making litho plates. The darkroom's special feature is a walkthrough doorway to let people in and out without letting light in at the same time. With a small office, the whole area is about five times that of the old premises.



## THE FUTURE

Now that Windhorse Press is settled into its new home, we look towards the future. With another four books by Sangharakshita lined up for the press, the Newsletter every quarter, Mitrata every two months, as well as general printing from the FWBO and others, the present press is being stretched beyond

its limits. The next step will be towards a second press, with full colour reproduction, and able to cope with larger formats. Windhorse Press will also be expanding the finishing side of printing: collating, folding, etcetera, and including bookbinding.

In this way not only will the service be making known the Buddha's teachings through the written word, but will be creating living Buddhism in the form of a working environment where like-minded individuals can work together for the Ideal of Enlightenment.

Aryamitra

For further information contact the Print Manager, Windhorse Press, at Sukhavati, 51 Roman Road, London E.2. (telephone 01-981 1933).



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## CENTRES and BRANCHES

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### FUND RAISING

As work on Sukhavati continues, so we continue to raise the money necessary for its transformation. This session we have had a jumble sale, a sponsored walk, and most recently, a flag day. Over forty people from Pundarika, Sukhavati, Aryatara and West London paraded the streets of Camden with tins, stickers and leaflets, and between us we collected over £200. Responses varied, but many people were friendly and encouraging and quite a few new faces appeared at Dharmachakra Day at Pundarika the following day as a result of coming into contact with one of us. This reminds me that one of the Mitras out collecting this time was 'culled' from our last flag day.

The Fund Raising team, which now consists of Lokamitra, myself, Padmavajra and Maggie Oakshott, continue to write letters, think up new ideas, and do whatever else we can think of to raise money. We now have a brightly coloured new appeal which we are sending out to everyone who might be able to help us. Next session we will possibly be having some film shows and also a big bazaar and auction at Hampstead Town Hall at Christmas time. So if anyone has anything which they think would be worth auctioning, please let us know.

The current financial position is as follows. We have now raised £25,000 and have a further £3,500 promised over the next year. This is a total of £28,500 towards the £44,000 needed. You may remember the editor's note in the last Newsletter pointed out that if 200 people gave £100 each, we would have £20,000. Well, since then quite a lot of people have

either given or promised £100, so now we only need another 155 to do the same and we'll have enough money to complete the work! So how about it? Could you contribute £100? Some people are working especially to raise £100, other have given it from their savings. Some people have said they will raise it in a group. For example, three people from Pundarika are going out busking to raise £100 between them.



Although fund raising is presently based at Pundarika, it is something which obviously concerns anyone at all interested in the Movement. Most of our Centres are housed in buildings which won't be available to us for long periods. On the other hand, we shall have Sukhavati for at least 25 years. It is the first time in the history of the Movement that we have had such a relatively stable Centre. After almost ten years, this is obviously a most important step for the FWBO. So please keep this in mind and continue to support Sukhavati as much as you can.

Anoma



## PUNDARIKA (ARCHWAY)

Since our report in the last newsletter, we have made quite a few changes around the place. We have new, blue rush matting in the downstairs area of the Centre and a new moss-green carpet in the shrine room. On the occasion of Wesak, Christine Roissetter and Dawn Inkster offered for the shrine room a beautiful embroidered wall hanging of white lotuses against a blue ground. Finally, we have a completely new shrine. The colours are now maroon, red, and gold, with an image made by Greta Hornung, a Friend from West London. With a shrine room full of people, the new shrine was dedicated on Dharmachakra Day.

This session we decided to try something new on Wednesday evenings. Instead of the usual beginners' meditation class, we held two six week meditation courses. The first one didn't bring in too many people, although those who came enjoyed it. The second has been very successful, with a dozen people attending, from all walks of life and several from other countries too. Each evening comprises instruction in meditation followed by a tea break and then a talk on various aspects of meditation. We usually conclude the evening with another short period of meditation. The course ends with a day retreat here at Pundarika. The advantage of a course as opposed to the usual beginners' meditation class is that people commit themselves to coming for several weeks and so there is continuity. Also people get to know each other and so quite a strong friendly feeling develops which, with different people coming each week, is more difficult. After six weeks of the course and a day retreat, people have a firm basis of meditation and can then choose to come to the Sunday beginners' class or to the Tuesday regular class if they feel they would like to try some

chanting and pujas.

On Sunday evenings a series of five talks was given by members of the Western Buddhist Order, entitled 'Buddhism as Evolution'. Judging from the questions asked afterwards, people found these talks quite stimulating.

Next session we shall be holding a seven week Dharma course on Wednesday evenings. Then for the last eight Wednesdays (November 3rd to December 22nd inclusive) we are very pleased to announce that the Ven. Sangharakshita will be giving a series of lectures on the Sutra of Golden Light.

During this session, two people from Pundarika have received the Upasaka Ordination from the Ven. Sangharakshita. On 12th June, at a retreat in Suffolk, Gary Hennessy and Richard Hutton received their private ordinations, and on the 13th, the public ceremony was held in the presence of Order members and Mitras mainly from Pundarika. Gary was given the name Ratnaguna, which means "precious qualities", and Richard received the name Padmavajra, meaning "lotus thunderbolt".

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## HERUKA (GLASGOW)

257 Nithsdale Road is at last FWBO's centre in Glasgow. The lodgers have moved out and now that we have the space we need, the shop, the library and the office have moved here. Only the beginners' class stays at 'Bridges', to give us a contact with urban Glasgow which complements the relative peace of the suburban centre. Things seem more settled now and it seems that we are near the end of the process of movement and change which has taken us from Bath Street, spread us through the city and is seeing us gather together again in the new centre.



From this viewpoint we can look back with a more panoramic perspective and maybe pick out patterns in events that were less clear close up.

The patterns go pretty far back, when Sangharakshita visited Glasgow in 1973 to give a lecture. Some of you, aware of Glasgow's notoriety, might be surprised at the idea of the "dear, green place" as fertile ground for the seeds of the Dharma, but its people are perceptive and realistic, with a real (if sometimes badly directed) vigour, and following the lecture the already existing Glasgow Buddhist Group invited Upasika Gotami to Glasgow. She came and for the first time the people of the Glasgow Buddhist Group, interested in Buddhism, encountered a committed, practising Buddhist involved in a vigorous movement with the weight of tradition behind it. The G.B.G. was dissolved and born from the ashes was FWBO Glasgow.

From the early days then single individuals - first Gotami, for a shorter time Padmaraja, and Chintamani, then Vajradaka, and then Malini - have been of central importance, each being, in effect, entirely responsible for the centre and its growth. The centre was housed in Bath Street almost from the beginning and classes, the organisation, and people's attitude to the Friends was influenced by the four-apartment tenement in the midst of city centre bustle. It wasn't ideal and early on there was talk of a 'new Centre' and effort was put into a property search with depressingly little result.

Meanwhile the centre grew. Numbers and funds increased,

and the ordinations of Mallika and Uttara meant an Order in Glasgow rather than an Order member. Vairocana was ordained soon afterwards. Uttara left for Aryatara, Ajita was ordained and Dharmapala came to stay. Gotami and Ratnakuta, living some seventy miles away, kept in touch, and the Order moved from strength to strength. The



Membership of the Glasgow Order and the Council largely overlap and the growth of the Order and more mature Buddhists on the council meant that responsibility could be spread more widely, and individuals had to learn to work as members of a team.

The team was still administering Bath Street and searching for the new centre. Slowly the realisation dawned that a lot of energy was going out of Bath Street, looking for the new centre, and not enough energy was going into Bath Street to make full use of its potential. So energy was redirected as people began to appreciate Bath Street afresh and, largely due to Malini's inspiration, within a few weeks it was transformed: a new shrine built and dedicated, the shrine room and sitting room redecorated, the whole place,



and people too, revitalised. People appreciated afresh the value and importance of the centre.

Then, with faultless timing, the move which we had planned for so long, at the very time when we had put it aside, was thrust upon us as after a long, rather stormy period of negotiation with our landlord it became clear that it was time to move. Circumstance seemed to confirm that the time was right and at the eleventh hour a house, far better than we could have hoped, was made available to us by the district council. The process of decorating began again as we turned the bare house into a beautiful centre. The wind of change blowing separated the wheat from the chaff; separated the essential centre from the institutional encrustation which in less than three years had grown around it. People became aware of the importance of individual attitudes and relationships, the spiritual community in fact, during the period of homelessness before Nithsdale Road became fully functioning. In the classes, numbers dropped as committed people, some perhaps discovering their commitment for the first time, made the move, while others were not able or just not inclined to make the move with us. Areas of weakness in the formal structure of the council, masked before by the informal contact which we enjoyed at Bath Street became apparent and led to a definition of roles and relationships within the council.

Now, although to some extent still in the old, the first stirrings of the new can be seen. Wesak, the first celebration at Nithsdale Road, saw an

influx of energy and new faces. The AGM on June 10 saw the re-defined council begin a new administrative year. Bhante joined our summer retreat on June 24 and carried out the ordination of Ian Waddell, who became Dhammarati - "delighting in the Dhamma". After the retreat Bhante talked about maitri, positive emotion, and the Mitra system to the largest gathering of friends in the centre so far, then with a simple ceremony in the context of the Sevenfold Puja, Pat Dunlop, Nigel Goodman, Sharon Conlin, Paul Record, Duncan Skinner and Mike Thomsen became Mitras, bringing the Mitra system to Glasgow.

The FWBO's three years in Glasgow have been years of growth; a growth in awareness of the importance of the work to be done, and of people becoming committed, and committed people becoming more committed to doing it. Nithsdale Road provided a good medium.

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## TRURO ( CORNWALL )

Friends activities in Cornwall centre around two focuses; the country focus and the town focus. The country focus is a cottage where we meet once a week for meditation and puja, and once a month for a day retreat. The town focus is in Truro where for the past few months we have held an introductory meditation and discussion evening, once a week in a room of a house used as an 'alternative' style community centre. We are looking for a more permanent centre that can be based round a shop selling a range of goods from books to food - a sort of physico-spiritual grocers, and to this end a small group of



Friends have set about raising money and looking for premises. Meanwhile we have left the premises mentioned above and moved into a cheaper and more spacious room which we rent for one evening a week.

For the past few months we have been very fortunate to have had a number of visits from groups of upasakas and mitras from South East England. Subhuti gave a talk in Falmouth on the subject of 'Society and the development of the Individual'. Both this talk and the contact with our visitors have given a lot of energy and inspiration to the Group here. Their encouragement and positivity about our Branch has spurred us on to greater efforts.

After the Summer our activities will be re-structured to include an on-going study group, a meditation/discussion/puja evening and an occasional six week introduction to meditation course as well as our successful monthly day-retreats. The advantage of the introductory courses is that they can be run in different towns, and therefore act as 'shop-windows' and a doorway into the movement and its activities at the two centres.

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## BRIGHTON

What I find particularly interesting about being in Brighton, and which I hope will encourage other Friends to come and blend their energies with ours, is the particularly favourable conditions, even atmosphere which one finds here. Maybe it has something to do with the fact that the majority of the Brighton populace is concerned with nothing more nefarious than enjoying them-

selves, or turning an honest penny. People quite obviously find our centre relaxing without conducing to laziness, an open book, not without its mysteries, and a growing point for whatever talents they can muster.



Bhante has now gladdened us with his presence on several occasions, adding each time to our fund of energy and enthusiasm, and we look forward to seeing him again on September 28th and 30th, and October 11th and 13th, when he will be giving four public talks on the subject of what the Friends of the Western Buddhist Order has to offer. These talks will be given in the Royal Pavillion.

By the time Bhante next visits us we hope to have fully established Brighton as an autonomous centre of the FWBO, rather than its being a brach of London. We also hope to have established an Order community, a day-retreat house, a men's community, women's community and a vegetarian restaurant called 'Sunrise' - an apt name for our newest venture. We also hope to have sold quite a few more copies of the Ven. Sangharakshita's autobiography 'The Thousand Petalled Lotus', not to mention the rapidly burgeoning set of Windhorse Publications.

We are providing three weekend retreats this autumn in addition



to our usual morning and evening meditations, live talks, pujas and study groups. The retreats will be held at Aryatara Community, Purley on the weekends of September 11-12th, October 23-24th, and December 11-12th.

We also look forward to Dhamma-dinna visiting us every Tuesday in the autumn to inspire and exhort the women mitras, and hope that and other upasikas and upasakas, mitras and Friends, who feel in need of a change (which is said to be as good as - if not the same as - a rest!) from the hurly burly or the hum drum, will come and savour the Dharma with us down here in Sussex by the sea.

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## ARYATARA (SURREY)

Isn't our English language so limited in words that describe, or give expression to certain events or experiences that we are involved in in our daily lives? This is one thing that particularly annoys me when we come to write an article like this describing as much as possible what has happened in our centres in the past months since we last received our Newsletters: trying to interpret what I have been through and what others have been through and what the centre has been through or what took place in the centre and what took place in us due to being involved at that time with that particular centre. Well, what did take place at Aryatara since you last received your Newsletter? As was mentioned in the last report we were looking forward to Wesak and also to the summer coming, to a jumble sale, to the printing press moving, to Aryamitra and Phil moving, not to mention upasakæ Ananda and Chanda moving after being here after seven

years or more. And what about our classes and the sponsored walks, the retreats, our social evening, listening to Mahler's Second Symphony: Resurrection (recommended), sunbathing, having a picnic with Brighton Friends, celebrating Dharmachakra Day, and autumn soon approaching... And not to mention the pleasure of having Bhante here for a week, and Dhammadinna and Malini and Marichi, and Sulocana and Maggie and Annie, and Christine and Anoma who were all here taking part in a study seminar on some of the Songs of Milarepa. And what about who have moved in, like Padmaraja, Roger, and Mike, and also Dominic who is soon coming up from Brighton to join us?

Well, the only thing I can say is, may all beings share in the merits we have gained from whatever has taken place, both within the walls and within ourselves, here at Aryatara.

Uttara

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## MANDALA (WEST LONDON)

The move into our own centre in Fulham (reported in the last issue) may now be considered to be complete, and the dingy basement, littered with rubbish and old machinery, has finally been transformed into a beautiful shrine room and reception room. When we finally ran out of money for materials, nothing remained to be done but a few thousand minor jobs. On Buddha Day, the 13th March, our shrine was dedicated, together with the magnificent rupa - made and donated by Greta Hornung, another copy of which was dedicated at Pundarika on Dharmachakra Day.

We shall be holding a series of lectures by Order members, on various aspects of the Dharma



and the Buddhist life, on Wednesday evenings, commencing on 22 September and finishing on 27 October - that is, the week before the Ven. Sangharakshita's lecture series begins at Pundarika. There will thus be an uninterrupted chain of Wednesday evening live lectures in London from September to December.

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## NEW ZEALAND

FWBO Auckland is now installed in new premises at Room 18 Hilton House, 430 Queen Street (opposite Mayoral Drive). As well as continuing to a full programme of activities, the FWBO there is now becoming involved in fund raising for their own centre - and Sukhavati! Some Friends in New Zealand have actually been participating in WAM, the "work a month" project and sending their earnings half way round the world to buy materials for the new centre in London. The postal address for the Auckland centre remains the same as it has been, and can be found on the back cover.

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## HELSINKI

In Helsinki there has been a busy spring: several classes a week have kept the weekly attendance above 50 for months on end. Only the arrival of the summer has caused the attendance to fall to a single weekly class - it is customary here that very little happens during the summer. There has been a sustained and steady expansion in Helsinki, and we are looking forward to an active autumn. The next beginners' meditation courses start in the second week of September.

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## SUKHAVATI

Work on Sukhavati is progressing steadily and surely, and we are also beginning to hold some classes. There are now two yoga classes every week, and we shall be running an eight week introductory course to Buddhism in September. For further details write or phone Sukhavati.

## NORFOLK

### BRINGING THE DHARMA TO NORFOLK

To a stranger visiting the county the most striking feature of the Norfolk landscape is that it is not the dull, uninteresting, flat place that popular myth can lead one to believe. The lie of the land for the most part gently rises and falls, the hills, if one may call them such, only occasionally penetrating beyond 100 feet above sea level. The Norfolk horizon is vast and open, girdled by subtle contours and sometimes seemingly surmounted by massive cloud banks which thrust heavenwards like a ghostly mountain range imposing a momentary presence above. The skyline stimulates feelings of expansiveness and unobstructedness which no doubt are enhanced by the fact that Norfolk is one of the least populated areas of England. Even the air one breathes has the flavour of freedom being untouched by the pollution that comes with industrialisation. Such an environment provides a very favourable and pleasing setting for the establishment of a Buddhist community and for the pursuit of the spiritual life.

The first steps in this direction were taken a few years ago when the Ven. Sangharakshita visited Mary Rawnsley at her home at the Old Rectory in Tittleshall and encouraged her to attend a retreat he was conducting at Keffolds. Mary returned from the retreat a staunch Friend and expressed her willingness for her home to be used by the Friends for retreats. A number of retreats and seminars were subsequently held at the Old Rectory, which



is now known as Abhirati, and various Friends and Order members have lived there from time to time. In 1974 Mary took ordination into the Western Buddhist Order thus becoming Upasika Sulocana. In this way the presence of the FWBO was established in Norfolk.

In August 1974 the Ven. Sangharakshita took up residence in a small cottage in Castle Acre and began actively to encourage Friends to come to live in Norfolk. By the end of the year there were six Order members resident here thus bringing into existence the Norfolk chapter of the Western Buddhist Order. Weekly Order meetings were held each Friday and continue to be held, but as yet no move was made to establish a centre of the FWBO, although we were all aware that eventually this would be likely to happen. Throughout the following year those of us within the Norfolk chapter deepened our contact with one another and began to develop a feel for the county we had made our home.

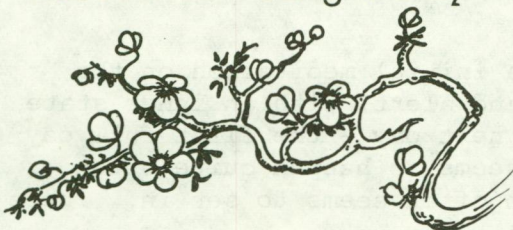
The people of Norfolk are rather conservative and sometimes speak a little apologetically of the 'backwardness' of the county compared with other more industrialised regions. But underneath this is a strong sense of pride in their local heritage and the

stubborn resistance to change that often goes with it. Although perhaps these attitudes are to some degree watered down in Norwich, one gets the feeling that the citizen born and bred in Norwich is still deeply rooted in the local culture.

Into this environment the FWBO has made what in terms of our own Movement amounts to a major thrust. FWBO Norfolk was established earlier this year and we began our activities with yoga classes in Norwich and Fakenham. We have celebrated two festivals and held two weekend retreats. However perhaps the most significant event in our short history has been the finding of suitable premises for use as our first centre. After searching persistently for three months we have taken a lease on a short life property from the Norwich City Council. The property which is at 226-8 Queens Road, Norwich consists of two terraced houses which we are in the process of converting into one. The premises are only a ten minute walk from the city centre and are easily accessible by public transport. We hope to be fully operational by September with a programme of activities which will be familiar to Friends everywhere centring around the practice of meditation and the study of the Dharma.

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## FESTIVALS Sangha Day



This year Sangha Day will be celebrated on Friday 8th October. FWBOs Surrey and Brighton will hold a joint celebration in Brighton on that night. For information about plans at other centres, please get in touch with them nearer the time.



## *Facing up to MARA*

If one genuinely and seriously wishes to evolve, to take oneself in hand and radically change the very essence of one's being, then there is a price to be paid. That price is constant vigilance, constant and unremitting effort. Now what does this constant vigilance, this constant effort mean? One thing that it does not mean is that we have to come over all grim and earnest about things! We do not have to grit our teeth, tighten up our muscles and make dreary and heavy weather of our whole life, thus affecting and infecting our whole lives with the disease of negativity - and infecting not only our own lives but also the lives of all about us with this negativity, this joyless and puritanical gloom.

What it does mean is that one should be inwardly and joyously awake and alert, all the while maintaining an inner lightness of touch, an inner sensitivity both to one's own state of being and also to everyone and everything around. This is the very opposite of the false 'effort' of negative, puritanical 'busyness' and intolerance. The 'effort' which is needed is positive, yet gentle. It is an attitude of subtle and tolerant awareness, from moment to moment, both of one's own inner environment and also of one's outer environment.

By inner environment is meant one's feeling and thoughts as they crop up all the time - one's desires, memories, anticipations and fears: all these have to be looked at by an unjudging and tolerant understanding. By outer environment, of course, is meant the whole world of events in which we live, move and have our being - that is, the people and things constantly around us.

There is one thing that it is vital to realise, and that is that without this effort no progress can be made. Evolution is not assured. It will not just happen. All further evolution has to be achieved deliberately and consciously. This is fairly obvious when we realise that this further evolution is the evolution of consciousness. It is therefore further obvious that each one of us has to achieve this evolution by our own conscious and individual efforts. If we do not make these efforts, then we shall not evolve. It is as simple as that.

These thoughts have been prompted by certain experiences I went through on attending a recent ten-day Mitra retreat. It was particularly valuable as we had the great joy of having Bhante with us to help us generate that extra life and inspiration on one of our study sessions. The retreat was intense - yet happy. After the first day or two one felt that a high quality of energy was being built up and maintained. This quality of energy is almost impossible to describe in words and it is probably something that, at our present stage, can only be produced in such a "cooperative" retreat situation, although the effect does of course carry over into one's life as one returns to the 'outer' world.

But to go back to the beginning... The initial meditation on the Friday evening was good: I felt fresh and alert, with an inner state of lightness and sensitivity. But the next day - the first full day - was bad! And this is something which seems to happen quite often. After an initial good start, a reaction often seems to set in. There



seemed to be a general feeling of tiredness, both physical and mental, and all our energies seemed to slacken, almost to turn sour on us. All sorts of thoughts and feelings began to well up from the subconscious and on looking at these I could see that they all had one thing in common - negativity! I began to wonder whether I was on the right track and whether all this effort was leading anywhere. Also I began to ask myself whether it was all worth it. The thought of another eight days or so of this regime began to seem almost intolerable! I even found myself beginning to wish that I could just pack up and go home!

Now why should all this be? On looking more deeply into the matter we discover that there is a part of ourselves that does not wish to evolve. In our present state, most of us are nothing but a bundle of fragmented 'selves'. We are not fully in touch with a real or unified self (that which is sometimes termed the 'Higher Self') and so we are largely the battleground of many conflicting and warring little 'selves'. Now many of these pseudo 'selves' do not want to evolve at all. They want nothing to do with it! And this is because they know that higher evolution will inevitably spell their own extinction! Evolution means the experience and realisation of unity, of oneness, and in the realisation of this oneness all the little 'selves' will be transmuted and dissolved.

So what happens is that as soon as any serious effort is made in the direction of evolution these little 'selves', these pseudo "I's" start bobbing up out of the subconscious and kicking up a din. They constantly and relentlessly distort and disturb our inner environment with their endless self-protective racket, their endless negativities. They try to make one feel tired, to make one feel depressed - and what is more dangerous and insidious, they try to make one give up all further efforts in the sphere of meditation and evolution altogether. And they are also very cunning! They bring forth all sorts of specious excuses and 'reasons' as to why one should give up. Reasons such as "You haven't the capacity," "You haven't got the time," "You are too old," (or "too young", as the case may be), "Your environment and circumstances are against you."

In traditional Buddhism, these 'voices' from our lower unconscious are symbolically personified as 'the Hosts of Mara'. 'Mara' is the personification of everything that stands in the way of our Higher Evolution, the personification of all our negative states, the personification of the Lower Evolution as opposed to the Higher Evolution.

The Buddha Himself, we are told, had to face Mara and his hosts and this He did, neither by counter-force or violence, nor by evasion or running away. He faced, and eventually dissolved, the hosts of Mara by confronting them fairly and squarely, by looking at them and acknowledging their presence with an attitude of calm and compassionate awareness. We are told that when the darts flung at Him by the hosts of Mara reached the outer surface of His aura, they were, on account of His compassionate and fearless attitude, at once changed and transmuted into flowers!

So, the key seems to lie in the cultivation of an inner state of calm awareness and unstrained and gentle effort. Perhaps a significant





key-word could be said to be that of 'perseverance'.

All of this was amply confirmed by my experience on this retreat. At the end of this first, negative day, I seemed to reach a watershed, a hump, a nodal point as it were. The joyful and encouraging thing is, that having gone through this process, having surmounted this



hump, things now began to get better. As a result of this perseverance, from the next day on, these negative states loosened their hold and everything became much more positive. Blockages seemed to be removed and new energies released. But if I had given up while still in the grip of these negative states, then all would have been lost. As it was, by the end of the retreat I felt a greater sense of integration, of sensitivity, and a condition which can only be described, perhaps somewhat clumsily, as 'greater awakenedness'.

However, the negative states, in some form or other, will no doubt come again, for they are not finally dissolved until Supreme Enlightenment is attained. (Not 'personal' enlightenment, but Enlightenment for and together with all sentient beings within all possible universes). But once one has faced these states and persevered, once over the watershed, then one has taken what is perhaps the first positive step in a whole series of "regular steps" leading in the direction of the Higher Evolution, and from this point onwards the task should prove that much easier. What we have done once, we can do again! The hosts of Mara, having been faced up to once, can be faced with more and more confidence again and again - until final Liberation, Supreme Enlightenment, is achieved.

Francis Gritton

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## BOOKS RECEIVED

We hope to include some book reviews in the next issue. Recently we have received:

'The Way of the Kabbalah' by Zev Ben Shimon Halevi, published by Rider, £2.60 paper, £4.75 casebound.

'Initiation into Yoga' by Sri Krishna Prem, pub. Rider, £1.95.

'Kindly Bent to Ease Us' by Longchenpa, translated by H.V.Guenther, pub. by Dharma Publishing, 348pp, £2.95.

'Golden Zephyr' by Nagarjuna and Lama Mi-pham, trans. Leslie Kawamura, pub. Dharma Publishing, 114pp.

'Psycho-cosmic Symbolism of the Buddhist Stupa' by Lama Anagarika Govinda, pub. by Dharma Publishing, 112pp, £2.60.

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## INSURANCE

The Sun Alliance and London Insurance Group have offered us an arrangement whereby we get a percentage of the premium of any new business we obtain for them.

All classes of insurance can be arranged: household, motor, life, commercial, etc. The Sun Alliance also operate a mortgage service and receive favourable terms and facilities from most leading Building Societies.

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## Publications

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In the last issue, I appealed for financial assistance in the form of loans or donations. Money is needed to cover the cost of publishing The Three Jewels, Crossing the Stream, and The Religion of Art as well as several smaller projects. I am aware that there

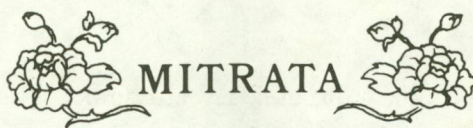
are many other demands being made on your enthusiasm and generosity at present, but I hope that at least some of you may feel inspired by the vision of making the Dharma available in this way. Contributions of any size, shape, or form will be very gratefully received.

### This Newsletter

....costs us about £500 p.a. to produce and post. We receive about £100 p.a. in subscriptions. This difference is covered by the account from which we hope to pay for our publications.

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Based on the Ven. Sangharakshita's lectures, writings and study seminars, Mitrata is a comprehensive, down to earth 'manual' for people who are trying to practise Buddhism. Until now the circulation of this magazine has been restricted to Mitras, who are those considering ordination into the Western Buddhist Order. So encouraging has been their response that we have decided to try making it available to a wider readership. The sort of topics covered include morality and meditation, the hindrances encountered along the path, spiritual community, and so on.

If you think that you would like to receive this magazine please write to me. Subscriptions are £3 p.a. Mitrata will be issued once every two months.

Nagabodhi

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### Books by the Venerable Maha Sthavira Sanghakshita

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Messengers from Tibet and Other Poems

A Survey of Buddhism

Crossing the Stream

Anagarika Dharmapala: a Biographical Sketch

The Three Jewels: An Introduction to Buddhism

The Essence of Zen

The Thousand Petalled Lotus

The Path of the Inner Life

The Religion of Art (in press)



## Public Lectures

to be given this autumn by  
VENERABLE MAHA STHAVIRA SANGHARAKSHITA



### Buddhism for Today and Tomorrow

Four lectures to be given on September 28th and 30th, and October 11th and 13th at the Royal Pavilion, Brighton.



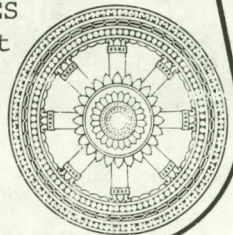
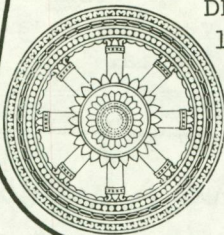
### The Sutra of Golden Light

Eight lectures to be given at 7.30 pm each Wednesday from November 3rd to December 22nd, at Pundarika, London.

## Dharmachakra Tapes

Ven. Sangharakshita's lectures are available on cassette at £1.75 per lecture. P and P 10p for the first lecture, and 5p for each subsequent one, (airmail 20p each cassette). For catalogue, write or telephone:

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## RETREATS

Various Centres are organising weekend retreats at Aryatara between now and December. The dates are as follows; to book apply to Centre named in brackets after each date. Retreats run Friday night to Sunday.

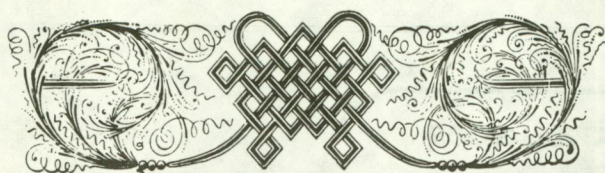
September 11-12 (Brighton)  
25-26 (Aryatara)

October 16-17 (Mandala)  
23-24 (Brighton)  
30-31 (Pundarika) beginners

November 20-21 (Aryatara)  
27-28 (Pundarika)

December 11-12 (Brighton)

Other Centres outside the London area are also hold regular retreats. For instance Truro have a day retreat once a month. So for more information please apply to local Centres.



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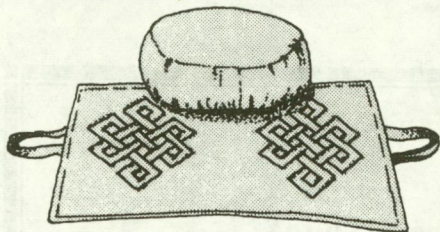
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## BOOKS ABOUT TIBET

We have been asked by the Library of Tibetan Works and Archives, at the headquarters of H.H. The Dalai Lama, if any of our readers and Friends are able to donate any books on Tibet to their reference collection in Dharmasala. A list of the new and old books needed is available from the Director, Library of Tibetan Works and Archives, Dharmasala, Kangra Dt., H.P., India.

## Kusa Cushions



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Other services include photography, and silk screen printing.

Phone 01 263 2339.



## About the Friends of the Western Buddhist Order

The Friends of the Western Buddhist Order was founded in 1967 by the Venerable Maha Sthavira Sangharakshita, an Englishman who has spent twenty years in India as a Buddhist monk. He returned to England in the early Sixties, and seeing the potential for disseminating the Teachings of the Buddha in the West. He felt the need, along with others, for a more spiritually active and authentic type of Buddhist movement in this country and therefore founded the Friends of the Western Buddhist Order. A year later, in 1968, he founded the Western Buddhist Order itself, in order to provide a full experience of Spiritual Community, and full opportunities for complete commitment to the Buddhist way of life.

The Western Buddhist Order is a Spiritual Community of voluntarily associated individuals who have come together through their common commitment to the Three Jewels: that is, to the Buddha, or the Ideal of Enlightenment; to the Dharma, the Path of the Higher Evolution of the Individual; and to the Sangha, the community of all those with the same ideal. All members have formally Gone for Refuge to the Three Jewels in public and private ceremonies with the Ven. Sangharakshita, and are thus dedicated to their own development and to working, along with other Order members, in spreading the Dharma in the West.

The Order is neither lay or monastic. The Going for Refuge is the central act in the life of a Buddhist and the lifestyle one leads is secondary. The exact number and form of precepts taken is simply a working out of this commitment in one's life. Order members are of all ages, of both sexes and of different nationalities. Some live alone, others with their families and some in communities. All are committed to the Three Jewels and to the following of the ten basic precepts which cover all aspects of natural morality. That is, morality which naturally springs from a skilful state of mind, rather than morality of a merely conventional kind.

Through the medium of the Friends, the organisational matrix of the Order, members of the Order aim to create conditions whereby others can come into direct contact with the teachings of Buddhism, in a practical, dynamic, and living way and eventually, if they wish, commit themselves also. To this end, in our Centres and Branches, we hold classes and courses in meditation and yoga, courses in basic Buddhism, lecture series, seminars, courses in communication, and retreats. We publish a quarterly newsletter, and celebrate all the major Buddhist festivals. We are also increasingly trying to create situations within the movement whereby people can work and live together. We have our own printing press and publications department, and have plans to run a bulk wholefood business and start a vegetarian restaurant. We are very much aware that people develop faster in surroundings which are encouraging and helpful and are therefore concerned to create ideal conditions whenever and wherever we can. All our activities have one purpose and one purpose only, that is to help the growth of the individual.

All those who wish to participate in our activities at whatever level are very welcome to do so; we have no formal membership as we are not an organisation or a society. We wish to offer unlimited possibilities for involvement and growth, and the possibility of re-orientating one's whole life in the direction of the Three Jewels; of being eventually transformed into the Three Jewels.



FRIENDS OF THE WESTERN BUDDHIST ORDER  
CENTRES AND BRANCHES

- LONDON FWBO: Pundarika, 1a Balmore Street, Archway,  
London N.19. Tel: 01-263 2339  
  
Sukhavati, 51 Roman Road, Bethnal Green,  
London E.2. Tel: 01-981 1933  
  
Mandala (West London Branch), 86d Lillie Rd,  
Fulham, London SW6. Tel: 01-385 8637
- GLASGOW FWBO: 257 Nithsdale Road, Glasgow G41  
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- SURREY FWBO: Aryatara Community, 3 Plough Lane, Purley,  
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- BRIGHTON FWBO: 19 George Street, Brighton, Sussex  
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- CORNWALL FWBO BRANCH: Upasaka Manjuvajra, c/o W.H.Thomas,  
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Tel: c/o Upasaka Devamitra - Norwich 52622
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- NEW ZEALAND FWBO: Auckland: PO Box 68-453, Newton, Auckland.  
and, 19 Oxtan Road, Sandringham, Tel: 860 909  
  
Christchurch: 191 England Street, off Linwood St,  
Christchurch 1. Tel: 829 003  
  
Wellington: c/o Upasaka Achala, 24 Plunket St,  
Kelburn, Wellington.



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