

# FWBO NEWSLETTER

35

MON REPOSE

30p

**We're leaving home, bye bye.**



## Weekly Programmes

### PUNDARIKA (ARCHWAY)

Monday	6 - 9pm	Hatha yoga (two session, by arrangement only)
Tuesday	7.00pm	Meditation, puja (variable programme)
Wednesday	7.00pm	Beginners' Meditation class (FROM 15th SEPTEMBER)
Sunday	6.30pm	Beginners' Meditation class (FINISHES 5th SEPTEMBER)
	8.00pm	Talk or recorded lecture ( " " " )

### SUKHAVATI

Wednesday	7.00pm	Hatha yoga
Thursday	7.00pm	Meditation class + recorded lecture
Classes held at 119, Roman Road, Bethnal Green, E.2.		

### MANDALA (WEST LONDON)

Monday	7.00pm	Beginners' Meditation class (from mid September)
Tuesday	5.30pm	Hatha yoga
Thursday	7.00pm	Double meditation and puja

### ARYATARA (SURREY)

Monday	6.00pm & 7.45pm	Hatha yoga
Tuesday	10.30am 7.30pm	Hatha yoga Meditation, puja
Wednesday	7.30pm	Beginners' meditation class

### BRIGHTON

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

### VAJRADHATU (NORWICH)

Tuesday	7.00pm	Meditation, puja (variable programme)
Thursday	5.15pm	Hatha yoga
	7.00pm	Beginners' meditation class
	8.20	Recorded lecture

Six week meditation course from last week of September. Telephone Norwich 27034 for details

### CORNWALL

Although there are no 'open' classes being held in Truro at present, weekend retreats are being held once a month, and a beginners' meditation class is to start soon. For further information contact: David Austin at 3, Bedruthan Avenue, Tregurra Parc, Truro.

### HERUKA (GLASGOW) | see article inside





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## FWBO NEWSLETTER 35 SUMMER 77

### EDITORIAL

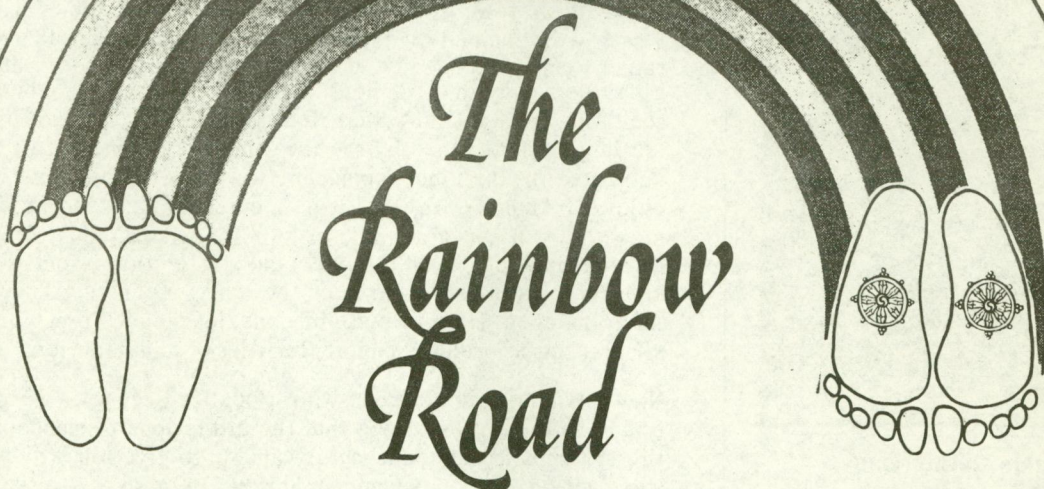
Home, they say, is where the heart is. Where we live, who we live with, how we live...considerations such as these are invariably determined by our feelings, conscious and otherwise, rather than by our ideas and thoughts. So far so good. But it is also true to say that the heart is where the home is. What we feel, what we want, how we relate to the world...these things are largely determined by the the kind of environment we are subjected to, the kind of company we keep, the lifestyle we enjoy. So 'home', whether it be a certain place, job, relationship, or even set of attitudes which bind us to these things in a particular way, is on the one hand a reflection of our present state of consciousness and, on the other, a concretizing, re-inforcing agent for that state of consciousness. To put it more simply, 'home' means comfort, familiarity and security.

Now a Buddhist is someone who 'Goes for Refuge'. One way or another he comes to see that the attractions of mundane life are impermanent, ultimately unable to give him any real satisfaction, and consequently hollow. He also recognises, albeit dimly, that Buddhahood, Enlightenment alone, *can* offer him what he seeks, and so he makes his commitment. He re-directs, re-invests his energies and feelings towards Enlightenment...or would if he could... Did it come as a surprise to you, a shock, when after the initial clarity and joy of discovering the Spiritual Path you felt the first confident tugging of the 'gravitational pull'? And are you by now getting used to that insistent *leitmotiv* of conflict and indecision that dulls the edge of your aspiration? Although we may regularly recite the formula of 'Going for Refuge', how often and how deeply do we really feel that the Three Jewels *are* our true refuge? How many of us are prepared to invest all our emotions in the quest for Enlightenment? How many of us are 'Going for Refuge' while still actually cowering in the protective custody of a 'home' of some kind?

Each one of us has to track down for himself the nature of his own particular 'home' or 'homes'. Home is the counterfeit security, the empty dream; it is the dim light that attracts. And having found our homes we quite simply have to leave them. That is the only way in which we will find out who we really are; where our real strengths and weaknesses lie. That is the only way in which we will have the space to become what we could be. Being a Buddhist involves more than change. It is not simply a matter of making a few additions here, a few adjustments there... For each of us it will involve the total transformation of our entire being. To 'Go for Refuge' is to will that transformation. To 'leave home' is to be open to it.

NAGABODHI





# The Rainbow Road

The following is an extract from the original draft of *The Thousand-Petalled Lotus*. For reasons of space the publishers asked Bhante to précis much of the material relating to his early life, and his first few years in India. We hope that we will be able to publish these eleven or so 'lost' chapters in full one day. For the time being, here is the section in which Bhante writes about the occasion of his own 'Going Forth' into the homeless state. You can find the modified version of this account on pages 96-98 of *The Thousand-Petalled Lotus*.

It was nearly ten, and the flag at the top of the flagpole hung limp and motionless against an expanse of sky that could hardly have been more richly or radiantly blue. Since early morning loudspeakers had been relaying speeches and patriotic songs, and from all over the little hilltop town, as well as from the villages perched on neighbouring crags, people had been congregating in honour of the day to which many of them had looked forward – even fought for – all their lives. Moving slowly through the narrow precipitous streets, they debouched into an open space in the centre of the town in such numbers that already the area surrounding the dais at the foot of the flagpole was packed with a solid mass of white-shirted humanity. As was natural in the martial society of the hills, the gathering consisted mainly of men, most of whom were 'bearded like the pard' and wore bright red, or yellow, or blue, or orange turbans. Some carried swords. Soon, as the sun rose above the moun-

tains, and the huge crowd sat patiently waiting for the proceedings to begin, the atmosphere grew uncomfortably hot. Here and there folded newspapers were held up to protect the face from the heat, while the glare refracted from the sea of white shirts and colourful turbans was so intense that the eyes were quickly dazzled and one had to look away.

Once again I looked up at the flag at the top of the flagpole. Limp and motionless it hung there in the sunlight of that August morning, the red white and blue folds standing out bright and unmistakeable against the blue sky. Suddenly, as I watched, I realised that the eyes of everybody in the crowd were fixed on the flag. The meeting had begun... Before many minutes had passed it seemed that the flag at the top of the flagpole was feeling the influence of all those eyes, of all those minds. It twitched, it trembled, and then finally, in a series

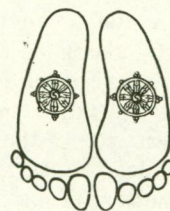


of jerks, the flag that had flown over the Indian sub-continent for more than a century, the flag with the red cross of St George, champion of England, and the red and blue crosses of St. Andrew and St. Patrick, slowly fluttered all the way down the flagpole to the ground. It was the end of an epoch. For a moment the flagpole stood white and naked against the blue sky. Then, as the crowd held its breath, there fluttered up the flagpole another flag, a saffron white and green flag with the Wheel of the Buddhist Emperor Ashoka in the centre – the flag of independent India. The instant it reached the top and hung motionless the sea of white shirts heaved in the sunlight, colourful turbans bobbed up and down, while from two thousand throats burst jubilant shouts of ‘*Jai Hind!*’ Victory to India! A new epoch had begun.

When the last of the jais had died away, and tears of emotion wiped from bearded cheeks, it was time for the speeches. One by one the dignitaries assembled on the dais rose to their feet strode or waddled to the microphone and harangued the crowd. Some spoke in Hindi, some in English, and some in Punjabi. Before long it was my turn. Since my knowledge of Hindi was limited, and I knew no Punjabi, I spoke in English. After centuries of oppression India was free, I said, and the flag we had raised aloft that morning now flew over every town and every village in the sub-continent. But the people of India should never forget that freedom had been won by non-violent means, and that the Wheel of Ashoka symbolized the moral and spiritual ideals taught by Gautama the Buddha two thousand five hundred years ago. Only if they remained true to those ideals, and made them the guiding principles of their national life, would India be truly great. Otherwise, political independence would have little meaning, and the sacrifices which had been made in its behalf would have been made in vain.

Three days after delivering this exhortation I took a step which was as decisive for my own individual life as the winning of political independence was for the collective existence of the Indian people. From a shop in the bazaar I bought a handful of the reddish-brown earth known as gerua-mati and a lump of alum. Dropping them into a bucket of boiling water, and stirring vigorously until they had been dissolved, I obtained a dye which, though not permanent, would at least survive a few washings. Into this dye I then plunged the white, Indian-style, shirt and lungi which had been my regular costume for the past few months, pushing them about with a stick until the thick homespun of the shirt and the flimsier millweave of the lungi were alike thoroughly saturated. By the time I drew them out, and hung them up to dry, both garments had been coloured the traditional saffron-yellow of the parivrajaka, the

free-lance ascetic who, giving up home, family and worldly goods, and depending for his subsistence solely on alms, with or without a companion, silent or communicative, wanders from place to place in quest of spiritual reality. Early next morning, the morning of 18th August 1947, I dressed myself in my strange new garb, said goodbye to the cliff-side retreat which had been my home for the last few weeks, and made my way through the deserted streets of the bazaar just as the shopkeepers were taking down their shutters. With me was the politically minded young Bengali with whom I had joined forces for a year, and who despite his very different background had elected to take the same momentous step as myself. As we set out that morning on a path that would take us we knew not where, both of us felt sensitive and vulnerable, like chicks just out of the shell, and though the stout Punjabi shopkeepers were too preoccupied with opening up shop for the day to give us more than a passing curious glance, we could not help feeling as though all eyes were upon us.



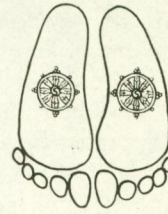
Since we had arrived in the picturesque little hill station only a month before, and had kept very much to ourselves, we knew very few people there, and to these we had already said goodbye. As might have been expected, they were strongly opposed to the step we were about to take, which they considered rash and foolhardy in the extreme. The tender hearted lady from Calcutta, who lived alone in a little green painted wooden villa on the outskirts of the town, and who was not only a niece of the great poet Tagore but the mother of one of the leading Indian film actresses of the day, wept at the thought of all the hardships that we would have to undergo. The hospitable Hindu merchant, thanks to whose generosity we had been able to study and meditate undisturbed, shook his head in a gloomy foreboding. Though he was by nature a deeply religious man, and genuinely sympathised with our desire to lead a spiritual life, he doubted if we were yet ready to take so radical and so irrevocable a step as that of giving up all worldly concerns. As for the wily old Bengali scholar who was responsible for our being in the town at all, and whose schemes and stratagems we had at last seen through, he roundly upbraided us for our selfishness in leaving him at a time when one of his grandest projects was about to come to fruition and he needed our



services most. But whatever misgivings others might feel about the step we had decided to take, my friend and I were convinced of its absolute rightness. Were we not following in the footsteps of the Buddha Himself, as well as in the footsteps of the great Tibetan poet-mystic Milarepa, the great Chinese Zen master Hui Neng – to say nothing of the hundreds and thousands of ascetics, saints and sages, both Hindu and Buddhist, from the dawn of history down to the present day? The only person who approved our decision, and approved wholeheartedly, was a middle-aged Sikh doctor doing research into malaria control, and with him we had therefore agreed to have breakfast before setting out on the ten mile trek that would take us from the mist-enshrouded foothills of the Western Himalyas down to the ricefields and railways of the plains.

Though on Independence Day the weather had been fine enough, the monsoon season was not yet really over, and by the time we had left our friend's bungalow the sky was overcast and it was raining. Now that we were actually 'going forth from home into homelessness', actually leaving behind us the world and all its ways, the mood of exhilaration in which we had been living for the last few days had deepened into one of solemnity. Indeed, it was as though the full significance of the step we had so enthusiastically decided to take dawned upon us only at the crucial moment of our actually taking it. In this we resembled men who, even though they have many times anticipated death in their thoughts, have no idea of what it is really like until it has them by the throat. Nor was the resemblance utterly fortuitous. In giving up home, family, and worldly possessions, we were in fact undergoing a kind of voluntary death, and according to Hindu tradition, at least, one who had 'gone forth' in this way was civilly dead – so much so indeed, that his returning to the world would be as uncanny and unnatural as the return of a ghost. As I well knew, on the eve of their departure into the homeless life, orthodox Hindu ascetics celebrated their own funeral rights, casting into the sacred fire even the cherished crown lock and the brahminical thread. Henceforth they were dead to the world. Their sons inherited their property, as if they had actually died. Their wives were left widows. Something of all this we felt for ourselves, something we gathered from the attitude of our Sikh friend, who despite his western scientific education was a devoutly religious man with an exceptionally intense feeling for the traditional Indian spiritual values. At breakfast he had been so overcome by emotion that he could hardly speak, while we ourselves had been able to eat very little of the repast he had so generously provided. He regarded us, it was clear, as men under sentence of execution, and while he believed im-

licitly in the sacredness of the cause for which we were sacrificing our lives, he could not but be sorry to see us die.



We had not gone more than a mile or two down the mountainside, following the winding mountain road, before the mists thinned and we emerged into a new world, a world of blue skies and brilliant sunshine, of running waters, green grass, and innumerable shining drops. As we did so, the feeling of solemnity with which we had set out left us, and our mood of exhilaration returned. We had died, but were alive again, and like Gawain, after the Green Knight's axe had only grazed his neck, instead of striking his head off as he had expected, we could hardly believe our good fortune. Drawing a deep breath, we involuntarily quickened our pace. In the distance beckoned a whole new realm of spiritual experience, and we were eager to be on our way. As we rounded a bend, a rainbow stood arching the road before us, its ethereal colours gleaming diaphanous against the green hills. Round the next bend there was another, and another.... Soon we were engulfed in a world of rainbows. There were rainbows on the earth and rainbows in the sky, rainbows round rocks and bushes and rainbows above mountain streams. There were rainbows everywhere – not only single rainbows but double and triple rainbows, all shining in unearthly glory in the sunlit morning air. Most of the rainbows spanned the road, so that in the course of our descent we had to pass through them, as though through a series of fairy arches. As we did so, I could not help thinking of the events of the past few years, and of the strange and wonderful way in which they had led up to the present moment. I thought of my experiences in Ceylon and Singapore, of my first experiments with meditation, of my meeting with my Bengali companion, of my unceremonious departure from the army, of the Calcutta riots, of my disappointment with organised Buddhism. Yes, a great deal had happened to me since that day, well nigh three years ago, when through the fog and mist of a September morning I caught from the crowded rail of a British troopship my first glimpse of India.

Sangharakshita



# LEAVING HOME

Something is in the air. The smell of change is born on the breeze, gulls wheel in the blue sky overhead, each white speck the personification of restlessness, each melancholy cry the expression of longing to be away, in search of the mountains and oceans of far lands. The sea; restless and constantly changing, ever adapting to time and tide, mysteriously and endlessly encompassing, mastered by none.

Such are the musings of one for whom the turning point is reached. A crossroads of life where behind is childhood, the green valleys of family and home supportive and comforting: soft flowing streams, moss carpeted vales. To either side lie the plains of adult life, seductively appealing in their regularity. Row upon row of neat fields and hedgerows, little coloured houses with front gardens where flowers grow. Smooth, paved streets where people walk endlessly to and from, to and fro. But there is another way at the crossroads, a stony path overlooked by most travellers. A long and winding road which crosses deep chasms on tottering bridges, follows steep mountain paths and runs beside unknown oceans. Once a traveller has paused on the road of life and glimpsed this path he will never forget that view, and if he follows other roads it will come back to him sometimes, as he sits by his fireside gazing at the flames, or at night in a dream, and he will feel a longing he can't quite grasp. Like a hunger that has long been denied or the ache of an old wound.

Leaving home is a spontaneous action born from emotional conflict. It is an expression of overwhelming optimism for the future. Above all it is the first step of the greatest adventure that mankind will ever undertake, the quest for self-knowledge. When I say that it is born from emot-

ional conflict I mean that 'leaving home in the Buddhist sense is never a thing that can be decided upon or planned in a rational or intellectual manner. Of course you may decide you would like to leave, you may even start packing all your belongings, but unless a certain state of mind is also involved these things are no more than empty actions. In fact, one could theoretically 'leave home' without actually changing one's physical environment but for most of us this would be extremely hard to accomplish. So what are the events which lead up to this supreme act of irrationality? I can distinguish four main stages or areas (for they may overlap or run concurrently). Firstly is the experience of restlessness, of dissatisfaction - with life as it is, with surroundings, with old friends, with self. Eventually this may get so violent as to be a state of positive mental torment. Secondly there is the realisation that you must *do* something about relieving this torment, and at this stage one begins to look long and hard at oneself, in fact to prepare for the great adventure, even if we don't realise it in these terms at the time. Because, this is an adventure which we embark upon alone, we are our own travelling companions. We step out naked and vulnerable, throwing off all the supports of the old life, the emotional entanglements, the material involvements. We stand up courageously and say 'here I am, just as you see me. I have nothing to lose and everything to hope for, and

I consider myself worthy to strive towards those things'. This aspect of self-acceptance is tremendously important; to see the things we like about ourselves and the things we dislike. To acknowledge both and say 'okay, let's get going and do something about the bad things, not just sit here and feel guilty about them'. Thirdly and perhaps hardest to overcome is our emotional response to the thought of leaving behind the old life. For although we now feel repulsed by it, paradoxically this is the time when all the good and the beautiful things will spring to mind. We will see them all perfectly, devoid of the negative attributes which they may have had and we will feel regret for what was and what might have been... This is how Gautama must have felt as he stood beside his sleeping wife and child, listening to their quiet breathing in the fragrance of the Indian night. Fourthly is the catalyst. A catalyst is scientifically defined as a substance which speeds up or triggers off a reaction between other substances, the catalyst itself being unchanged during that reaction. So in our situation it is that occurrence, event or factor which just pushes us over the edge, from contemplation into action. The catalyst is usually nothing whatever to do with the reality of the situation, but of course at the time we are sure it has! Finally there is the action itself. You just walk away. Away from the old life and towards the new, and at that point you truly become a new person. A person with a direction, a creator in your own right. Living itself assumes a heroic invincibility, the momentum of which carries you some way along the path so that when you at last turn to look behind you have already gone too far to turn back, and the lights of the little houses twinkle far behind, seductive no longer.

Helen Johnson



The following article originally appeared in 'Shabda', the monthly communication sheet of the Western Buddhist Order. It's publication stimulated a lot of thought, some controversy and many, many, words. Since then it has been successfully used as a text for a few mitra study groups, and we feel that this issue of the Newsletter provides an ideal framework to give it the wider readership it surely deserves.

# LEAVING MOTHER AND INITIATION INTO MANHOOD



Illustration by Chintamani

**O**fall the issues that have arisen within the Order, whether spiritual or otherwise, one of the most emotive to date seems to be: 'What makes a man a man, what happens if he isn't, and if he isn't then how can he become one?' Even despite the obvious wealth of speculative possibilities within this issue it seems that most of us, men and women (or perhaps I should say males and females) alike, are still in the dark as regards the answer.

On the face of it there would appear to be no problem; men look and behave in such and such a way and women behave in another. Society has its values as to what constitutes the differences between the sexes and lays down its rules for their respective be-

haviour and also the way in which they should relate to each other. Quite often though, we fail to realise that our modern Western view of these things may be quite different from the view held by other cultures at other periods of history. What may be regarded as the norm, and thus encouraged, in twentieth century London, might have been regarded as an outrage against basic sanity in, say, ancient Athens. In terms of Buddhism, of course, this all comes under the heading of conditioning to be overcome and, as we should all know by now, nothing in our makeup should escape the scrutiny of awareness; what remains in the darkness of our unconscious minds, repressed, neglected and ignored, provides recruiting material for Mara's battalions of monsters, demons and devils who, when our guard is down, will overcome us, usurp our energy and lay waste what

we had previously considered to be a fine 'spiritual' nature.

In my own life and practice this question came to a head while I was living alone in Norfolk. I came, through some startling experiences, to a series of conclusions that radically altered my view of myself and the world around me. So this article is an attempt to clarify my own mind and give some form to my experience, combined with those helpful pieces of advice that my friends, intimate and otherwise, have given to me. I hope it will be of general use.

**S**o, what does make a real man? In short, inner state must match outward appearance and manner: that is, a 23 year old male must have the emotions



of a 23 year old male. This sounds very simple indeed and possibly a bit naive, but I believe that it raises many points that not many people consider. As Bhante has pointed out in one of his lectures, what distinguishes Man from the rest of nature is his ability no matter how latent, to evolve by his own deliberate efforts; in our case through the medium of the Dharma. In other words the prerequisite for Man's true growth is independence: independence to do whatever is felt necessary for himself or for others. So we begin to see that the motivation for true action must spring directly from an individual who feels a positive sense of aloneness. Any action that is motivated by a dependence on an outside figure can, at root, be said to be regressive. With this in mind it is easy to see where the earliest and most basic seat of dependence lies: in one word — mother.

**M**other provides the security, warmth and protection that every child needs during the early stages of growing up. But in the case of a boy a certain point is reached where this cosy womb-like world of warmth and security associated with mother ceases to be useful. At this point, if a conscious effort is not made to leave it behind, it will start becoming harmful to any growth of individuality. It is this stage of growth that is marked, in so-called primitive societies, by a vitally important ceremony which provides a ritualistic situation in which the young man can leave mother and be initiated into manhood.

So what, we may ask, is initiation? During childhood the young boy will discover that if he behaves in a certain way in front of his mother he can be sure of her approval and affection as she obviously has her own preconceived ideas as to what her dear little

son should be like. The little boy wants to appear to be a big boy and to be seen to be the best at everything, so he begins to associate these mother-pleasing tactics with genuine masculine status. In other words his assertiveness is dependent for its success on mummy's approval; take that away and he becomes weak, lonely and impotent. In some more extreme cases the poor little boy has to construct an elaborate performance conforming to his mother's idea of what constitutes a 'good boy' in order to attract the attention and affection so necessary for his growth. Not only does this serve to alienate him from those normal and naturally healthy tendencies which mummy, in her blindness, disapproves of, but it also eventually means that it is the performance, not the person himself that is getting the attention.

We can therefore begin to see that if the boy is to become a man in the full sense of the word he must give up being a man in his mother's eyes and become a man in the sight of his father. In other words, the fake masculinity based on mother dependency must be abandoned and true masculinity, in relation to other men, developed.

An initiation into manhood, then, is an experiential situation in which the false man dies in order that the true man may be born. The young man has to realise that he must submit and become totally passive to that which will liberate him from the domination of his mother. Even the act of becoming passive is a direct affront on the false assertiveness that was so necessary before.

Having abandoned the world of mother and all that it implies, the young man can now begin to realise that his assertiveness is natural to him and that it is no longer an act that he has to put on; he now feels no desperate need to prove that he is a man as manhood is his natural state; nor need he fear the kind of crippling

almost castrating disapproval that he would formerly have incurred for seeming to be a 'bad boy' or a 'baby'.

**A** true man acts in the world directly from himself, essentially by himself; his attitude should be one of independent, bold fearlessness. If he meets failure he does not sink into chronic depression, or, even worse, he does not run into the arms of some mother substitute for reassurance, but simply returns to the task with renewed vigour and increased awareness of the pitfalls involved.

This process of growing up ought to happen naturally, so that by the time the man is mature in body and intellect his emotions should match. However, this is tragically far from the case, man, or more especially middle-class Western man being the perverse creature that he is. If men were really men we wouldn't find the sick, neurotic, messes that occur so frequently in our 'modern, civilised and progressive' world. Twentieth century Western society has spawned that pathetic creature that we could call the 'not-yet-man', that is, a 'mummy's boy' in the body of an adult male. Since there are so many of these around this possibly indicates that we don't, as many women suppose, live in a man-dominated society, since after all, the men's masculinity is so often dependent on women for its existence.

Not having made the break from mother is a condition that will manifest itself in the most basic areas of life; it is the X-factor that perverts the energy of so many males today. Unfortunately though, as our 'mummy's boy' gets older he begins to carry his mummy around inside him until she becomes a monstrous gorgon hovering above and behind him and who will emotionally turn him



to stone whenever he goes against her wishes. Our poor young man is perpetually shackled and held down by this mother within. He feels he must continually try to stay on her best side as he is terrified of losing her favour. He tries to be a good, clean, nice big boy, saying the right things, having the right attitudes, but fundamentally he hates his bondage: after all, who in his right mind likes being chained to something? Eventually the whole of this poor creature's life becomes a a grotesque Royal Command Performance with the Queen Mother presiding in the Royal Box. We can see this at work in many ways. For instance, 'mummy's boys' have a neurotic need to show off in front of women and to make them laugh, and they sink into sullen despair when somebody appears who can do it better; they may sport ostentatious beards and put on a false masculine swagger - or are even nice, sweet and angelic, depending on what mummy likes; they have a complete inability to take any independent initiative of their own.

Probably the most insidious symptom of this unfortunate condition is the 'Relationship'. It is insidious because it involves another person and perverts natural, healthy urges into a psychological nightmare. Immature emotions expressed through a mature body are one of the greatest aberrations of nature to date. Our 'mummy's boy', although physically mature and, on the surface at least, having left home, feels an overwhelming need to seek out the company of women. Now, as I have just said, he is physically mature so he experiences a normal and quite healthy sex drive, *but* there is another quite unhealthy need lurking underneath: the need to surrender to the siren song of the mother calling him home. Sooner or later he finds the 'right' woman and sinks into the dark and murky labyrinth of infantile emotional dependency. In other words, having established his relationship

(something, incidentally, that was unknown before the last century), he becomes incapable of functioning happily and independently and gradually the notion of always having the woman with him for ever and ever sinks deeper and deeper into his mind. This state leads to a failure in true, fearless, creativity and a crippling fear of criticism, with the poor



**The Awakening Giant**

woman, as mother-substitute, becoming associated with warmth, security and a kiss-and-make-it-better way of looking at the world.

Our 'mother's boy' will probably also find himself using his more adult qualities, such as strong body and keen intellect, to impress his girlfriend in much the same way that a small boy shows off in front of his mother. He may launch into profound metaphysical discourses or 'preach' to her on important questions of human be-

haviour, but usually in a manner that wouldn't stand up to even five minutes of real debate in the company of other men.

Above all, this ghastly situation leads to a growing sense of anger and resentment at being shackled and held down, although it is usually unconscious. It shows itself especially in that particular form of jealous criticism which seeks to undermine the confidence of those who are free, happy and thoughtfully creative.

**T**hen, of course, there is the evil, tentacled monster of sexual guilt. After all, no healthy, sane man would make love with his mother. When Oedipus the king discovered that he had been committing incest he put out his eyes. Blinding, as Erich Neumann has suggested, is a symbol for castration and that is just what many 'mummy's boys' would like to do out of guilt at their perverted sexuality. This, then, can lead to an alienation from, and a repression of, what should have been a perfectly guilt free animal nature: *diabolus deus inversus est*; a repressed god becomes a devil - and how terrible it is to be plagued by devils.

Finally, many 'mummy's boys' have a fear of passivity in a homosexual relationship even though that is what they may naturally want. To be sexually passive with another man is the ultimate insult to so-called masculinity as, in a sense, one becomes a woman; in any case, mummy wouldn't like it. I have met a particularly overpowering woman who told me, with great pride, that her poor, downtrodden and cowed son was perfectly 'normal'. He could smoke marijuana (discreetly of course - she was a modern, liberal mother) and even when he took heroin in a last desperate attempt at rebellion he wasn't beyond redemption, but if he became involved with homosexuality, I was passionately assured, this would be the death-dart to his poor mother's heart.

One could even go so far as to suggest that taking the passive role in a homosexual relationship could, for some men, constitute an initiation into manhood as (a) the man is surrendering his own pseudo-assertive side and therefore un-

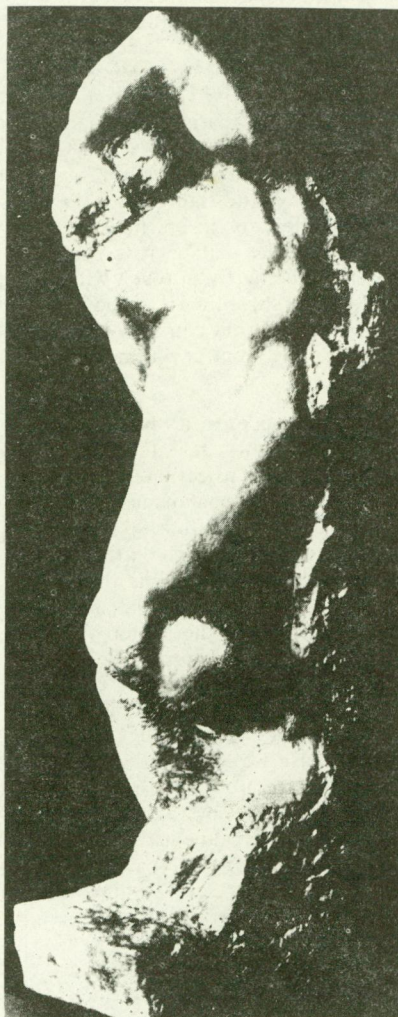


dergoing a sort of symbolic death and (b) is experiencing his sexuality in a situation that is free from women and all their associations (i.e. emotional dependency).

**A**s far as the Spiritual life is concerned there are certain particular ways in which this syndrome can manifest itself. Obviously all unconscious, unresolved neurotic tendencies constitute unskilful mental states, but we can be more specific. When a person goes for Refuge with all that it implies it should be an act of complete independence; one cannot give oneself to the Three Jewels whilst still being tied to mummy's apron strings. Then again we can observe the phenomenon of the 'good Buddhist' (in the ultimately bad sense). It is to present one's nice, clean, pure side so as to appear to be a thoroughly 'good' boy doing and saying all the right things at the right times. Our 'dedication' to the movement can be a perversion of real dedication and can so easily be an expression of our performance to our mothers. In most cases, however, one can't keep up the act of being 'good' for long as this is fundamentally going against one's own nature; sooner or later rebelliousness will set in and there will be an overwhelming desire to be 'bad'. This is quite simply the ignored parts of one's being clamouring for attention and if the reaction doesn't have too many disastrous consequences a whole person will begin to emerge. Thus more can be given to the Dharma. We must not, however think that by becoming Enlightened for the sake of all beings we are going to find mummy saying: 'my what a big boy you are! Aren't you clever!!' We may then find that we actually resent being Buddhists and eventually we may even consider giving it all up as we feel restricted and tied down by an 'authority' to which we no longer wish to submit ourselves. A spiritual community is a collection of free, independent individuals who are working side by side for an aim that they all share. We are all essentially alone. How can we meditate, perform Puja and work for others in order to gain approval? Our efforts in the Spiritual Life must ultimately be from our own, essentially solitary initiative and, above all, they must express what we REALLY want to do.

If we feel sexually guilty our 'spirit-

ual' life can become a continual atonement for our 'impurity' and 'grossness'. We can constantly attempt to fill our lives with 'refined' activities as mummy disapproves of dirty little boys who fiddle under the bedclothes. At its worst this can become a terrible pseudo-asceticism by which we continually try to punish ourselves for being 'impure' and therefore 'unspiritual' and so more resentment accumulates. It is only by realising how thor-



**The Young Giant**

oughly gross we are, in all our primitive beauty, that we can then begin to refine our total being from our top-most chakra right down to our genitals. It is worth considering that just as refined liquor is stronger and more potent than crude beer, so a refined nature should be vigorously concentrated and not weak, watery, insipid and easily disturbed as so many people imagine 'refinement' to be.

It is only man, and especially 'civil-

ized' and 'cultured' man, who can alienate himself from a vital part of his own nature. Undoubtedly, Christian conditioning has encouraged this, but more especially in the case of our 'mummy's boy', Christian conditioning expressed through the mouth of his mother. As I have said before, mummy disapproves of fiddling under the bedclothes and her son gradually becomes ashamed of all that is basic, earthy and natural in himself, and thus contemptuous of so-called paganism in the world at large. When he becomes involved in the spiritual life he manages somehow to rationalise this feeling of guilt into a desire to escape from disturbing 'grossness' by immersing himself in the sort of emasculated anaemic and basically gutless realm that he mistakes for spirituality. We must, therefore, beware of reactively holding fast to the view that all that is pagan and natural is sub-individual unspiritual and so unworthy of our attention. Ultimately this is quite true of course, in the sense that the ethnic, being conditioned, only goes so far; but for someone who has a guilt complex about his own pagan side, to rationalise his guilt away in this manner is tantamount to emotional castration. When we meet those who are at peace with themselves in this area we should rejoice that healthy people like this exist and not jealously dismiss them from the spiritual life by relegating them to the world of animals where communication as an 'individual' is impossible.

**J**ust as Padmasambhava was only able to integrate Buddhism into the overall life of Tibet by converting the indigenous Tibetan gods to the service of the Dharma, so we must realise that within the unexplored wilderness of our own beings there are many potent forces which, if ignored and excluded from our efforts to evolve, will rise in rightful rebellion and begin to hound us across our lives. Sooner or later we must stop running, turn and face our hunters and start, instead, to hunt and track down what are essentially integral aspects of our own nature — and finally take full responsibility for them. Padmasambhava converted demons by forcing them to tell him their 'seed-syllables' or, more poetically, their sacred names: we must do likewise. In simple terms, when we have



gained control over the essential energy that had sought, from long repression to overwhelm us, the Dharma within our own lives will have ever more and more strength, support and unshakeability.

So how, in practical terms, is this all-important break with mother to be achieved? The first and most basic step for us is to be completely honest with ourselves and this, as no doubt many will realise by now, is a very difficult task. It is difficult enough for a young man of 23 to admit that he is still chained to his mother so how much more so for the older and seemingly more responsible 'man'? Having openly examined ourselves we should then, if that break seems necessary, have as little to do with women, certainly in a casual social sense, as possible, until we can relate to them as men relate and not as little boys. This can be successfully achieved through living in a men's community.

**I**n our work we should, if possible, find that activity which we do because we simply like to: it should be that activity which we do without any neurotic need for approval. One only truly gives oneself to those people and situations from which one craves nothing; and so if we can find that kind of *selfless* activity, and if we can immerse ourselves in it, isolated from all competitive feelings, and all frantic needs to prove ourselves to mother, then that selfless attitude should spread to all other areas of our life.

We should be very suspicious of any desires we may have to *be seen* to do wonderful things, especially with women in mind. If we indulge these desires we will probably be unable to carry out those things that we undertook to do (ie. we had no original, healthy feel for that activity) and we will continue to isolate ourselves from those healthy, untainted parts of our natures.

Above all, we should be completely open to all the joys and pleasures that living and working with other men can bring, from the most refined right down to the apparently gross. It is only the mummy within who chastises us for being bad boys so, at first, we can afford to 'let rip' a bit just in order to express our joy at being free, bold and

reckless. We should feel as many young men feel in tribal societies, when, to the rhythm of beating drums and spears struck on shields, they perform their warrior dances.

There will, of course, be those who are by now protesting that the emphasis placed on leaving mother in order to develop the strength and boldness of manhood is a little one-sided. The idea of rip-roaring masculinity seems to be rather distasteful to those who pride themselves on their more 'delicate', 'refined' and 'poetic' natures. In any case what about all those definitely positive virtues such as gentleness, tenderness, sensitivity (in the true sense), giving and sharing, that many associate with femininity? We attribute them to our positive 'feminine' side and argue, quite rightly, that they are indispensable to our spiritual growth. Well, quite simply, it is impossible for us to be really in touch with that side of ourselves until we have destroyed totally what can only be described as the great devouring mother within.

Giving, for instance, in its pure form, is a fearless activity. It is fearless because it fears no rejection, no failure, and it springs spontaneously from a person's encounter with a specific need in a situation. How on earth, then, can one 'give' out of a feeling that one has to be a 'good boy'? Undoubtedly the act of giving, no matter what the motive, will have a good, refining effect; thus it should always be encouraged; but please, please let us allow ourselves to give because we want to, and not because we resentfully feel that by giving we are going to stay 'in favour'. It is a great joy to see how effortlessly and spontaneously a free and naturally healthy person gives whenever the need arises. To quote Bhante from *Crossing The Stream*, ... 'the conventionally 'good' man is often a harsh and unsympathetic character, critical in the extreme of the faults of others and highly conscious of the magnitude of his own virtues; while the conventionally 'bad' man or woman may, on the other hand, be sympathetic and unselfish to a degree which almost compensates for his or her deviations from the accepted standards of behaviour.'

**F**inally, let us beware of twisting

the Dharma. 'Mother quotes the Dharma to serve her own ends', to bend an old saying. An obvious example of this is the way in which the Bodhisattva Tara is often reduced to the status of a comforting Great Earth Mother to whom we rush for a big hug. We thus forget that it is ourselves who must manifest Tara's qualities of compassion, receptivity and fearless trusting in our lives.

**T**he aims of the Friends of the Western Buddhist Order are revolutionary in the most profound sense of the word: they are seeking to effect a complete turnabout in the way we, and hopefully, many others look at ourselves, each other and the world about us. I feel that there has been a tendency in some quarters to use the final, promised bliss of Nirvana and even the weak idea of 'refined' spirituality as an excuse for non-action. If Western society is anything it is a society of voyeurs: so many people get their kicks from drooling over the achievements of others. Likewise it is all too easy for us to stagnate as we eulogise over how *wonderful* it will be at the end of the path and how vigorous, capable and free somebody *else* is. If we are truly to achieve a revolution in men's hearts we must have the courage first to achieve one in our own and no clinging, life-denying parent figure within should be given even the slightest opportunity to cripple our efforts.

When we invoke the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas to work through us there must be no resistance offered to them by an ego that 'performs' sadhanas as a means of being a clever boy. Here, as in all our spiritual work, instead of desperately trying to assert ourselves in order to achieve some sort of recognition, we should simply become passive, and open ourselves to the Great Spiritual Influences that can work through us. To open is an act of fearless trust and we can only trust if we no longer fear disapproval for not conforming to the expectations of our mothers within. So when we have truly become free men, free to do what we really want to do, then nothing, except those who are not free, will stand in the way of establishing the Dharma here in the West.

Chintamani

*The Awakening Giant and Young Giant 1530-33 by Michelangelo*



# LEAVING HOME AT HOME

When the subject in question is Going Forth or Leaving Home, where stands, or rather, how goes the householder? By very definition, isn't the householder the one who stays home, doesn't go anywhere? He certainly doesn't go forth in the literal sense, leaving house and all else behind for the sake of the Spiritual Quest, as the Buddha did and as thousands of his bikkhu and sramanera disciples did after Him. On the other hand, there is a sense in which the concept of leaving home, or 'going forth' is relevant to the householder. Here, within the Friends, there is a sense in which the householder who is at all serious about the spiritual life has to go forth if he is to make any progress. To understand this we have to consider carefully the significance of the upasaka/upasika ordination and the root purpose of the Higher Evolution.

It has to be remembered that ordination into the Western Buddhist Order does not mean becoming a 'monk', does not mean becoming celibate, does not mean going forth into the homeless life. It means Going for Refuge, in the presence of the spiritual teacher, to the Buddha, the Dharma and the Sangha; the Three Jewels. It is an expression of one's commitment to the Higher Evolution, of one's determination to evolve into individuality and attain Enlightenment, whatever the obstacles. Some Order members are householders and, hopefully, many more householders will eventually go forward to make their commitment. They have gone for Refuge in exactly the same sense and to the same degree as non-householders. If their Going for Refuge was in some sense different there would, of course, have to be a different form of ordination for them. Commitment to one's spiritual development, to one's individual evolution is at the very heart

Not everyone who feels drawn to the spiritual life is in a position to drop everything and 'dwell in spaceous regions owned by no one'. We asked Abhaya, who is married and has a family, to write about 'leaving home' in the context of family life.



*Abhaya with his son Daniel*

of the Movement, above and beyond whatever way of life one happens to be leading. So one is first and foremost committed; that one is married or living in a single sex community is a secondary. Now becoming an individual involves grow-

ing out of all sorts of psychological and neurotic dependence on groups. The individual has in this emotional, psychological sense left all groups behind; he is utterly and forever weaned of them. Men and women with family and household responsibilities who have committed themselves or wish to commit themselves to growth as individuals are in no way excused this formidable undertaking of freeing the heart and mind from all the enslavement to group conditionings. How can they be, when the Freedom which they seek, the Fruit of true Enlightenment, is the same as that sought by every aspirant? The householder has the same Enlightenment potential as the rest of the Spiritual Community.

It would, however, be naive to leave the matter there, on a purely theoretical level. For in practice people, however lofty their motives or strong their determination to grow might be, are highly susceptible to the influence of the group until a long way on in their journey towards true individuality. It is all very well to say that people can become totally weaned of all the groups they depend on for their emotional and otherwise security without physically leaving them behind, but how many succeed in this? Isn't it just another variation of the view that 'since we're all enlightened anyway, there's no need to do anything, or to go anywhere'? Unblinkered observation of what happens in practice can only lead to the conclusion that the aspiring individual is in general likely to make further and faster progress as he is free from all the emotional ties of family life and the time-consuming demands of household responsibilities. Here the point might be made that to the extent that it is done with awareness and skill, the fulfilling of family and household responsibilities is itself a spiritual practice. But to complete the pic-





*Tea with Upasika Srimala and her children*

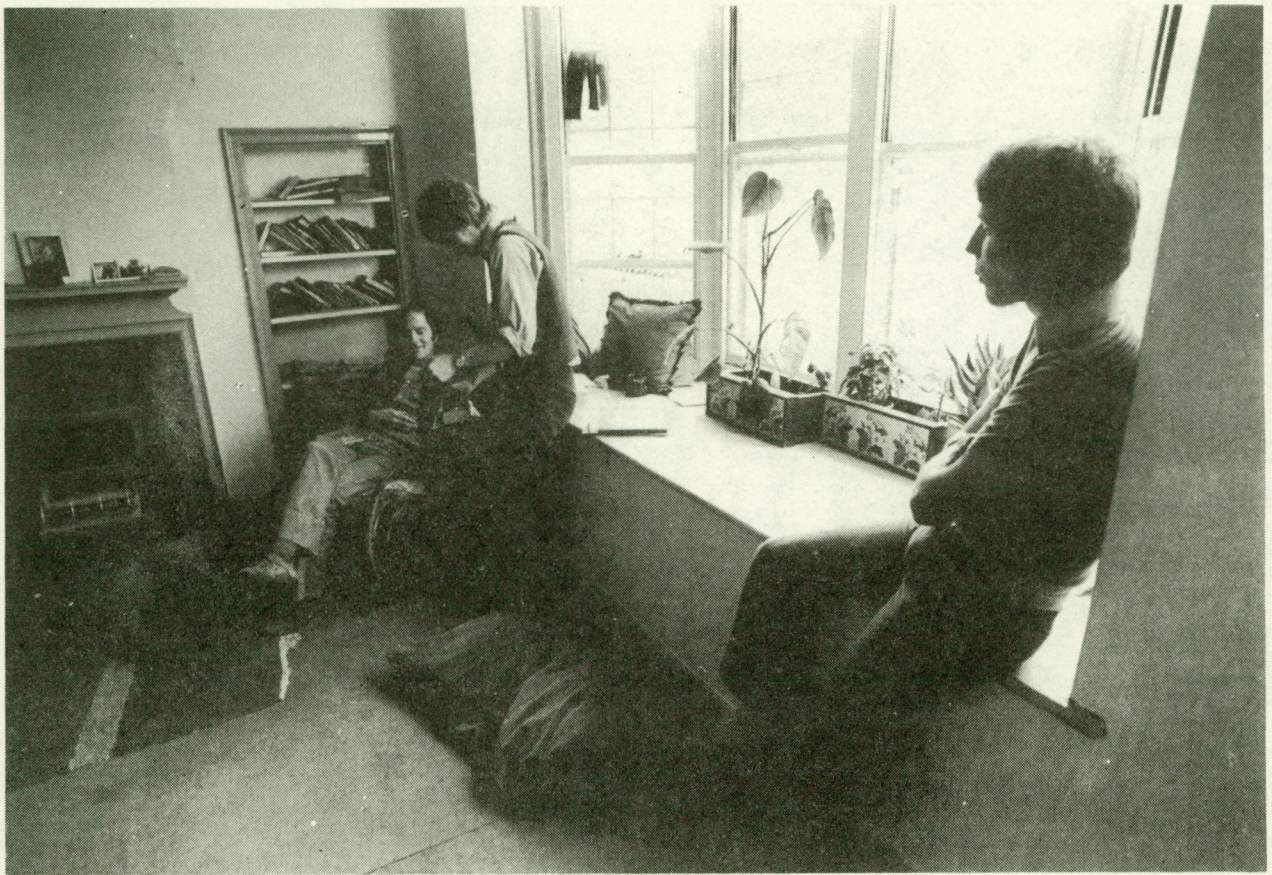
ture, other factors in the household situation have to be considered, such as the unpredictable and not always skilful demands of dependants and other intimates, in the form of noise and other distractions. For instance, sustaining unforced concentration throughout periods of meditation in spite of the relentless crying of a child in the next room, or succeeding in recapturing a former state of calm after fruitless efforts to pacify the infant is theoretically possible but, I hazard to guess, a comparatively rare achievement. The monk in his cell, or the full-timer in the comparative quiet of his single life has a much better chance. Let Johanne Sebastian Bach be an example to the harassed householder in this respect. We are told that he sat creating his masterpieces hour after hour in the same room as his ten presumably vocal if not screaming children! The response to this might well be that Bach was a genius and

therefore exceptional, but one must needs counter this with the observation that we all are called upon to be exceptional even though we may not succeed as far as artistic genius.

Assuming to be true the above conclusion about the relative conduciveness to growth of the respective ways of life of those who are householders and those who are not, we must now come back to the householder and the sense in which he has to go forth. We have already seen that as one who aspires to true individuality, he must strive his utmost to free himself from all gross and subtle psychological dependence on the groups he has opted to stay with in the flesh. Within the context of the Friends, he has at his disposal valuable means to achieving this, in the form of meditation practice, the guidance and inspiration of the Spiritual Teacher, the encouragement of the

members of the Spiritual Community, study of the Dharma, communication exercises, retreats, and so on. If he makes the utmost use of these invaluable means for growth, practising mindfully all the time, then a great deal of work will be done on the undermining of all inhibiting conditionings. But this may well be not enough for most. For the success of all such efforts have to be tested by actually physically leaving the group or groups at least for short periods of time. If men and women find themselves unable even though they would like to, to leave their families behind (having made considerate practical provision for their absence, of course) for the purpose of attending the occasional retreat or even a weekly meditation class, then they will have to start asking themselves questions about the nature and extent of their group dependence and whether it can be entirely positive. Certainly when involvement in the





*With Devamitra and Kularatna at Vajrakula*

spiritual quest gets properly under way, all sorts of emotional dependencies float to the surface which one wasn't even aware of being involved in. Only when we make a real move to set sail for Nirvana do we feel that tugging of our moorings to Samsara! Then there is nothing for it but to untie the stubborn knots and cast off. And if patient efforts to untie prove unfruitful, then unceremonious severing may be the only other alternative. One group which the aspiring householder will have to leave behind with more vigorous determination than others, perhaps, is that which has come to be known as the 'nuclear family', the family, that is, which is not only completely out of reach of any form of contact with a spiritual community but even out of any real human contact with neighbouring families of cultural groups of any kind. Such a situation is inimical to the spiritual life in that the man and woman can

very quickly become, for want of any other outlet, utterly dependent on each other and soon begin to sap each other's spiritual vitals; two emotionally dependent electrons circling around a spiritual vacuum; a very far cry indeed from two individuals relating positively and freely, allowing each other a healthy degree of space and room for growing. It would seem essential for anyone finding himself or herself in such unconducive circumstances to make every effort to change those circumstances without delay and begin to establish closer contacts with the spiritual community.

Because his financial responsibilities are greater than those of the rest, another area which the householder can find particularly problematic is that related to Right or Perfect Livelihood. Perfect Livelihood means, of course, that one's way of making a living needs to be

in perfect line with one's efforts to grow, so that there is never the necessity to reconcile, even in the slightest of subtle ways, how one makes ends meet with one's total practice of the Dharma. There can be a number of possible obstacles to development related to the job one has. The fact that one may be working, for instance, with people who are overtly unsympathetic, even hostile to the idea of the Higher Evolution, has an undermining effect over longer or shorter periods of time. Or one's work may be so demanding in terms of time and effort involved that one is left with hardly any energy at all to devote to spiritual practice. The group one works for may require a degree of conformity to group ideals which is impossible to reconcile with one's freedom as an individual. Perhaps the most ensnaring facet of all of certain jobs is that they overstimulate one's 'career' ambitions, to the extent that a man is eventu-





*At work on the house*

ally brought to the point where he ditches his spiritual development in favour of promotion up the professional ladder. I refer to this as the most ensnaring because it seems to involve one's egoity to a more thorough degree than the rest. The sincere practising Western Buddhist has no mundane career to which he is irrevocably committed; the earning of money is only a means of progressing towards that Transcendent Career, the career of the Bodhisattva.

It will be appreciated by the householders who find themselves in the problematic area outlined above how crucial is the need for close and regular contact with the spiritual community. It is much easier to arrive at a solution to such problems, or, (if they have not yet reached the stature of 'problems'), to resolve such difficulties, within the sphere of spiritual community than in isolation. As Bhante reminds us in the saying quoted on the cover of the last issue, the FWBO exists to help human beings to become individuals. There may well be more than a few householders on the fringes of the FWBO, occasionally

in touch with one or another Centre, or at least subscribing to the Newsletter, who are having their doubts about whether there is a place for them in the Movement, feeling perhaps that if they are not prepared to Go Forth, to Leave Home today in as literal a sense as the Buddha did, they do not 'qualify'. May all such, if they really do exist, become dislodged from their peripheral perches and wade right in. There is plenty of room. Are you, dear reader, a householder? And do you feel stunted? The FWBO exists, repeat, for *anyone* who longs to grow. The Movement facilitates, encourages, exults in GROWTH!

Let us now assume, then, that the householder Friend has gone forth psychologically and emotionally, as far and as assiduously as he can, and that he has managed to establish a positive pattern of leaving home for a few hours every week to attend a meditation class, and for a weekend or longer twice or three times a year to go on retreat. As a result of such regular spiritual practice, his relating to all members of his family and his close associates will be more positive and helpful; the inestimable benefit of contact

with spiritual friends will enable him to resolve difficulties arising within the 'danger' areas. Let us also assume that more and more householders are attracted into the Movement, and further, that they begin to associate together positively, to participate together in creative ventures (as many non-householders are already doing), pooling without stint all the resources at their disposal — financial/material, intellectual, artistic, practical, organisational. The realisation of many a dream then becomes feasible. This way any 'problem' of right livelihood will naturally be solved, independently of any exploitative systems. FWBO schools will be formed and flourish and our children be given a better chance to develop at a very early age towards individuality. This way the householder will eventually be spared the drudge of nine to five, and be able to make time and space for the stimulation and deployment of creative energies. The 'vast secular Sangha' referred to by Bhante in one of his early lectures will emerge.... There is much work to be done. But we are all very fortunate. Once the foundations have been laid, the vistas are endless.



# FIRST FAMILY RETREAT

The First Ever Family Retreat was held at Broomhouse Farm, (Suffolk) on the 16/17th July, 77, led by Abhaya and attended by families Chipps, Kennedy and Roche.

How did we involve our children in the retreat? There was no point in spending the weekend hoping that they would be "un-child-like" enough to keep quiet during *our* meditations and to sit respectfully still during *our* sensitive pujas. We had to set out to learn how to involve them physically and spiritually in the nature of the weekend. By extension we had to learn how to involve them in our everyday spiritual life and practice—the lesson could be taken home with us.

As tolerance and understanding increased, so too did our involvement with the children and with each other. In the same way that we learnt not to isolate the little ones, we understood that we had to include and accommodate each other. This is particularly important to married couples who are learning

to evolve in harmony (I nearly said harness!). The householder has already committed himself to his partner and children so the first lesson on the retreat was to begin to use these relationships creatively. To use the energy generated by these relationships to enhance and encourage our spiritual development. Unless this lesson can be assimilated there will always be conflict in the home. The householder will be forced to carry out his practise and development in isolation which is a contradiction of his function.

Learning to live together - even for

this short period - was a process of re-education. The family as a unit can get very set in its ways - inter-dependant and conditioned up to its collective eye-balls. Partiality and exclusiveness were two areas we touched on. Partiality in the form of favoured thinking towards ones own children and exclusiveness in one's relationship with one's partner. We erect private "no go" areas and claim that space as ours. This is normally manifested in ghost-like disappearance to bedrooms. We talked about the creation of space being an *internal* activity and that by being alone one wasn't necessarily creating space around oneself. The relevance of this to the householder who of necessity has to share his physical space and time with others is obvious - a crucial lesson to be learnt.

Study - The Sigalovada Suttanta - deceptively simple narrative but based on the staggering assumption that there is an ethical bond binding the householder to the rest of

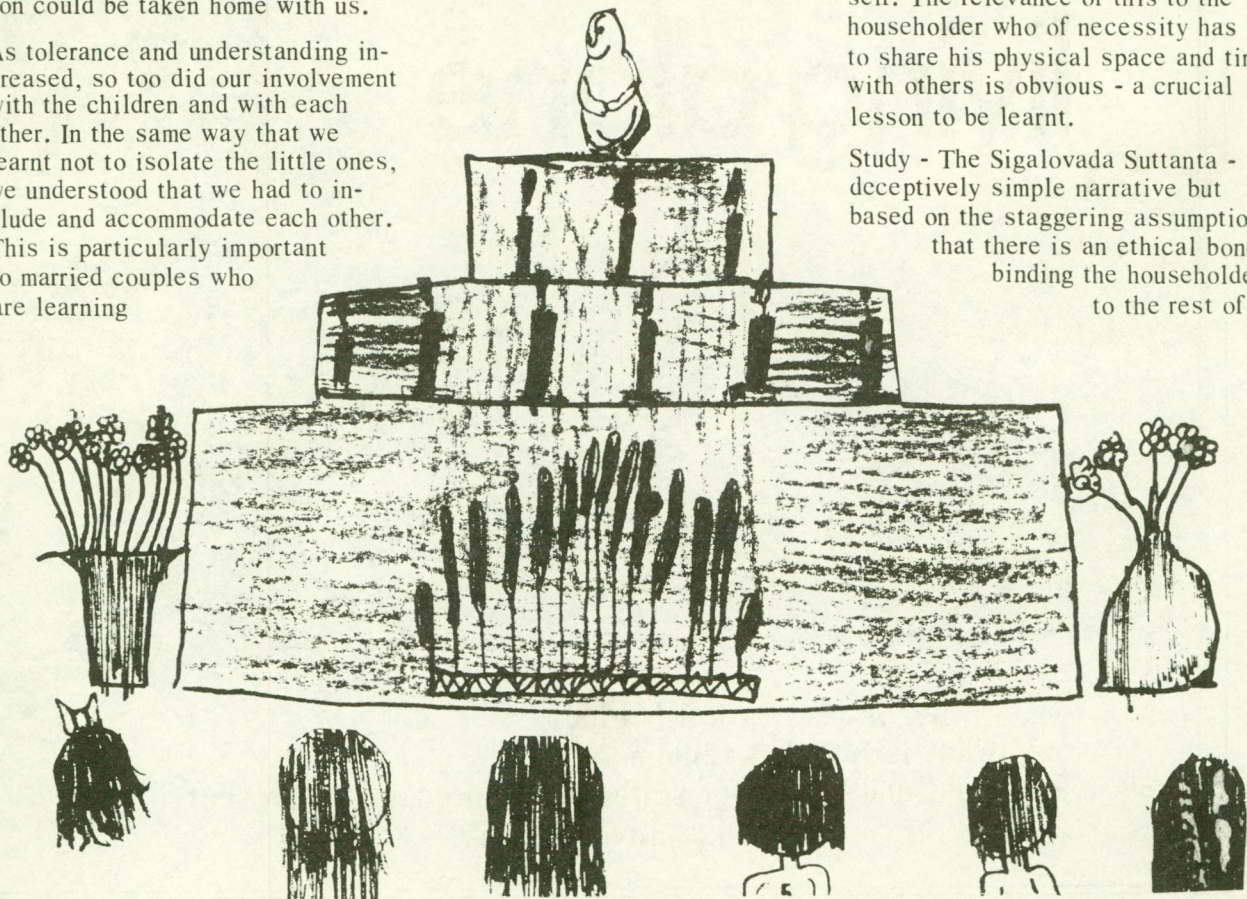


Illustration by Rebecca Roche



society. It was difficult to relate to the Sutra - not because it was irrelevant but more because our everyday family lives were isolated from a real sense of ethical values. As insular, remote, private, nuclear units we were unable to form meaningful relationships with society at large, let alone other similar isolated groups. The Retreat by now was becoming a rare jewel - an opportunity to reverse this terrifying trend. It was providing an opportunity to re-establish a social order to which ethical values were pertinent. Ordinarily it's a case of going forth on Tuesday nights (to Pundarika or elsewhere) for a quick blast of the Sangha before creeping back to our pits to sleep. The Sutra insisted that the spiritual fellowship for the householder has to embrace the whole of society all of the time.

That this is no high flown idealism but simply the absolute basic necessity of living:-

"These be the things that make the world go round, as linchpin serves the rolling of the car". We manage a communal gulp and Bhante's phrase 'a blue-print for a new society' reverberates around the room. There is a gradual realisation that the retreat is settling in motion ripples that if allowed to build momentum could create a devastating avalanche. We would all be greatly changed if "the fall" were to happen. Our little family lives would be polluted.

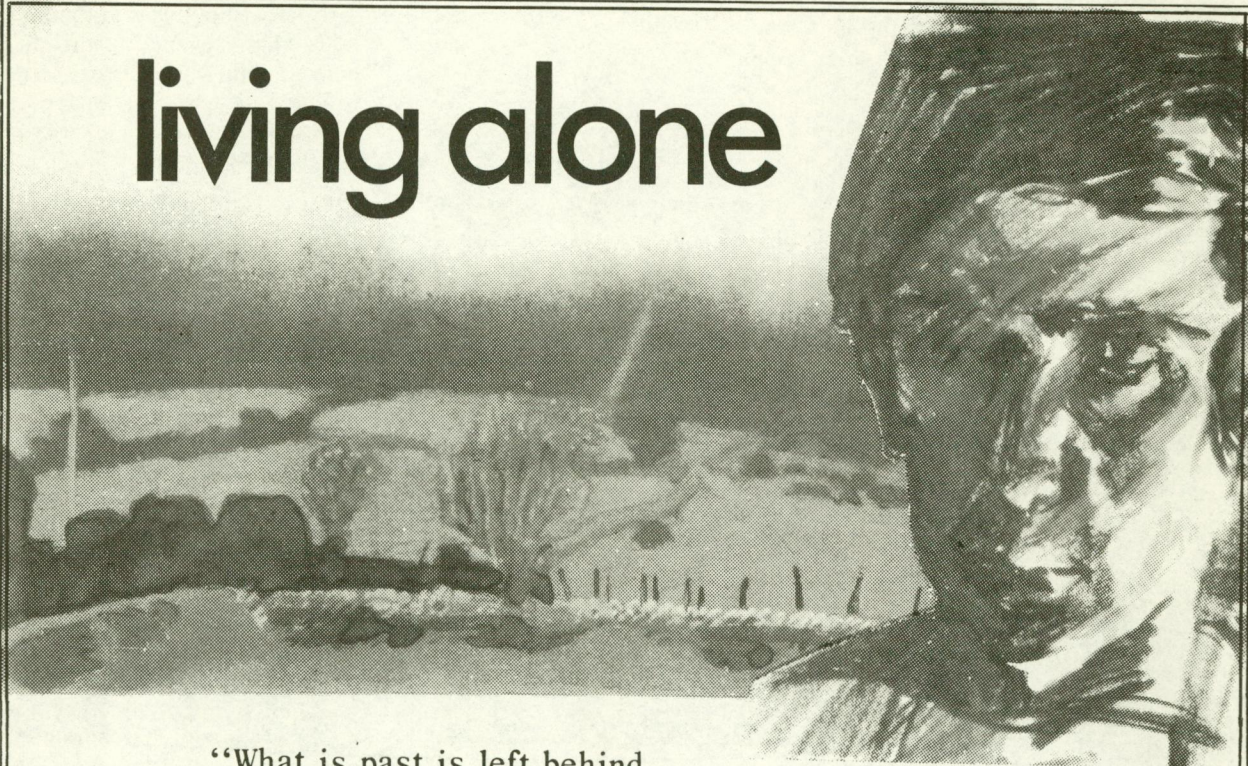
We think we've got the courage to repeat the experiment soon and perhaps often. There were departing whispers of regular family retreats leading to a long intensive summer

retreat next year. If we hope to evolve into the new society (and take our loved ones with us) there seems no better way to prepare than to set it up in miniature and to practise in it and with it as often as possible. There was a shared vision of populating our own village - using the village hall as the shrine room (our spiritual and social centre) and creating our livelihood among our own talents. Any more friends with children are urged to get in touch with us. I can promise it is an enormous help.

P.S. We had the traditional drama with the water pump at Broom house, but the editor wanted less reportage and more thoughts-arising. Gossip available on request.

John Roche

# living alone



"What is past is left behind,  
What is future is renounced,  
Lust and desire for selfhood acquired in the present  
is quite put away"

Illustration by David Living



p

People tried to tell me about solitary retreats; they described scenes of peace and tranquility mixed with elements of trauma and terror, but I was in many ways quite unprepared for what happened to me on my two week solitary which started on April 19th this year.

Why are solitaires so popular in the FWBO? Is it, as some cynic may suggest another form of escapism? Is it a legacy left over from Wordsworth, or a Victorian sentimental dream of a domesticated, tamed countryside, fresh and green under spring sunshine with daisies and dandelions poking their heads through to greet you as you make tracks from the smog and dirt of the town. Or maybe you're turned on by stories of early Indian sages who having retired from their businesses, leave wives and children and spend the remaining days left to them, alone, homeless in a cave, meditating and attaining high states of consciousness.

If so, then you will probably receive a nasty jolt as you relinquish commitments, pass on responsibilities, pack your case, catch the bus into the open countryside and, with a little sigh of relief, fit the key into the lock of the caravan and step over the threshold.....

A few days later you've settled in, the novelty of it all has blown away; you've got used to the freedom, the openness of the situation meditations don't seem to have got any better and you're beginning to feel a bit bored; then one morning you wake up to the sound of heavy rain and a blustery wind that shakes the caravan. From the window all that can be seen is a blank grey mist, the atmosphere is cold, damp and gloomy, rain drips in from the window frame; alone with no direct link to the outside world, from the depths of your depression a question emerges - 'what on earth am I doing?'

You're trapped with your ideal, and, like a cornered fox you are forced at last to turn and face the whining hounds of Samsara! There, in that tiny caravan, you slowly become aware

that the one thing, the one person you didn't wish to see is right there with you, your own worst enemy; you yourself! All your dreams, all your fantasies, whims and fancies, weaknesses and opinions are swept away from under your feet like so many playing card constructions and you begin to feel the vaguely threatening indifference of Reality. Scream and shout, curse and plead, no one will hear you, only the chickens or the sheep, but they'll show no sympathy. If you read D H Lawrence, you may be reminded at this stage of the man in "The Man Who Loved Islands" who ends his life huddled under a pile of blankets with hyperthermia, trapped, alone and beyond help on a remote, snow-bound island in the hostile North Atlantic.

To start with, maybe you had doubts, 'Am I doing the right thing? Am I wasting my time?' but these questions dissolve when Reality hits you. Worry nags at you - 'Will the Calor Gas last? Have I really brought enough food? Am I getting enough sleep? Am I getting too much sleep? Will it stop raining this afternoon or maybe tomorrow?' When you hear the turbulent winds threatening to shake the caravan from its moorings and the rain drumming endless tattoos on the roof and walls, you may even sink low enough to wish you were back in a nice cosy house in the city with only the traffic and the odd jet and siren to make life miserable. The hardest thing to come to terms with is the freedom. You have won for yourself a short space of time in your life where you can do whatever you like. This is a priceless opportunity to discover what you really want to do with your life, who you really are etc. But you find that it's so easy to waste it. You catch yourself trying to fill time to make it go faster; you blot out your opportunities with vague yearnings and fantasies, trying to build up a 'disneyland' out of the realities of your existence in order to excite, distract and vainly inspire yourself with trivia. The worse time is in the early evening when the whole countryside is transformed by an orange glow from the setting sun enriching the green fields and casting unfamiliar highlights on the far mountains. You yearn for somebody

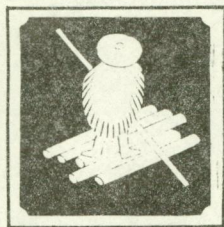
to share this beauty with. By yourself it feels so cold, if only you could get back to the warm gas fires of Sukhavati - oh for someone to talk to, someone to stimulate your mind! How I'd like to have been at home sitting in front of the fire, watching TV and unwrapping my birthday presents in moments like that! Living in the past is such a sad affair.

I suppose for me the turning point of the retreat came soon after I read the passage from 'The Life of the Buddha' quoted at the beginning of this article. It is taken from the advice given to a Bikkhu given over to spending his time alone, cut off from the Sangha. I felt as if bonds had been loosened, I appreciated the need to get involved with the present, especially in those particular circumstances, and to forget the past, ignoring all the worries about the future (the last part I didn't quite grasp). I dutifully got more involved with cleaning my shoes, fetching water, and all the other seemingly boring, non glamorous activities that comprise everyday existence. The benefits were wonderful; life became simpler, energy became more readily available meditation and yoga made some promising advances. I had a clearer idea of how I wanted to spend the day - read, eat, meditate, do yoga, relax, sleep. Gradually I began to formulate a timetable for myself - a distraction maybe, but I stopped feeling guilty about it and I did remain aware of an occasional feeling of boredom. There remained a feeling that I'd neglected something, there was something more, it got so that eventually I couldn't do anything - I felt I needed some sort of foil, some sort of wordly exercise to use the energies that had been building up. This foil took the form of experiments with ink marks on wet and dry paper - there being a bottle of black writing ink on the window sill. This saw me through six days of bad weather. On the Saturday morning before I left, the mist and clouds cleared and the sun blazed out, and I set foot in the outside world again. Celebrating with a snack of tea and a buttered scone in the beach cafe near Clynnog-Fawr, and with an apple and a bar of chocolate while walking, I gave myself indigestion.

David Living



# BOOK REVIEW



## Zen Past and Present



**The Blue Cliff Record**, Volume One. Translated from the Chinese *Pi Yen Lu* by Thomas and J.C. Cleary. Foreword by Taizan Maezumi Roshi. Shambhala, Boulder & London, 1977. Pp.xxv-268. Price £3.00 (paperback).

**The Zen Way**. Irmgard Schloegl. Sheldon Press, London, 1977. Pp. viii-116. Price £2.95 (paperback).

**Thomas Merton on Zen**. Sheldon Press, London, 1976.

Pp. xi-144. Price £2.50 (paperback).

**No Water No Moon**. Reflections on Zen. Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh. Sheldon Press, London, 1977. Pp. 246. Price £2.95 (paperback).

**The Tiger's Cave**. Trevor Leggett. Translations of Japanese Zen texts. Routledge & Kegan Paul, London and Henley, 1977. Pp.192. Price £2.50 (paperback).

**A**ccording to tradition, Zen began when the Buddha held up a golden flower in the midst of the assembly. No one understood the meaning of his action except Mahakashyapa, who smiled. The Buddha thereupon declared, 'This is the profound and mysterious principle of Enlightenment, which I now transmit to you, O Mahakashyapa!' In this way the Dharma was transmitted to Mahakashyapa, who thereupon became the first Zen Patriarch. It was transmitted not through the medium of words, nor even through the principle of thoughts, but directly, from mind to mind, or from heart to heart, by a process of what may be called transcendental telepathy. Emphasising this aspect of Zen, a traditional Chinese verse speaks of it as 'A special transmission outside the Scriptures; No dependence on words and letters'. Nonetheless, despite its claim to be a 'wordless', purely spiritual transmission of the Buddha's 'Teaching', and its apparent aversion to scriptural studies, in the course of more than a thousand years of recognizable historical existence the Zen school produced an enormous quantity of literature, much of it of great literary and spiritual significance, and including works which came to be regarded as being in effect scriptures in their own right. This literature was produced, of course, mainly in Chinese and Japanese. In recent decades a small portion of it has been translated into various European languages, and in this way has come to influence the spiritual lives of a number of people in the West. Be-

sides such translations of the Zen classics, as they maybe called, books 'about' Zen have been written by Buddhists and non-Buddhists, Easterners and Westerners, of widely varying degrees of authority and experience. A fairly representative batch of such publications is now before us. It might be useful to look first at the translation of a Zen classic of exceptional importance and then, using this as a sort of touchstone, at the modern works.

**T**he Zen classic in question is the *Pi Yen Lu* or *Blue Cliff Record*, an eleventh century Chinese compilation in one hundred chapters, the first thirty five of which have now been translated by two American scholars. To review a work of this kind is almost as much out of the question as reviewing a sutra. One could, of course, shout 'Mu!' or threaten the translators and their publishers with thirty blows. Or one could even leave these columns blank by way of registering one's protest against being expected to 'add flowers to brocade' in this way. But much as connoisseurs of Zen might relish such behaviour, it would not be of much help to the ordinary reader. Let us therefore approach the work by way of its literary structure. Essentially it is a collection of one hundred anecdotes of the sayings and doings of the Chinese Ch'an masters and disciples of the 8th to the 10th centuries C.E., a period which may be regarded as the golden age of Ch'an. These anecdotes were compiled from traditional sources by the Ch'an master Hsueh Tou Ch'ung



Hsien (980–1052 C.E.) who also composed a poem on each anecdote. About sixty years after Hsueh Tou's death another Ch'an master, Yuan Wu K'e Ch'in (1063–1135 C.E.), gave a series of talks elucidating the anecdotes and the poems. Each chapter of the *Blue Cliff Record* (so called from the name of the temple where Yuan Wu gave his talks) therefore consists of six parts: (1) Yuan Wu's introduction (missing in some cases); (2) the anecdote, taken from Ch'an tradition or Buddhist scripture; (3) remarks by Yuan Wu on certain points in the anecdote; (4) commentary on the anecdote by Yuan Wu; (5) the poem by Hsueh Tou, interspersed with remarks by Yuan Wu, and (6) commentary by Yuan Wu on the poem and its relation to the anecdote.

The nucleus of each chapter is thus the anecdote, to which poem, remark and commentary were gradually added in a manner resembling the process of accretion that forms a pearl, and it is worth enquiring why this should be so. As noted already, Zen claimed to be 'A special transmission outside the

Scriptures'. In its own terminology, it was the 'school of the patriarchs', that is to say, the school of the living exemplars of Enlightenment, as distinct from T'ien T'ai and Hua Yen schools, for example, which were 'doctrinal schools', or schools specialising in the systematic study of a certain sutra or group of sutras. This being so, it was hardly possible for the Zen masters to base their teaching on systematic expositions of the scriptures. They therefore developed the practice of taking as their starting point something that an earlier Zen master (or other ancient Buddhist worthy) had said or done. Since the master was enlightened, his words or actions would be an expression of the Enlightenment experience, and therefore able to give the Zen disciple some clue as to what it was all about. They would serve as spiritual precedent, as it were, by which the validity of his own attainment could be tested. In this way originated the kung an (Ch.) or koan (Jap), as the anecdotes which were used in this way came to be called. Literally the term kung an means 'public case' or 'public record', that is to say, a legal case which can be cited as a precedent for the settlement of new cases. The *Blue Cliff Record* is therefore essentially a collection of koans, complete with examples of the way in which these were used by, and the kind of effect they had on, subsequent generations of masters and disciples of the most spiritually vital and creative period in Ch'an history – which is to say, one of the most spiritually vital and creative periods in the entire history of Buddhism. The purpose of the koans was to function as catalysts of Enlightenment. As Yuan Wu says, 'Whenever the Ancients

handed down a word or half a phrase, it was like sparks struck from flint, like a flash of lightning, directly opening up a single straight path.' (p.47).

The rather complex literary structure of the *Pi Yen Lu* made possible the creation of a work of extraordinary richness, variety and beauty, and in his Foreword to the translation Taizan Maezumi Roshi rightly describes it as one of the most wonderful dharma-treasures of the world's Eastern heritage', (p.ix). Its hundred 'cases' are, he tells us, equivalent to all the dharmas preached by Shakyamuni Buddha, and each 'case' contains innumerable dharmas. The work is, in fact, a whole world in itself – a world in which, or even a corner of which, one could well spend

one's whole life and hardly notice that the time had passed. In this world – which is the world of T'ang and Sung dynasty China and yet, at the same time, our own world – we encounter all sorts

**The Blue Cliff rises high into the air;  
Below, it is wrapped in mist, above it is  
shrouded in cloud.  
What use is a path up the sheer side,  
If, however far you climb, you can  
never reach the top?**

of wonderful and extraordinary figures, some of whom are already known to Western students of Zen. Apart from semi-legendary figures like Bodhidharma, there is Hung Po, who was seven feet tall, had a lump in his forehead like a round pearl, and who 'understood Ch'an by nature'; Pai Chang, who compiled the so-called 'pure standards' for Zen monasteries, and who first thundered in the scandalized ears of an eleemosynary generation, 'A day of no working is a day of no eating'; the nun Iron Grindstone Liu, who had studied for a long time, and whose active edge was 'sharp and dangerous'; and Yun Men, to whose lineage belonged both Hsueh Tou and Yuan Wu. Yun Men liked to teach three word Ch'an. He also taught one word Ch'an. In ordinary situations, even, he would revile people. 'When he uttered a phrase, it was like an iron spike..' (p.39) Hsiang Lin Teng Yuan, one of the 'Four Sages', served as Yun Men's attendant for eighteen years. Whenever Yun Men dealt with him he would just call out, 'Attendant Yuan!' Yuan would answer, 'Yes?' Yun Men would say, 'What is it?' It went on like this for eighteen years, when one day Hsiang Lin finally awakened. We also meet Master Chu Ti, who whenever anything was asked would just raise one finger; Ma Tsu, famous for polishing a rock in order to make it into a mirror; and Chao Chu, who awakened to the way when he was nearly sixty, settled down at a temple at eighty, and taught until his death at one hundred and twenty. He was also known for his asceticism. 'When one leg of his rope chair broke, he tied on a leftover piece of firewood with rope to support it. There were repeated requests to make a new leg for it, but



# The Going For



Gotama leaves his wife and son.

**N**OW I, brethren, before my enlightenment, when I was not yet a perfected Buddha, but was a Bodhisattva, being myself still of nature to be born again,— I sought after things that are of nature to be reborn. Being myself of nature to decay, being subject to disease and death, being myself subject to sorrow, to the impurities, I sought after things of like nature.

Then there came to me the thought: “Why do I, being of nature to be reborn, being subject to death, to sorrow, to the impurities, thus search after things of like nature? What if, I being myself of such nature, and seeing the disadvantage of what is subject to rebirth, were to search after the unsurpassed, perfect security, which is Nibbana? Being myself subject to decay,



He rides out from the Palace.



# Birth of Gotama



Cutting off his hair he severs all links with worldly life.

disease, death, sorrow, and the impurities, and seeing the disadvantage (of what is subject to these things), what if I were to search after the untainted, unsurpassed, perfect security, which is Nibbana?"

**T**HEN I, brethren, some time after this, when I was a young lad, a black-haired stripling, endowed with happy youth, in the first flush of manhood, against my mother's and my father's wish, who lamented with tearful eyes, I had the hair of head and face shaved off, I donned the saffron robes, and I went forth from my home to the homeless life. Thus I became a wanderer and a searcher for what is good, searching after the unsurpassed, peaceful state most excellent.



Sitting beneath the Bodhi-Tree, Gotama gains Enlightenment.



the master would not allow it.' (p.228) We hear, too, Tung Shan's celebrated 'Three pounds of hemp', see the celebrated hermit of Lotus Flower Peak holding up his staff, and listen to the dialogue between Manjusri and Wu Cho.

**T**

he world of the *Blue Cliff Record* is in fact a world in which we encounter no one except masters and disciples, all of whom are concerned with nothing except Enlightenment. 'When the ancients travelled on foot to visit the monasteries everywhere,' says Yuan Wu, 'they only had this matter on their minds; they wanted to discern whether the old teacher on the carved wooden seat possessed eyes or did not possess eyes.' (p.195) For 'patch-robed monks' of this kind, who spent the greater part of their lives trudging the roads of China, or meditating on remote mountain peaks, Zen was not a matter of 'the witty word among the tea-cups' (as a correspondent once described the London-based Zen of the 'fifties) but literally a matter of life or death. Yun Men went to see Mu Chou. 'As soon as he opened the door a little, (Yun Men) immediately bounded in; Mu Chou held him fast and said, 'Speak! Speak!' Yun Men hesitated, and was pushed out; he still had one foot inside when Mu Chou slammed the door, breaking Yun Men's leg. As Yun Men cried out in pain, he was suddenly greatly enlightened.' (pp.37-38) In a word, the world of the *Blue Cliff Record* is a world in which *Buddhism matters*, — is the only thing that matters, — and in which people are prepared to go to any lengths in order to attain — and transmit — 'the profound and mysterious principle of Enlightenment'.

In introducing us to this world, so strange and yet so familiar, the translators of the *Pi Yen Lu* have widened our spiritual horizons immeasurably, and given us access to an inexhaustible treasure. As they state in their Introduction, 'The publication of *The Blue Cliff Record* in English will help open new vistas in the study of Buddhism in the West' — even though it is true that this is, in their own modest words, 'only part of a larger task.' (p.xxiii) What effect these new vistas will have on the spiritual lives of American and English Buddhists, and on the course of Western Buddhism, it is impossible to predict. There is little doubt, however, that this classic of Zen literature

will not be used in quite the same way as in ancient China or modern Japan, and that its influence will not be confined to 'official' Zen circles. There is also little doubt that, when the two remaining volumes are published, this version of the *Blue Cliff Record* will take its place with Rhys Davids' 'Dialogues of the Buddha' and Conze's 'Perfection of Wisdom' as a major contribution to our knowledge of the primary sources of Buddhist tradition.

**F**

rom the Zen classic of the eleventh century C.E. to the modern works 'about' Zen is nearly a thousand years, and it would not be strange if something of the spirit of Zen had evaporated in the interim. The author of *The Zen Way*, Irmgard Schloegl, has at least spent twelve years in Japan undergoing traditional Zen training, and her chapter 'Training in a Japanese Zen Monastery', a fascinating account of the whole cycle of the monastic year, will certainly dispel a few illusions. Though life in a Zen monastery is hard, and discipline strict, Dr Schloegl is at pains to show that the human element is not lacking, and that even head monks have hearts of gold. Valuable as this chapter is, however, the real substance of the book is to be found in the short Introduction and the chapters entitled 'Fundamentals' and 'Application'. For Dr Schloegl the Zen Way is above all a way of training that has as its object the genuine transformation — not merely the sublimation — of primitive emotional energy. It is this energy which is traditionally spoken of as the 'heart (not 'mind', she insists) of man, and which is symbolized by the 'splendid, tremendously strong, powerful, wild and quite ungovernable bull' of the well-known bull-herding pictures. In dealing with the practical side of the transformation

process, clearly her central concern, Dr Schloegl rightly emphasises that primitive emotions should be neither repressed nor expressed, and well shows how the disciplined life of the Zen monastery helps the monk to achieve the middle way in this respect. She is also alive to the danger of what she terms 'seizure', which occurs when a man is carried away by untransformed emotional energy,

as well as to the related danger of regression, when the unleashed energy turns destructive. In dealing with the theoretical implications of the transformation process she is less reliable. Her grasp of Buddhist doctrine is, in fact, at times distinctly shaky. Yet even though her active edge may not be as sharp and dangerous as Iron Grindstone Liu's it

**A hundred peaks behind, a hundred peaks  
before;  
All at once, the Blue Cliff rises  
in the distance  
Birds disappear into the mist, monkeys' cries  
are lost in silence;  
Darkness gathers, and there is still  
a long way to go.**



is certainly formidable enough to deal with anything she is likely to find in the neighbourhood of Eccleston Square.

I have only one real criticism. In the absence of temples and training monasteries Dr Schloegl suggests that we in the West should take our ordinary daily life (i.e. job, housework) as our training discipline. This is, of course, something that could well be done - indeed, in principle should be done. In making the suggestion, however, Dr Schloegl appears to overlook two things: (1) The extent to which modern economic life violates the principles of Right Livelihood; and (2) The possibility of our going away 'on retreat' from time to time and benefitting from the positively structured routine of a quasi-monastic environment for a limited period - as frequently happens in the FWBO. If the routine of daily life was sufficient as a training discipline the Buddha would not have founded a monastic order, the masters and disciples of the *Blue Cliff Record* would not have all been monks, and there would have been no Zen monastery for Dr Schloegl herself to stay at when she went to Japan. 'Daily Life Practice' is not the same thing as acceptance of the status quo.



Thomas Merton was a Roman Catholic monk of the Cistercian Order of Strict Observance (the Trappists) who wrote a great deal about Eastern mysticism, especially Zen. The essays collected in *Thomas Merton on Zen* are a selection from what the publishers call his 'prodigious output'. Some are chapters taken from books which he himself published as such, while others are prefaces to books by other people. In view of the miscellaneous nature of its origin, it would not be fair to review the present collection as though it was a book in the strict sense of the term. Nevertheless it does have a certain unity which allows us to treat it in this way to some extent. This unity is not due to the fact that all the essays are about Zen, or have some bearing on it, nor even to the fact that the author always approaches his subject from the same point of view. It stems, rather, from the nature of the author's own mental makeup as revealed in all these pieces. Thomas Merton is clearly a well read, well informed man of great mental agility and verbal fluency who is ready to define Zen - or anything else - at the drop of a biretta. On p.4 he tells us that 'It is a product of the combination of Mahayana Buddhism with Chinese Taoism which was later transported to Japan and further refined there'. Though what may be called the Mrs. Beeton theory of the origin of Zen has enjoyed the support of people who should have known better, even a cursory glance at the first volume of the *Blue Cliff Record* will show us no sign of Mahayana Buddhism in process of being 'combined' with Taoism in this way. One will be lucky if one finds very much 'Mahayana

Buddhism'. All one finds is people concerned, either as masters or disciples, with 'this matter'. On p.52 Father Merton returns to the attack. 'Zen is, in fact' 'an Asian form of religious existentialism.' He is equally ready to define - and compare - Zen enlightenment and Rilke's '*nowhere without no*'. 'Zen Enlightenment is an insight into being in all its existential reality and actualization. It is a fully alert and superconscious act of being which transcends time and space. Such is the attainment of the 'Buddha mind', or 'Buddha hood'. (Compare the Christian expressions 'having the mind of Christ' 1 Cor. 2.16, being 'of one spirit with Christ', 'He who is united to the Lord is one spirit' 1 Cor. 6.17, though the Buddhist idea *sic* takes no account of any 'supernatural order' in the Thomist sense.) (p.6) 'That '*nowhere without no*' (a mysterious expression) is the void of *sunyata*. Thanks for telling us! and the emptiness of Eckhart's 'Ground' or, perhaps more properly, Boehme's 'Un-ground' (*Ungrund*). 'God,' said Boehme, 'is called the seeing and finding of the Nothing. And it is therefore called a Nothing (though it is God Himself) because it is inconceivable and inexpressible.' This is more theological than Rilke.....' (p.78) Etc., etc. Blah blah blah. Thomas Merton is quite capable of going on like this for pages together. In famous phrase, he is 'intoxicated with the exuberance of his own verbosity'. Or as Yuan Wu puts it, 'Because later students become attached to their words and more and more give rise to intellectual interpretations, therefore they do not see the Ancients' message.' (*The Blue Cliff Record*, p.57)

This is not to say that there are not good things to be found in these essays. Despite his weakness for 'intellectual interpretations', Father Merton's facility of expression at times enables him to hit the nail firmly and squarely on the head. Speaking of the results of *koan* study and the identity of 'individuality' and 'desire', for instance, he says, 'It is not as if the 'individual' were a hard, substantial, ontological core from which desires proceed, but rather that desires themselves form a kind of knot of psychic energies which seek to remain firmly tied as the autonomous 'self'.' (p.74). This could hardly be better put. Nonetheless, the overall impression remains that in these essays Thomas Merton is preoccupied not with Zen so much as with what others have thought and said about Zen. This is not because he was never in Japan. It is not even because he never actually practised Zen Buddhism. Rather, it is because he was so highly skilled in the manipulation of words and concepts, and became so deeply absorbed in the exercise of that skill, that he was unable to distinguish words and concepts from realities, and when he was playing elaborate games with the one thought he was dealing meaningfully with the other. It is surprising, therefore, to find Irmgard Schloegl, in her Introduction to the volume, saying of Father Merton's comments that they 'belong to the best that a Westerner has produced'. (p.x) This could, of course be taken as an example of damning with faint



praise, especially when one thinks of the worst that Westerners have done in this line. But Dr. Schloegl's judgement appears to be made in good faith. Being herself a practical, down to earth kind of person she is, I suspect, over-impressed by the agility with which Father Merton performs on the intellectual tightrope and with true grandmotherly kindness, concludes that he must have a pair of spiritual wings somewhere to prevent him from falling.

**A**

fter going through *No Water No Moon* one might be tempted to conclude that hot air rather than wings was the sustaining factor. Whether or not Shree Rajneesh ('Bhagavan' to you!) is 'one of the most highly regarded and admired teachers in India' (back cover blurb) he certainly does have what seems to be increasingly regarded as one of the most indispensable qualifications of a teacher nowadays - the gift of the spiritual gab. Thomas Merton's output of words may have been prodigious but Shree Rajneesh's is spectacular. This is because instead of having the trouble of writing it all out he just talks. In *No Water No Moon* he talks about Zen. Or rather, he talks at length about ten traditional Zen stories, and two admiring female disciples have compiled and edited his comments for our benefit. Let me say at once that Shree Rajneesh talks brilliantly and amusingly - for a few chapters. He also talks excellent sense - on half a dozen pages. Unfortunately, he has the same weakness for intellectual interpretations as Thomas Merton, and really believes that he has explained exactly what each story means. Talking about 'Gutei's Finger', he says, 'oneness is needed - when the other is not a constant fight. This is why Gutei used to raise one finger whenever he was explaining Zen. He was saying, "Be one! - and all your problems will be solved."' (p.113) It is interesting to compare this 'explanation' with Yuan Wu's commentary on 'Chu Ti's One-Finger Ch'an' in the *Blue Cliff Record*, where the koan on which the story is based originally appeared. 'If you don't understand at the finger, then you turn your back on Chu Ti; if you don't go to the finger to understand, then it's like cast iron. Whether you understand or not, Chu Ti still goes on this way; whether you're high or low, he still goes on this way; whether you're right or wrong, he still goes on this way.' (*The Blue Cliff Record*, pp.123-124.) Shree Rajneesh certainly understands a lot about Zen. In the end we become tired of the constant stream of dogmatic assertions, misleading half truths, and sweeping generalisations - not to mention undigested gobbets of Shree Rajneesh's reading, from the Bible to the Reader's Digest, which are also borne along on the stream. 'Monks are repressed people', (p.18) 'Rituals are repeated by idiots', (p.21) 'All temples are inventions of the clever people to exploit the stupid', (p.4) and, 'Enlightened persons are always inconsistent', (p.143) are good examples of some of his wilder generalisations,

and tell us, perhaps, more about himself than about Zen.

**L**

ike some other modern teachers, Shree Rajneesh is concerned to invoke the authority of the Buddha, Jesus, etc. for some of his own assertions, and if a suitable quotation is not available he does not hesitate to manufacture one, thus we learn that 'Buddha never answered questions' (p.134) and, 'Buddha used to say, "Don't ask if you want to be answered. When you don't ask, I will answer. If you ask the door is closed."' (p.134) Also, 'Buddha used to insist with newcomers: "For one year remain with me without asking anything. If you ask, you cannot be allowed to live with me, you will have to move. For one year simply be silent."' (p.134) The purpose of these fabrications - not to use a stronger term - seems to be to make out Bhagavan Buddha to have been very much like 'Bhagwan' Rajneesh, for then 'Bhagwan' Rajneesh would be very much like Bhagavan Buddha. At one point in the talks given at his Ashram in the fashionable quarter of Poona Shree Rajneesh even says, 'A Buddha comes - I am here' (p.128) as though the two were identical. He would do very well to take to heart his own excellent advice, 'It is good to sit in a Buddha posture; but remember you are not Buddha.' (p.21)

The back cover blurb tells us, 'This is not the Zen that has been intellectually adopted in the West; it is the Zen of the heart'. I cannot agree. Whatever the Zen that has been adopted in the West may or may not be, there is little doubt that the Zen which has been adopted in these talks resembles mouth Zen rather than heart Zen. Entertaining and instructive though they often are, Shree Rajneesh's thinking is at times so muddled that they will increase rather than decrease the confusion that surrounds the word Zen, and thus in all likelihood do more harm than good. At a time when it has become more necessary than ever to clarify the fundamentals of the spiritual life this is a pity.

The first edition of *The Tiger's Cave* appeared in 1964. Besides talks on the Heart Sutra by Abbot Obora of the Soto Zen Sect (contemporary), these translations of Japanese Zen texts include *Yasenkanna*, an autobiographical narrative by Zen master Hakuin (eighteenth century), and various shorter pieces. In the past thirteen years I have frequently recommended this book, as well as its predecessor *A First Zen Reader*, as one of the very few really good books on Zen, and although many other works on the subject have appeared since it was originally published I find, on reading it again in this new edition, no reason to revise that judgement.

SANGHARAKSHITA

**Also Received :- The Sound of the One Hand.** Translated by Yoel Hoffmann. Published by Sheldon Press. Pp xi-303 Price £4.95 (Hard back).



# CENTRES and BRANCHES

## WANSTEAD

30 Cambridge Park, E11 2PR

FWBO Wanstead came into existence as long ago as January of this year at the winter Women's retreat, but it is only in the last week that we have completed our negotiations with the Department of Environment and moved into our rented property in Wanstead, thus providing the centre with a physical base.

The idea for a larger and more self-contained (in terms of having its own shrine-room space, guest rooms and facilities for living, practising and working together) had been around for a long time. As long ago as Autumn 1975 a number of us, then living in two small women's communities, discussed the possibility, but it was apparent that the necessary energy, enthusiasm, commitment and vision for such a project were not available. Consequently I decided to work more slowly and build up a group of women who were not only interested but also able to see such a project through. When Anoma was ordained she came to live with me, followed several months later by Christine Seymour (now Sanghadevi) and later still by Helen Johnson, a Cornwall mitra, on an extended visit. A year passed and it was imperative that we did something soon as we knew that the life of the Archway Centre had only a few more months.

We began looking for properties in North London and discovered a house owned by the Department of Environment. This was unavailable but they offered us two houses in need of slight repair and redecoration in Wanstead, which we turned down because we were still working with the idea

of being within striking distance of the North London Centre and still involved with its activities.

However, we discovered that finding property in London, especially cheap property, is extremely difficult and after several weeks of searching we decided to re-open negotiations with the Department. At the Christmas retreat we formed our Council and became a legally and financially autonomous centre of the FWBO.

Most of us interested in the idea of such a community had spent a long time living in communities around the large and thriving Archway Centre and it took some time to re-adjust to the idea of being in an isolated situation over in East London, thrown completely on our own resources. People were keen to get into some work on the houses and to learn about redecoration, and Helen, our handywoman, offered to master mind the work. However, while we were sorting out who was going to come, our fortunes changed, the Department withdrew their offer of the two houses, and offered us one large 17 room four storyed house in need of considerable repair, which was still to be bought by them.

Three of us went to see it and discovered that it had had an extensive fire in the basement, which had spread to the ground floor and up the stairs as well. All the rooms were smoke damaged and in need of complete redecoration. Much of the wood was badly charred on all floors. There was no gas, electricity, water or plumbing of any kind, many of the windows were missing not to speak of window frames. The house had not been occupied, except for the odd tramp, for two to three years and was full of old furniture, junk and rubble. It did how-



ever have a big and beautiful garden. My first reaction on seeing it was delight! I liked the feel of the house and I was pleased there was so much work to do and I felt this was what was needed to really give the community energy and direction.

The eleven of us involved began to meet regularly and discuss ideas and plans. Everyone was asked to get full time work and give as much money as possible to the fund. Perhaps the worst thing about these months was not knowing for sure whether we would get the house and when exactly it would come through. Meanwhile eviction orders had been served to our side of Balmore St. It was a period of intense frustration for all of us as the delays continued and as we banged away on our typewriters in various office jobs.

However after Easter spirits rose on Sanghadevi's ordination weekend, when we had the pleasure of Bhante's company and Helen returned from Cornwall with our newly acquired van. Six of the eventual eleven were now living together and we began to really build up energy and momentum. During this period as well as working for money several people went out to learn some of the skills that were now needed if we were going to get the house together with as little outside help as possible. Two people went to learn about painting and decorating, two went to learn about wiring and one about plumbing.

We were getting more and more keen to get on with the job but were frustrated by more and more delays. Time was drawing near when the date of the sale of the house to the DOE should be completed and also when we expected to receive our final eviction orders. Would they synchronise? Unfortunately at the 11th hour it seemed that they might not. The eviction order had arrived, but the sale was still not com-

pleted. Despair was in the air. Everyone was packed and ready to go, final plans had been made, we had money in our bank account for materials, a van a supply of tools, and no house. Eventually on Wednesday, 22nd June, we got the go ahead, our months and months of waiting were over and the real work could begin. On Friday we set off in the van with a supply of tools and set about clearing the ground floor of furniture and junk and the basement of piles of rubble and dirt. This took us several hours and we left later that night leaving two people behind. On the Saturday we moved our five van loads of belongings from Balmore St, which took about eleven hours to complete.



*The last cup of tea in Balmore Street*

We also removed all the electrical fittings, wood and plumbing we could from the houses as they were shortly to be gutted. At times on Saturday Balmore Street looked like a scene from a surrealistic film with people drinking tea around the tables in the street and sitting on their furniture. Eventually, late that night everyone gratefully laid their heads down and spent their first night in Wanstead.



We had decided previously that the first two weeks would be conducted as a working retreat with a programme of double meditation, breakfast, work all day interspersed with tea breaks and lunch, yoga, supper and puja. The first few days went by in a haze of heavy physical work and sheer exhaustion. More and more junk was shifted,



*Dhammadinna at work*

ceilings were smashed down, skips loaded, rooms measured for materials and glass, nails ripped out of walls, sinks removed etc. Hilary (the housekeeper) produced on her two ring calor gas cooker in a very makeshift kitchen, delicious and refined food which we ate in the garden away from the dust and rubble. The stop cock was discovered in the back of the darkest, blackest room in the basement, a hose pipe attached - running water! We live camping style, washing up in the garden and washing in water from a large rain tank which we fill with the hose. Helen discovered a shower attachment somewhere and cold showers are available in the back garden in a suitably secluded spot.

On Wednesday our two electricians had their work checked by the LEB and the first light bulb was ritually turned on.

On Thursday evening we downed tools early to go to the public baths to be clean for the next days celebrations of Dharmachakra Day, which we celebrated with a day retreat with meditation, a talk, readings and a concluding puja, sitting in a circle in the shrine room around a small dharmachakra mandala made out of flowers.

Occasionally I surface from the immediate job in hand and wonder how eleven women with next to no skill or knowledge or experience in this sort of work come to be doing it with such gusto and happiness. It seems a little insane, but my confidence in Helen's ability to teach us what she knows and all our abilities to learn and discover for ourselves, rather than wavering, grows everyday.

When our initial two week retreat period is over, we will have to review our financial position, and some people may have to leave the on-site work force and go out to work again. We estimate the work will take us from three to six months depending on how many people we have working and how fast we learn all that we are going to need to know. As facilities improve we will be inviting small groups of women to come and help us with the work, holding small weekend retreats and open days and afternoons. Eventually we want to provide not only a roof over our own heads (that is the one thing we do have) but a place for all women in the movement and especially London, to come and visit or stay at various times. Quite what we will do when we have finished the house is unsure. No doubt the energy and skill we have built up will quite naturally spill over into something else.



Our final plans for the house are as follows:- The basement will contain the kitchen and adjoining dining room, two bedrooms and a small shrine room; first floor will have a large shrine room, a large study/common/library room, and another bedroom and an office; first floor - four bedrooms, top floor - four bedrooms. There are two small rooms at the end of the corridor on the first and top floors which can be made into small overnight rooms. In the garden there is a large brick shed which we are hoping to turn into a guest room for longer term guests.

It has been our decision as a community that no men are allowed on the premises.

The main feeling at the moment is delight at having finally got here, satisfaction at the way the work is going and a deep feeling of happiness and contentment at being involved in the creation of a real women's spiritual community.

Dhammadinna

## CORNWALL

The most exciting news from Cornwall is the development of the first community of the FWBO here. Several people will be moving into a large house, in an idyllic setting in the heart of some of the most beautiful countryside in Cornwall, pleasingly isolated on the outskirts of a pretty village called St. Stephen's Coombe, Near St. Austell. The house is at present called Selsey, and is owned by one of the friends, Rita James, who lives there with her three children. It will be a mixed community and there is room for one or two more people. Selsey has been in use by the FWBO in Cornwall for some time now as the regular monthly week end retreats have been held there, with much success. The last retreat

was very well attended and proved a strengthening experience for those who took part. Mitra ceremonies took place for Rebecca Webb and Harvey Mason and the four Order members and two mitras from London who came added a great deal, giving us a chance for more contact, which was very stimulating.



*On retreat*



*The new community house*

A new beginners meditation class is to start on Thursday evenings in Truro as demand for such a class has



risen to warrant it. The 'regulars' class on a Monday, held at Lancarrow, continues well with increased attendance. Plans for a weeks retreat are being discussed and information will be circulated to all centres in due course.

It is encouraging to see the FWBO growing here in Cornwall and really worth while when Order members, mitras and friends from other centres come down for retreats and visits - its like a breath of fresh air.

Rebecca Webb

## SUKHAVATI BETHNAL GREEN

Since last November, work on the conversion of Sukhavati has been at a standstill. All the funds originally raised were exhausted after the basic conversion of the upper floors was completed. Since then we have been trying to make money by means of our own businesses.

The foremost amongst these commercial activities has been Friends Building Services, a contract building firm which has done work ranging from re-making window frames and mending rooves to the full scale conversion of a Victorian house. This has enabled us to maintain and develop building skills as well as support the community. The printing press has continued to print both for the FWBO and on a commercial basis. A light removal business has been set up using a Luton box van. In these ways we have managed to support a community of up to 30 people and build up our stocks of materials. Although some small headway has been made with building work here, we are unlikely to raise enough money from our commercial activities to be able to finish within

the next two or three years. Fortunately we have been donated a large sum of money and a cottage in Norfolk which we will sell. This should enable us to restart work on the ground floor in October. If all goes well, we should be able to open the public centre in Summer 1978.

Even though we will have acquired the funds with which to finish the building programme, commercial work cannot stop. The press and transport businesses will be supplemented by the opening of a wholefood and book shop on the ground floor. We are also in the process of buying a small property next door to Sukhavati in which to set up joinery workshops so that we can make, by hand, items of specialist joinery such as period windows and doors and furniture designed at Sukhavati.

The transition from work on our own building to work for others on a commercial basis was not an easy one. Since none of us receives any wages, some additional motivation is required to tackle an outside working situation. Most of us found ourselves stretched quite a bit and were forced once more to re-evaluate our individual positions. The possibility of using Sukhavati as a cosy shelter was made less possible. As is usual from such situations, most people gained a lot from it.

Retrospectively, one wonders at our sanity in setting up a building firm with so little experience either in business or in the trades, especially at a time when the industry generally is in decline. We were almost entirely dependent on the skills of Atula, who has worked in the trade for 15-odd years, and of Dipankara, who trained as a civil engineer but managed to become surveyor, architect, estimator, clerk of works, as well as electrician. Others, even if graduates of the first



year's work at Sukhavati, were relatively untried. However, our work has now settled down to a reasonable pace rather than the state of permanent emergency of the earlier days.

One fact which has been well recognised is that skill is a prerequisite. We need people with developed skills around which others can work. Facilities need to be provided for people to learn skills. We have already set up an apprenticeship scheme in carpentry which four or five people are following. It is hoped to commence a similar training scheme in plumbing.

Being forced to lay off work at Sukhavati has also given us time to re-evaluate plans for the ground floor which are now much more comprehensive and clear. Work on the Buddha images for the shrine rooms has also had time to mature.

Once we knew that the finishing date for the project was to be put back, we were concerned to have classes in meditation and yoga started as soon as possible. After protracted negotiations, we have leased an old Salvation Army hostel from the local council. The building has been allowed to decay quite severely and requires quite a bit of work to get it into shape. The ground floor and basement are to be leased off to a community photographic gallery and workshop. The Attic is already in use by Windhorse Design as a studio and the floor below already partly houses a community of five. They have given their community the name of 'Golgonooza' from William Blake's 'Fourfold Spiritual London'. There is still a lot of work to do on these floors and the community members, still without basic facilities, are to be seen at Sukhavati mealtimes, covered in grime. The first floor is mostly completed and has been opened as the

'East End Meditation Centre'. For the



*The East End Meditation Centre  
(reception room)*

past month a meditation class and a yoga class have been held each week and already a small core of regulars has built up. A contingent of some 10 people from Sukhavati and other Order members and Mitras from Golgonooza and Beulah, a newly formed women's community in the area, all attend the class, so that the atmosphere is already quite strong.

Amidst all this activity, the 25 or so members of the community live, study and meditate together. There are 14 Order members, recently joined by the newly ordained Kuladeva from Aryatara,



8 mitras and 3 friends. There are still opportunities for men to join the community particularly those with building skills or who would like to learn some. We live communally; all money earned is pooled and is used for the needs of the community, all household jobs are shared. There are weekly study groups for those who want them, meditation twice daily and puja in the evening. As often as possible there are retreats and many members of the community go away for a period of solitary retreat at some time.

We very much look forward to the next few months, particularly to getting back to work on Sukhavati but also to developing and extending our contacts at the East End Meditation Centre.

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## GOLGONOOZA

About a year ago Sukhavati FWBO decided that a new building was needed to house a temporary centre, until the public area of Sukhavati was finished. A building was found at 119 Roman Rd. which was much bigger than required, so the idea arose of sub-letting the basement and ground floor to Half Moon Photography, a photographic workshop aimed at improving visual literacy. The first floor would house the East End Meditation Centre and the second and third would become a community and design studio respectively. In April after a long period of negotiations with Tower Hamlets Council, who own the building, Subhuti signed a three year lease. Windhorse Designs moved in and the community started to establish itself.

The Golgonooza Association, initiated by Upasakas Luvah and Siddhiratna, John Rooney, a mitra and Rintrah, is the basis of the community. Siddhiratna and John moved into the building

as soon as it became available and started work on the conversion. Luvah and Rintrah have also been working on the building and are due to be installed by the beginning of August. Manjuvajra moved in and joined Siddhiratna and Anne Murphy of Windhorse Designs as administrator of the studio. By temperament the community members are 'individualistic' and have a definite 'worldly' streak, in that they have an interest in contact with areas outside the Movement, especially in the fields of politics and the arts. However, through frequent house meetings, group meditation, and economic communality, consistent effort to develop a truly spiritual community is foremost in our minds. The community is all men but we hope that within the context of the studio and the Golden Drum Theatre to establish positive working relationships with both sexes.

Windhorse Designs had in it's early days operated from various temporary homes producing Mitrata, the newsletter, posters and other design work for the movement. Now with it's new permanent home and the improved facilities of a dark-room and a good silk screen set-up, activities are expanding into the field of visual aids to the communicating of the Dharma and the spirit of the FWBO. As well as the production of this newsletter, the latest Mitrata and a new edition of the Three Jewels, the studio is now involved in "outside" work for the BBC and other clients. A photographic archive is being established and a set of black and white slides illustrating various aspects of the FWBO will soon be available.

Luvah and Rintrah are both members of the Golden Drum Theatre group which represents a venture into the performing arts. It's production of "The Circle of Destiny" has already been well received at a number of centres;





and at a party for everyone connected with the building, a jazz/rock band drawn from the ranks of Golden Drum kept Order members, mitras and friends on their feet until well into the night.

William Blake, the inspiration of the Golden Drum production also inspired the name Golgonooza - the City of Art. Art here having not only its usual sense but meaning living life as a continuous creative act.

## PUNDARIKA ARCHWAY & MANDALA WEST LONDON

Since the last issue there has been rather an exodus from Pundarika. Our former Chairman, Lokamitra, has left, first of all to lead a retreat in the West Country and a series of yoga retreats in Cambridge, whence in October he will be leading a party of friends, mitras and Order members to India for a pilgrimage to the holy Buddhist places and to spend some time with his yoga teacher, BKS Iyengar. When he comes back he will eventually be settling in the West Country to establish the FWBO there.

Dhammadinna has left us too, with Anoma, Sanghadevi and eight women mitras, to

found a women's community in Wanstead.

We've also lost our Treasurer, Sagaramati, who has gone to Manchester with Ratnajyoti and a mitra, John Wadkin to start FWBO activities there:

Pundarika itself will, we have been told by the Council, definitely be closing down in December, and all the communities in Balmore Street are no more. It is the end of an era for what was for a long time the only FWBO Centre in the world.....



*The builders are moving up Balmore Street*

Left in North and West London to keep the FWBO going are Kamalashila, now Chairman, Padmavajra, Caretaker/Secretary, and Vangisa over in West London. Ratnaguna will be associated with us very much, but will be living at Sukhavati for a while while the new Friends Foods shop at Sukhavati is getting going.

The main concern at the moment is the establishment of a strong community as a basis for whatever public activities are started in the future in North and West London. Communities around Archway have, by the nature of the housing



situation there, always been rather transient; during the two years of Sukhavati's existence the pattern of Friends communities has improved and matured a great deal through its influence and we hope to have a really positive community in a month or so's time which will be able to run the FWBO here. After December, Mandala will be the main public Centre in London apart from the East London Meditation Centre. The community will be looking after both Centres until then, and looking Westwards for a more permanent home.

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## ARYATARA SURREY

By Andrew Skelton

This last session has been such a fruitful one, both for me and more essentially for Aryatara itself. The mere number of things that has happened provides ample material for consideration, even without trying to make clear the changes of energy and atmosphere, of which these activities are both cause and expression.

We still have no premises for a shop, though not through want of trying, but have maintained and developed our energies since Easter, through a variety of projects. We've started a painting and decorating business; bought a van which has already turned over a good number of removal jobs; and have added another yoga class to our weekly programme. Aryatara no longer functions as a retreat centre for other branches of the FWBO, since increased activities make our 'spare' time more valuable; time during which the community can just be together. Leaving aside our fund raising events which have steadily pushed up our funds towards the target required for our shop, the most essential change so far, and the one which most accurately

ly mirrors the more vital 'inner change' of our community and centre, is that Aryatara is now a co-operative; each member paying all income to the centre and in turn receiving food, keep and, of course, his pocket money.

This development is one face of the increased energy and commitment to the centre which has grown through retreats and work (particularly the redecorating of Aryatara's public rooms) and which is now being channelled back into the centre, making it more vital than I've even known it. And of course through the increased energy here, fresher and more vital people are spontaneously attracted to the house and drawn into the mandala of meditation, work, communication and, of course, living which is building up here. The prospect ahead for us is exciting and most important of all, we are going forward to meet it.

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## BRIGHTON

Report from Mangala

Since my report in the last newsletter, the new wave of people to which I referred has now consolidated itself into a steady group of regulars, and has seen the emergence of four new mitras.

Not only are these people in regular contact at the Centre, but many of them work in our vegetarian restaurant, Sunrise, and thus have contact in a more everyday situation as well. Sunrise is in fact really an extension of the Centre and we try and practise the same principles of goodwill and mindfulness while preparing and serving food, as we do while sitting on cushions meditating.

For several months now we have been looking for a new larger Centre and it looks like our search is finally over. We have found a suitable property at 15, Park Crescent Place, which should be ideal for our needs, having (when com-



pleted) a large shrine room, reception room, office, kitchen, accommodation for two or three people, a workshop, large back yard and basement

The property however needs a lot of work doing to it before it can be occupied - plumbing, re-wiring, decorating etc, and this of course will require a lot of money. We estimate that £2,000 should see it finished, but at present we have nowhere near that amount. If therefore you or anyone you know can spare any money, however little, or materials (plumbing, electrical, carpets etc) then please contact me at George Street. We really do need your help if we are to get the new Centre together, so please do give generously, and hopefully by the time the next newsletter appears we will have our new Centre firmly established.

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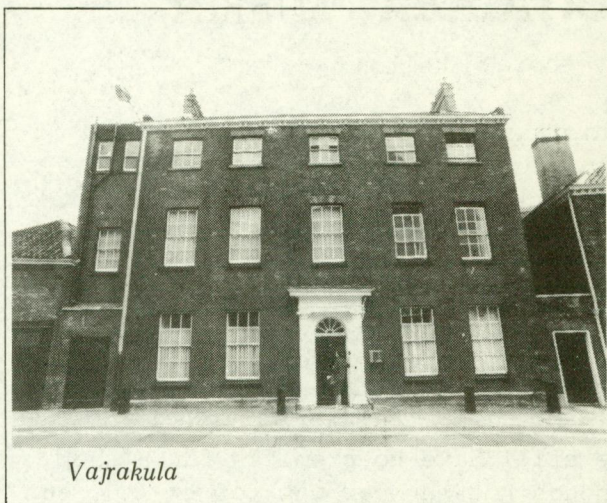
## VAJRADHATU NORWICH

Kulananda.

One of the most important things to have happened in Norfolk was the creation of four new Order members. Dave Zukas, Mike Thomas, Dominic Kennedy and Mike Chaskalson were, on May 14th, re-born as Kulamitra, Kularatna, Kuladeva and Kulananda. Bhante came down to Padmaloka for the duration of the ordination retreat and stayed on for a few days after. His presence was felt throughout Norfolk.

At Vajrakula, the men's community in Norwich, the lengthy task of re-decoration and restoration is almost complete and full-time work on the building has stopped. This marks the end of a period of introversion amongst the Norwich friends, making much more energy available for 'public' activities. Attendance at Vajradhatu classes has slackened off to a marked extent - a process which will

now be reversed. Already Andrew Goodman has produced "The Norfolk Thunderbolt" - the newsletter of the Norfolk friends, carrying the vajra one stage further in our often too placid part of England. The next obvious step is to create more opportunities for right-livelihood, and extending the skills already developed at the Rainbow Restaurant, we have begun to assemble the components of a mobile kitchen; we intend to take good vegetarian food and hopefully some of the Dharma to the various fairs and festivals which are becoming increasingly a feature of the English summer. Dharmachakra tapes too is now being run from Vajrakula.



*Vajrakula*

The new women's community has settled in at Aslacton - a village 14 miles from Norwich. They have acquired a beautiful farmhouse on six acres of ground from which they hope to be self-supporting within two years. The community currently consists of Annie Leigh, Malini and Teresa Fisher.

On yet another front John Roche and Ray Chips (friends from Pundarika) are planning to bring their families up from London and together with Abhaya and his family they are exploring the possibilities of a family community, either in separate units or in a single house. They are holding a family re-



treat together at Broomhouse Farm in July.

At Padmaloka the production of excellent hand-dipped candles is in full swing. The community has been joined by Asvajit. Padmapani too is now with us and Norfolk enjoys the highest concentration of the Order outside of London.

The dominant feeling here at the time of writing is one of potential. Norfolk is fertile ground for the Dharma and we seem to have amassed the necessary concentration of energy and ability for vigorous expansion. Work on the Norwich Centre began almost exactly one year ago and already much has been achieved; the prospects for the future are even more exciting.

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## HERUKA GLASGOW

Report from AJITA

Things in Glasgow have been changing very fast. After leaving our Nithsdale Road Centre, myself and Danavira moved into the already existing men's community situated in the West End. It is a flat which six of us share; from here also we have continued our weekly programme, holding on Tuesday, Meditation, Lecture and Puja and on Wednesday, Study night with meditation and puja.

Most of our energy is going into looking for a permanent Centre. Apart from two possibilities, one a church, the other a flat, we have been unlucky, owing to bad surveyor's reports, thus preventing us getting the necessary loan to buy them. However, perseverance will pay dividends.

We have been doing quite a bit of fund-raising with projects like benefit dinners, sponsored walks and W.A.M. These have certainly helped our financial

situation a great deal.

We have had a good deal of contact with other parts of Scotland this summer. With the Aberdeen Buddhist Group who invited two of us to lead a weekend retreat, with Dundee who asked us to lead a day retreat and also contact with the St. Andrews Buddhist Group. They proved to be very successful retreats indeed. Also with Edinburgh becoming a branch of the FWBO Glasgow, you get a tangible feeling of the fragrance of the Dharma, or real Buddhism, permeating up through Scotland in all directions.

The feeling we have in Glasgow, is one of growing inspiration and growing awareness of the Bodhisattva attitude, which the FWBO is to ever and ever greater degrees actualising here on this world for the sake of all.

Having mentioned where we're at, I'll tell you where we're going next. On the 17th July we will be moving the Community to 46 Gray Street, Kelvin-grove. There is room enough for eight, and so far Ajita, Dhammarati, Danavira, Vairocana and Dharmapala, who will be joining us, and Mick Thomson. From here we will work together as a team towards our aims.

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## WELLINGTON N.Z.

The past few months have been eventful in a number of ways. Looking back, perhaps the most significant development has been the first use of the Mitra system by the Wellington branch. We now have four new mitras, namely Ian, Liša, Elizabeth and Stuart.

During the week following the mitra ceremony we transferred our meeting place from Plunket Street to new premises at 5 Cluny Avenue, where Megha,



Achala and four others are living. The new premises has the big advantage of having a separate shrine room.

Towards the end of May we held our first successful weekend retreat. Despite the fact that with seven of us, we were slightly cramped, things work-

ed out rather well on the whole. Hopefully this will be the beginning of many such retreats in the countryside. We now plan to alternate weekend retreats with single day retreats in Wellington on alternate months. It is also planned to hold a fortnight's retreat during August.

## RETREATS

### A WEEK IN THE NETHERLANDS

It is now four and a half years since two Order members first visited the Netherlands and conducted a ten day retreat. Since that pioneering effort enough interest in retreats, and the FWBO, has developed to produce one big retreat a year interspersed by several weekend retreats, as well as an anglo-Dutch retreat in London. The practical result of these activities was sometimes very difficult to see, but a one week visit in May showed that pleasing tangible effects had been taking place.

For more than a year a collection of 'friends' who had been on one or more retreats and who live around the cities of Arnhem and Nijmegen have been gathering regularly at monthly intervals for group meditation and discussion. After much exchange of letters it was decided that Upasakas Purna and Vajradaka come over in May and lead a weekend of study and meditation organised by that group. Purna is from the Auckland centre in New Zealand and is spending about six months getting to know the Order and the FWBO in Europe. Vajradaka is based at Sukhavati in London.

The first day of the weekend was mainly devoted to discussion based on a transcript of a tape called "What Meditation Really Is" given by Bhante and edited by a mitra in Auckland. This was led by Purna who led us to ask ourselves what

is meditation!

In the course of discussion we talked of the great help that what we called the 'indirect aids' to growth could give us. Such things as listening to good music, being in pleasant surroundings, helping other people and creative arts and crafts. Doing them makes definite changes within us, but then it is as if we come up against a ceiling through which we cannot go, even if we switch to another such indirect way we will yet again come up against a ceiling. Meditation practice then emerged as a way of working directly on the mind, which helped us to grow but did not have such ceilings, thereby eventually being an essential aid in bridging the gap between non-enlightenment and Enlightenment

The next day was devoted mainly to meditation and puja, which was led by Vajradaka. We talked about the prospects of the meditation group, as some people were not sure whether others wanted to continue.

It was mentioned that one's own inner urge and commitment to growth was of prime importance. From this aspiration comes the search for anything which will help in that growth. It then becomes apparent how important and useful contact with like minded people is, so



from that inner commitment, a commitment to the sangha is born.

Mention was also made that in the meditation group each person has a talent and ability in a mental and spiritual sense which rubs off when receptivity and trusting are experienced, so the coming together becomes a point of personal inspiration and support and yet further incentive to discover the latent sangha.

The group decided to carry on meeting each month with periodic weekend retreats. Some were intending to go on the Swedish retreat in the Summer.

Besides leading the activities on the weekend, Purna and Vajradaka visited 'friends' in the Netherlands who could not come on the retreat or who were too far from Arnhem to join in the group. It was inspiring to see how they too had continued their meditation and yoga practice and kept alive the spirit and effort which give them something in common with all those who are discovering the Dharma in their own way as a bridge from where they are 'to' Nirvana.

The co-ordinator for the Arnhem-Nijmegen group is: Caroline Eykman, Wichard van Pontlaarn IO9, Arnhem, Holland.

Vajradaka

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## RETREATS



### RETREATS AT PADMALOKA



21st October - 5th November, 1977  
two week men's retreat

17th December - 7th January, 1978  
three week men's retreat

For further details of both these retreats contact Pundarika.

Please note that Pundarika are looking for somewhere to hold weekend retreats. If you know of somewhere please contact Pundarika.

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## FESTIVALS & CELEBRATIONS

SANGHA DAY falls on the 27th September this year, contact your local centre for details of celebrations.

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## STOP PRESS

### DHARMACHAKRA TAPES

The correct address for Dharmachakra Tapes is 41b All Saints Green, Norwich, Norfolk. We apologise for any confusion caused by the wrong address in the last newsletter. Send your orders, or medium sized SAE for catalogue to Vajrakula.

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### PADMALOKA OPEN DAY Sunday August 21st 1977

Padmaloka Retreat Centre and Mens' Community is holding an Open Day on the above date to which everyone is invited. Refreshments etc. will be available.

The Ven. Sangharakshita will be present.

Padmaloka, Lesingham House,  
Surlingham, Norwich. Surlingham 310

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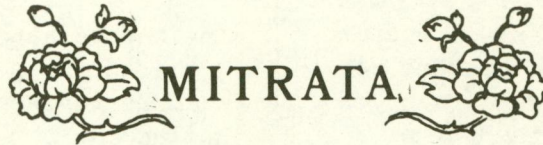
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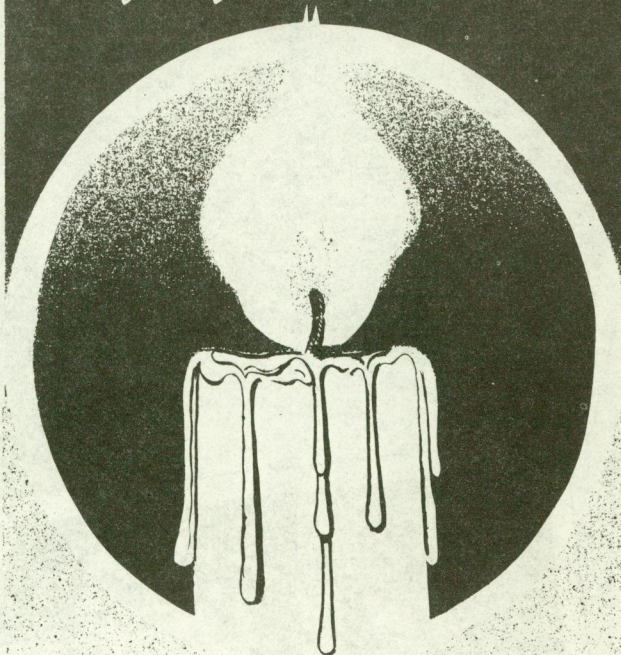
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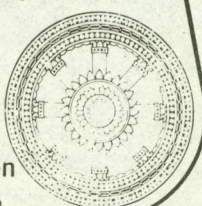
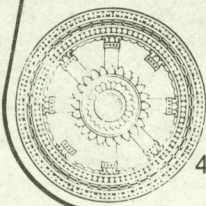
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Friends of the Western Buddhist Order  
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## About the Friends of the Western Buddhist Order

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 saw 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.



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