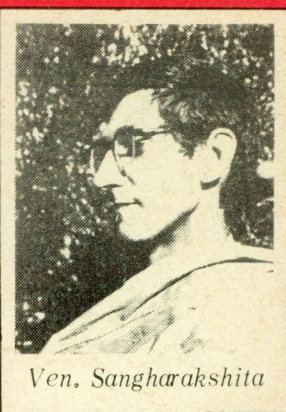


Dr. Ambedkar

THE FRIENDS OF THE WESTERN BUDDHIST ORDER NEWSLETTER 39 Price 40p



Ven. Sangharakshita



Bringing it all back home

The FWBO arrives in India

In this Issue

Birth of a Movement

Lokamitra on India

FWBO at Olympia

News Reports

Book Review

The twain shall meet

Weekly Programmes

SUKHAVATI

Monday	7.00pm	Meditation & Dharma courses (by arrangement)
Tuesday	7.00pm	Meditation and puja (varied programme)
Wednesday	7.30pm	Hatha yoga (also additional day classes - ring for details)
Thursday	7.00pm	Beginners' meditation class

MANDALA

Monday	7.00pm	Beginners' meditation course (by arrangement)
Tuesday	6.00pm	Hatha yoga
Thursday	7.00pm	Varied programme including meditation & puja. All welcome.

ARYATARA

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

AMITAYUS

15 Park Crescent Place, tel. 693971

Monday	7.15pm	Introductory evening with meditation instruction (19 George Street)
Tuesday	7.15pm	Regular meditation class
Wednesday	6.00pm & 7.30pm	Hatha yoga (by arrangement)
Thursday	7.15pm	Meditation and Buddhism course (by arrangement)

VAJRADHATU

Tuesday	7.00pm	Regular meditation and puja
Wednesday	6.30pm	Meditation course (6 weeks, by arrangement)
Thursday	7.00pm	Introductory Buddhism (talk/meditation/taped lecture)

HERUKA

Tuesday	7.30pm	Beginners' meditation class.
Wednesday	7.00pm	Tape-recorded lectures: Transformation of Life and World in 'The Sutra of Golden Light'.
Thursday	7.00pm	Beginners' meditation course.

MANCHESTER

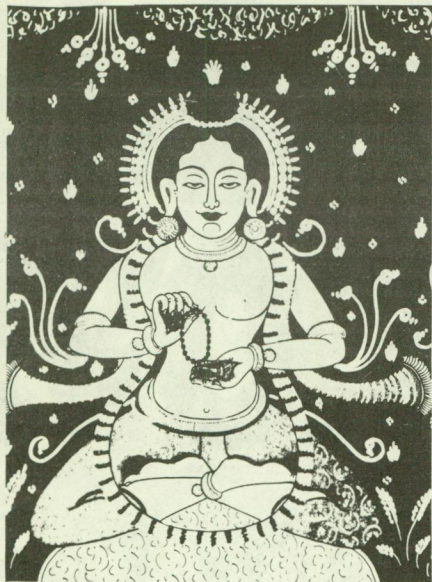
Meditation classes and Dharma courses are being held. Telephone 061-225 3372 for details.

EDINBURGH

Friends are invited to call in for meditation and Puja most nights of the week, and courses in meditation and Buddhism are being given (see report). For further details contact Upasaka Uttara.

CORNWALL

Mitras and friends are meditating at St. Austell Arts Centre every Tuesday. Contact Malcolm Webb at 2 Valley View, Trescowe, Nr Germoe, Penzanze Cornwall.



Siddhartha Gautama

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EDITORIAL

The obvious comment is, 'Taking coals to Newcastle?' What, people may ask, does the FWBO think it can do in India, the very cradle of Buddhism? For the fact is that by the time this Newsletter 'hits the stands', Lokamitra, shortly to be followed by Kularatna and Padmavajra, will be inspecting properties, renewing contacts, and generally going about the business of establishing a centre in Poona.

You would be wrong to think that this is some mad impulse: it is in many ways a continuation of the work begun back in the 'fifties by the late Dr B.R. Ambedkar, and the Ven. Sangharakshita. Many people know that over the centuries Buddhism has all but died in India. Could there be more dramatic, more poignant testimony to the universality of the principle of impermanence than that? India: native land of Gautama the Buddha, the nation once ruled entirely according to Buddhist principles by the great emperor Ashoka, the land whose very flag sports the Dharmachakra, now almost devoid of Buddhists. Certainly, the Dharma itself has not died; it has moved on to rich and new pastures. The golden flower once held before an assembly in northern India still utters its silent message – but now in Japan, in America, in England... Ethical directives originally given to the members of a village based peasant culture, still prove indispensable in the frenetic intercourse of technology-ridden urban living.

Almost twenty-two years ago, Dr Ambedkar, along with many of his followers, performed what should have been a very significant act – significant for themselves, being Untouchable, and significant for Buddhism in India – they converted from Hinduism to Buddhism. As you will learn from the following pages things simply did not turn out the way they could have, and should have. The consequence is that there are now, in Maharashtra State alone, literally millions of 'Buddhists' with almost no spiritual guidance or direction. It is among these people that we shall be working, establishing centres, teaching meditation, giving the Dharma.

Nothing arises or ceases except in dependence on conditions. The conditions according to which Buddhism died in India are many and various, and they should be tracked down and learned from. Could it be, however, that the vision beheld by Dr Ambedkar, the work accomplished by the Ven. Sangharakshita – in India and in the West –, the richness of the field in Maharashtra, and the strength and depth of commitment in the Western Buddhist Order, will provide the conditions according to which the Dharma will once more flourish and triumph, back on its native soil?

NAGABODHI



THE BIR MOVE

Dr Ambedkar

“W

hat can your Maha Bodhi Society do for Buddhism in India when you've got a Brahmin for a president?” Dr Bhim Rao Ambedkar, ex Law Minister of India, guide, leader and father-figure for Maharashtra's Untouchable population, sits at a desk in his Bombay house addressing a young English Bhikkhu—Sangharakshita. The hostility in his voice is partly habitual, the product of long years spent dealing with fierce political opposition, and partly an expression of his now-final rejection of Hinduism and all that goes with it.

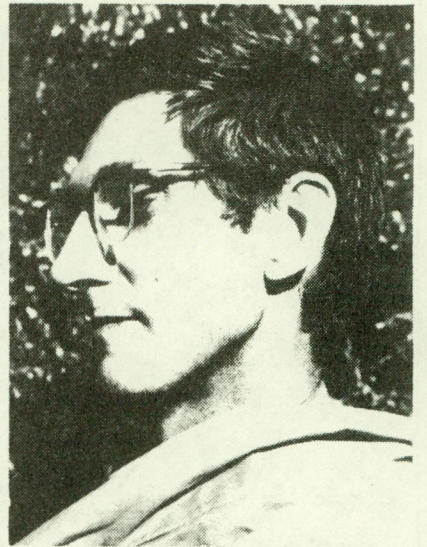
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erhaps more 'religious' than 'spiritual', an emotional man but with a strong rational streak, Dr Ambedkar spent many years trying to work *within* the Hindu system. His Hindu Code Bill, which he tried to pilot through the Indian parliament in 1951, was to have been an instrument of radical reform, reviewing and changing laws relating to the personal life of the entire Hindu population. His efforts met with outrage and abuse; he was accused of trying to break up orthodox Hindu society. He was. Although deeply attached to the Hindu religion himself, something of his English education, perhaps bringing to him an acquaintance with the principles of



BIRTH OF A MOVEMENT

Ven Sangharakshita

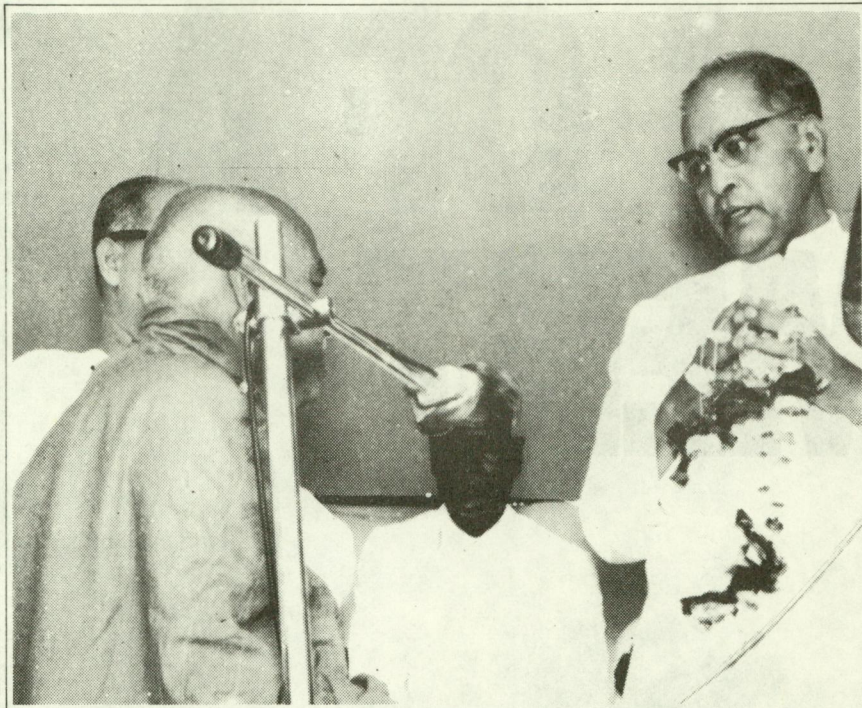


Western democratic idealism — liberty, fraternity, equality — something of his rational clarity, indeed something of his totality as a human being which recognised something to be wrong when it was, saw that there was something rotten in orthodox Hindu society: the inhuman conditions imposed upon members of the Untouchable castes. With his Bill watered down and compromised, his indignation with the cruel treatment of so many human beings still intact, he began to realise that mere legal reform was never going to provide a final answer. It was going to take some complete break with the whole system. Question: How do you stop men treating other men as Untouchable? Answer: Take the Untouchable man out of the system that designates him as Untouchable, and place him within one where no such categories exist. Dr Ambedkar intensified his study of the major world religions: Christianity, Sikhism, Islam, Buddhism . . .

The Ven Sangharakshita first came to hear of Dr Ambedkar in 1949, while staying at the Benares Hindu University and studying with the Ven Jagdish Kashyap. Already the newspapers were beginning to concern themselves with the controversy surrounding Dr Ambedkar's proposed Bill. Intrigued by reports that Dr Ambedkar and his followers were contemplating a change of religion, Bhante decided to write to him and



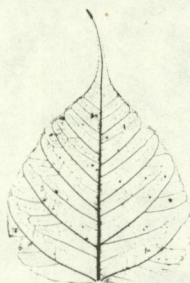
Dr Ambedkar goes for Refuge



then while staying in Bombay, to pay him a visit. He arrived to find the house bustling with a throng of delegates and local leaders of the Untouchable people, all awaiting audience with the great man. It was clear that the esteem in which they held their leader was well tinged with a reverence bounding on adulation. After a short wait Bhante was ushered into the presence -- to be greeted instantly with that cynical reference to the 'Hindu connection' right at the very 'top' of the Indian Buddhist movement. There was no denying it: Dr Shyama Prasad Mukherji, president of the Maha Bodhi Society, was a Hindu. A Brahmin! However, Bhante's insistence that such a state of affairs was as repugnant to himself as it appeared to be to his host was enough to mollify Ambedkar, and from that point on the meeting became cordial and friendly, sowing the seeds of strong mutual respect.

The two men met again some time later, in the winter of 1955. By now Dr Ambedkar, so ill that he was unable even to rise from his chair, had settled on the decision to convert to Buddhism. But how was it to be done? Who could officiate at such a ceremony? Bhante explained the

accepted practice: the Going for Refuge, the taking of the Precepts, and told him that the ceremony could be performed by any bhikku. Ambedkar immediately asked whether Bhante could and would perform the ceremony himself.

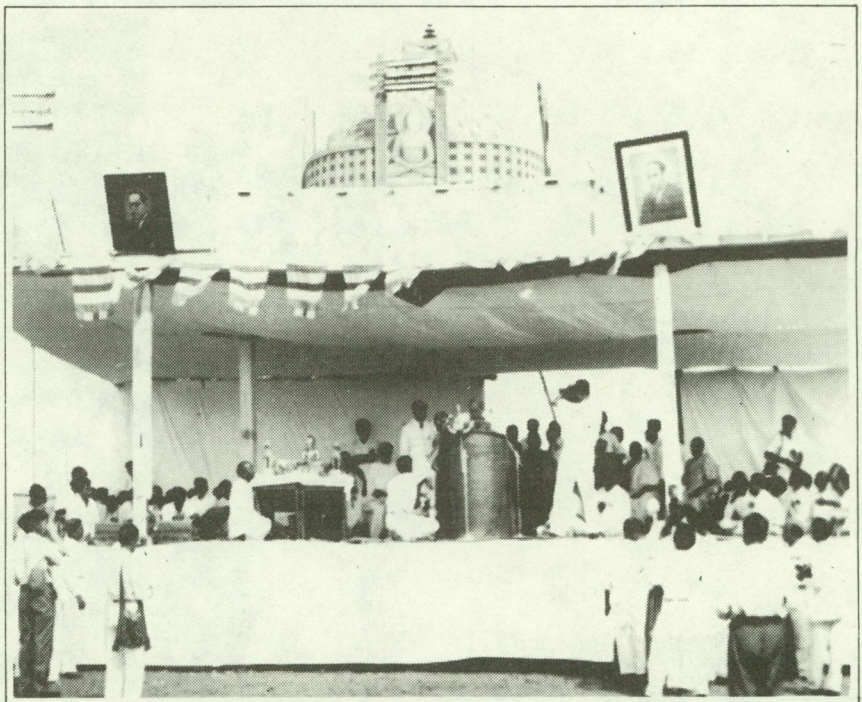


Although his friendship with the Doctor, his own anti-Brahminical leanings, as well as his status as a foreigner, which removed him completely from all connections with caste-consciousness, would have made him a most suitable officiant, Bhante's own suggestion was that the ceremony should be performed by the Ven Chandramani Maha Sthavira, the seniormost bhikku in India, thus ensuring maximum impact for the event. It was going to be very important that the Buddhist Sangha in India recognise the significance of what was taking place. Dr Ambedkar saw the sense in this and asked Bhante to give a talk to some of his followers to explain to them

all that he had just been saying -- let them know what it would mean to be Buddhists, tell them about the conversion ceremony. The meeting took place at 11 o'clock at night on a broad, windswept, open space between the tenement blocks in Worli, a working-class district of Bombay. About 2000 people came, including some of Ambedkar's top lieutenants, who were to take highly favourable reports back to headquarters. Above all, Bhante had stressed, there is no such thing as a *nominal* Buddhist. If you are going to convert to Buddhism then you must really mean it. Soon afterwards the first mass conversion took place. At the ceremony, which took place in Nagpur, Dr Ambedkar and reportedly half a million of his followers became Buddhists.

Just a few weeks later Bhante was in Delhi on tour with 57 "prominent Buddhists from border areas" and came to hear that Dr Ambedkar was in the city at the same time. He managed to persuade most of the bhikkhus and lamas on the tour to go along with him on a visit. It was important that people should know about the conversion movement, essential that the work should receive as much support and

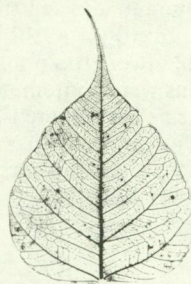
The setting for the first mass-conversion ceremony at Nagpur



encouragement from the Sangha as possible. It was a blazing hot day, and the large number of visitors dictated an outdoor meeting. To their shock they discovered Dr Ambedkar, dressed in a European-style suit, a pith hat protecting his head from the sun, literally sprawled over his desk, ill almost to the point of death. Despite the heat, despite his critical condition, he insisted on talking for two hours that afternoon, mainly in English with Bhante. There was so much to do . . . there was so little help . . . What was going to become of the Movement if he died? He was very concerned, very upset. Eventually his doctor-wife and Bhante managed to persuade him to go back indoors. That was the last time Bhante was to see him.

Just a few weeks later Bhante went to Nagpur to give a lecture as part of the mass-conversion programme. The Movement was still in its first flush of triumph and enthusiasm, and to his amazement Bhante found himself being greeted at the station by no less than 2000 people! Then came the blow. Within hours of his arrival at the home of his friend Mr

Kulkarni, a secretary from the Movement's offices ran in with the news that 'Baba Saheb' had just died. Immediate emotional reactions had to be put aside. The Movement had to be saved, guided, nurtured, and now, only six weeks after the first conversion, without its founder and leader! That night, standing on top of a rickshaw in a Nagpur park, Bhante addressed a crowd of 100,000. Candle-lit processions of ex-Untouchable Buddhists had converged on the site in total silence. Silence in an Indian crowd is so uncommon as to feel eerie. Now, as Bhante spoke, the feelings burst.



Everywhere people were crying, rolling on the ground and wailing. Bhante's message was clear and simple: this could not be the end. The Movement had to go on. In the next four days he gave 35 talks at different localities. On the day preceding his departure for Calcutta he gave *twelve* full-length lectures,

beginning at eight in the morning and finishing at two the following morning! Meanwhile, in Bombay, the Ven Ananda Kaushalyana — the only bhikkhu apart from Bhante fully to win the trust of Dr Ambedkar — was doing similar work. Lectures were continuing, conversions were taking place: the Movement was surviving.

Over the following years Bhante was to divide his time between his work at the Triyana Vardhana Vihara in Kalimpong and the ex-Untouchable Buddhists, down in Maharashtra. Among the new Buddhists he gave lectures and seminars, taught meditation, and officiated at weddings, name-giving ceremonies and, of course, conversions — giving *diksha* to about 100,000 people in all. Reaction to this work from the Hindu population was hostile in the extreme. He would be booed and hooted in the streets by gangs of right-wing caste Hindu youths. CID vans were ever present at his meetings. "Make sure you get every word," he would say to the detectives busy taking notes, "because this is about the Dharma, and the more people that read it the better!" Hindu reaction was not the only problem.

*The Ven. Sangharakshita with
ex-Untouchable women in Poona*



The power vacuum created by the death of Dr Ambedkar was creating a rich field for rivalry within the Movement itself, rivalries that were to dog and almost cripple the Movement right up to the present day. Putting forth the serpent-wisdom Bhante managed to avoid quarrels and confined his own involvement to the purely spiritual aspect of the work. Certainly the Movement had its social and political side, but his feeling was that the energy involved, the social uplift and sense of liberation, was so tremendous that it seemed as though it could, if continued indefinitely, carry these people to Enlightenment itself. It was a deeply human Movement and so could not but be going in the right direction.

The Movement's progress was also being hindered by a general lack of support and guidance from the Buddhist Sangha. There were other monks about but somehow they still failed to recognise the significance of what was going on around them. Some even appeared to be a little stand-offish. In a nutshell it was as if, for many of them, their commitment to the Dharma was not sufficient to cope with the situation. There seemed to be no one with the

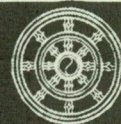


knowledge of the Dharma or the skill to apply it, no one with the vision to grasp the wonderful opportunity that was presenting itself. Bhante's own wish, to see local viharas springing up throughout the region — in the manner of our FWBO centres — could not be realised. There was no money, and there was no one to turn to for it; the ex-Untouchables were too poor and the caste Hindus were contemptuous. Now, 14 years later, there is still very little; just a small vihara on the site of the first mass-conversion and a few local meeting halls.

This is why the Ven Sangharakshita does not feel that his years in England have been at the expense of work he could have been doing in India. The FWBO is now in a position to go out there, funded from the West, to carry on the work that began in 1956. He envisages a net-

work of viharas spreading to wherever there are ex-Untouchable Buddhists, as well as to the holy places. The Western Buddhist Order is well suited to the task: Dr Ambedkar himself saw the need for a 'new' kind of bhikkhu — educated, in touch with the modern world, and free to act, free to go out and do Dharma work. There is no reason why the general lines on which the FWBO operates in the West should not be valid out there. Bhante also hopes to see us doing something on the material plane. Especially he would like to see us supporting a medical team to work among the poor people. Before long there will no doubt be Indian Order members, but for the time being there seem to be no problems regarding the acceptability of English Order members. Neither Bhante nor Lokamitra has ever experienced any difficulties in this respect. Indeed, English people may be better able to avoid the 'gravitational pull' of involvement in political rivalry. Indian Order members will, of course, have the advantage of knowing the conditions intimately. Not only that, but the emotional positivity and spontaneity of the ex-Untouchables is going to be a very welcome addition to the overall psychic balance of the Order and of the FWBO as a whole.

Nagabodhi



When Lokamitra flew off to India, on Sangha day last year, he had no idea what would be the consequences of his visit. He certainly did not expect that less than a year later he would be on his way back out there to start up a centre of the FWBO. Here he speaks about his time in India of his contact with the ex-Untouchable Buddhists, and suggests something of what lies ahead.

India a new beginning

This was not your first visit to India, was it?

I went out there in 1969 for seven months, though not as a Buddhist. I spent some time in the North, some time in Goa, and about three months travelling around the South.

Did you think that you would ever go back?

I thought I would at the time – although later I had my doubts. I wanted to go and practise Hatha Yoga with Mr Iyengar; for three years this was on my mind, but owing to commitments here I was not able to do it. When I finally came to plan this visit, I thought I'd take the opportunity to make a pilgrimage at the same time.

What else did you see yourself doing in India?

Well, in the two months before I went I asked Bhante whether there was anything I could do for him in India.

I did want to contact Dharpo Rimpoche because I had had a dream about him and have some quite strong feelings for him, but I knew nothing really about Buddhism among the ex-Untouchables, or what Bhante did there – except what you can read on the back of some of our publications.

So at first I saw myself as going primarily for the Yoga, and then, as the time got nearer, the pilgrimage took on more importance. Now, when I look back on my travels, they seem to divide into three parts. Firstly there was a month spent travelling around the North: to Sarnath, Bodh Gaya, Nalanda, Kalimpong. Then there were 11 weeks spent in Poona with a little bit of time in Bombay and Ahmedabad – among ex-Untouchable Buddhists. Lastly there were seven weeks spent at Sravasti on a sort of retreat. Sravasti is the place of the Jeta Grove, where the Buddha spent more than half His rainy seasons and gave more than half of His teachings.

How did it feel to be making a pilgrimage to the Holy places?

The pilgrimage had been on my mind for three or four months before I went, and actually thinking in terms of going on a pilgrimage was having an effect on me. We call ourselves Buddhists, we're putting the Buddha's teachings into practice to the best of our ability, every day we chant "*Buddham Saranam gacchami*" going to these places





associated with the life of the Buddha meant a tremendous amount to me. I remember arriving in Sarnath, the first Holy place I went to, and it was raining. I thought, "Oh no, what a drag."

But then I realised that this is how the Buddha must have experienced Sarnath, because He was teaching there during the rainy season. I was so happy to be there. It was a very peaceful place. I certainly picked up a very strong feeling — which has obviously been added to by the devotion of all the Buddhists who have been there since His time. Around Sarnath and Bodhi Gaya there are now Chinese temples, Tibetan temples, Ladhaki, Burmese and Thai temples . . . It's so inspiring to see such devotional people, especially the Tibetans.

You decided to take the Anagarika ordination just before leaving for India. Could you say something about this?

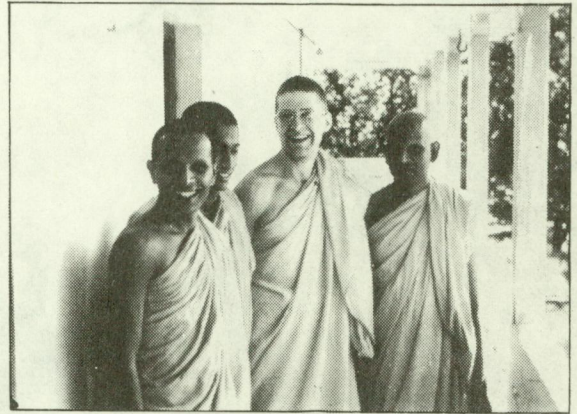
I wanted to be free out there and to devote all my energies to what I was doing. It was a very big step for me. I didn't know how long it would last — I was open-minded about that — but for the time being I was an Anagarika: that's how I felt and that is what I wanted to be. Out in India I felt very free and very much at home. People do respect you if you wear the yellow robe. They know that you're a 'monk', that you're not interested in mundane affairs as ends in themselves and that you are not too interested in worldly life. People give you a lot of space because of this; they don't impose themselves on you as much as they could do. It took me a little time to get used to being in robes among other Buddhists—being treated in quite a reverential way by lay Buddhists and being accepted by Bhikkus as a brother monk.

How did you come to make contact with the ex-Untouchable Buddhists?

Surata and I had been up in Kalimpong visiting some of Bhante's friends, including Dhardo Rimpoche. We were on our way to Poona and stopped in Nagpur where we hoped to meet Kulkarni, an ex-Brahmin Buddhist who used to help Bhante a lot, arranging lectures and translating for him. We went to see him and discovered that it was the twenty-first anniversary of the first 'mass conversion' of Untouchables to Buddhism. The ex-Untouchables are people who have converted to Buddhism within the last 22 years. Most of them converted for social and political reasons, because their status as Untouchables was just unbearable: inhuman. Dr Ambedkar, the former Law Minister and leader of the Untouchables at that time, who had been working for their welfare for many, many years, had eventually come to the conclusion that conversion to Buddhism was the only way in which they could ever change the situation. They were *untouchable*, they were outside caste in India, they were the lowest of the low, and even though the laws had been changed, still they were having a very hard time, still they were being discriminated against. Ambedkar converted to Buddhism in October 1956, along with 500,000 followers, and it was the anniversary of this that was being celebrated. We felt that we simply couldn't miss such an opportunity so we went along. The crowds must have been at least half a mile thick and after struggling through them for about 20 minutes we arrived at a massive arena just packed full of people. Being in robes I was immediately escorted right

up to the front, to the Bhikku's platform. I knew then that I was going to be asked to give a talk and thought of running out quickly! But at about 11.45 that night I did give a short talk. You can imagine the situation: I'd been travelling for about three days, I knew almost nothing about the ex-Untouchables, about Ambedkar, and here I was, a pupil of Sangharakshita who had done so much for these people, meant to give a talk. I really felt like I'd been thrown in at the deep end. I just said something about Ashoka and Ambedkar being two of the greatest men in Indian history — both being Buddhists. I went on from there to encourage them in their practice, and greeted them on behalf of British Buddhists. That, then, was the first contact I had!

The next day, in the afternoon, I went off alone,



With Bhikkhus in Sarnath



Mr and Mrs Maheshkar

back to the *Diksha* ground, where the meeting had been held and which had been given by the government to the Nagpur Buddhists because of its historical significance. I just wandered around. I briefly met the Ven Ananda Kaushalyana. I talked to quite a few people and very quickly got an idea of what was happening. I realised that the so-called Buddhist politicians are very strong and that the ex-Untouchables there were doing very little for themselves. There were, for instance, a monk and some lay people just fasting to death to get, I think, the name of a certain college changed and to get more rights for ex-Untouchables in education. This is all right, but I got the feeling that Buddhism there had become completely identified with politics.

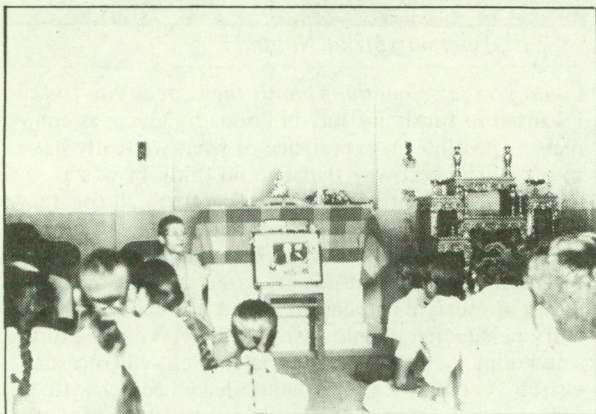
Later that night we got the train to Poona. The



first Buddhist we met there was the man who drove our rickshaw from the station. Three days later I met Mr and Mrs Maheshkar. Bhante had given me the address and asked us to call in on them. Again, I knew very little: I gathered that Mrs Maheshkar had run a Buddhist association for women that Bhante had founded, and that Mr Maheshkar had done most of the interpreting for Bhante in Poona, and that they had both been very close to Bhante at that time. That night they took Dhammadinna and me to a local vihara — which Bhante had in fact opened. Some local people came in, some of whom remembered Bhante, and we talked a bit about the Western Buddhist Order and about Bhante. From then on Mr Maheshkar arranged quite a few visits to other local meeting halls. So during the



On the Poona retreat



Dharma study

first month in Poona I gave quite a few talks and met more and more people. We also took a day retreat, which was quite successful.

What sort of picture were you forming of the ex-Untouchable Movement?

I was quite shocked that people could call themselves Buddhists and not meditate! (*Laughs*) I realised that very little had been done for them since Bhante left. Basically they are still a 'group' — they are 'ex-Untouchables', they are 'Mahars', most of them, and they still think of themselves in this way. There is little or no conception of Buddhism as a spiritual path so far as most people are concerned.

Why not?

Partly because of their original reasons for converting to

Buddhism: for social and political ends, and partly because they haven't had any more real guidance. There have been a number of Thai monks, and one or two of them have done quite good work, but on the whole very little has been done. I went to one or two meetings and, to be honest, I found the monks patronising and really just encouraging the people to become 'lay Buddhists' in the degenerate sense . . . no idea of Going for Refuge, no real spiritual practice . . . I was horrified in a way. Here were millions of Buddhists with almost nothing being done for them. Religion is very important to people in India: maybe they are not all going to meditate, maybe they are not all going to lead 'spiritual' lives, but they do want to know what it means to be a Buddhist. They want to know how it differs from their old Hindu beliefs and superstitions. Among that number of people there are undoubtedly going to be a few who have a thirst for something higher. Another thing is that some of the ex-Untouchable Buddhist politicians make it very difficult for any real Dharma work to be done. On the whole they are not favourable to meetings being held except under their patronage — in case they lose their influence. So some of these people certainly do want to develop, but they have been finding it very difficult. They have been studying, for example, but when we studied the transcripts of some of Bhante's lectures, at the retreat I took later on, I've never seen such joy in people's faces. The Dharma was really brought to life for them. They have been studying the Dharma for all these years but I really wondered what it had done for them. They haven't had any real guidance, any real spiritual communication.

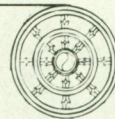
What particularly attracts you towards working in India?

Well, I very much enjoy working with the people, being with them. I like India. The people I was with there were very free and open. There's so much that we can do there.

Are there other reasons, apart from sheer numbers, that give the situation so much potential?

Firstly it is a matter of numbers. There are over 20 million Buddhists, mainly concentrated in Maharashtra. Secondly, they do consider themselves to be Buddhists, so we don't have to 'seduce' people to come along to classes with clever advertising and so on. They are open, at least on a preliminary level, to the Buddha's teaching. Of course, some of them are not, especially among the politicians, but they haven't had a chance to understand what Buddhism is all about. They still often associate the more spiritual aspects with Hinduism. They became converted in order to get away from their status as Untouchables. They were fed up with Hinduism. They don't want to know about Hinduism at all; they are very, very suspicious of anything that might smack of Hinduism, and you can't blame them at all.

Thirdly, I think that traditional Buddhist approaches are not going to work among them. They are living 2500 years after the Buddha. India is very different now. I don't think that Buddhism, especially as it has evolved in South-





east Asia, especially in Thailand and Sri Lanka, with its debased distinction between the monks and the lay people, is going to help these people at all. I think that our approach of having people who are Upasakas, for want of a better term, but who are devoting everything they can to the Dharma, to putting the Dharma into practice in their lives, taking full responsibility for their lives in a spiritual sense, is really just what they need. Basically I think that we have three things to offer. (1) Energy – which I felt to be lacking in a lot of people I met; (2) an attitude of adaptability to conditions as they are now; and (3) Spiritual Community. The Dharma will not take off out there until there are Indian members of a Spiritual Community practising together, communicating – until through their own experience of trying to lead the Dharma life they can see for themselves what is appropriate for them.

What is the first thing that you will do when you go back?

I'll be getting somewhere to live – somewhere also where I can hold at least small classes – in Poona, which is the place where Bhante had most contact. People remember him very well indeed. On the retreat it was like seeing shoots which hadn't had any nourishment since he left coming to life again. Now, since I left Poona, about 25 people have a Sunday morning meeting. They meditate and chat together, discuss themes from *Mitrata*. First of all I'll see what is happening with this group and start to work more intensely with people in meditation and study. That way I'll begin to see whether there are any who might be moving towards ordination.

What sort of difficulties do you see in the situation?

Well there are some factors that will have an effect on things. There is a large 'ethnic' Buddhist population without there being any real Spiritual Community. Most people get married and live in families, have to support families. So I'm going to be dealing mainly with householders. It does seem though that most people, because of their family situation, seem to be quite psychologically healthy. They are very warm to each other, very positive in that way. But housing conditions are by no means ideal. Most families live in one room. This makes obvious difficulties with regard to meditation. Some people, at the end of my stay, realised that they would have to convert their whole families to meditation in order to meditate themselves, and this they were determined to do. But there are these local meeting halls – viharas – so they may be able to use these for a period every day. Another factor is the poverty there. People have to work long hours for very little pay, so they don't get very much time. Obviously, at some point we're going to have to get into Right Livelihood schemes. This will be hard to get started over there. Jobs are hard to come by. People won't be prepared to leave their jobs for something else unless the risks are very low. I also found it quite difficult to get people to come along to something regularly. I gave a series of six meditation classes: two a week for three weeks. I also led two study groups, one on *Mind Reactive and Creative* and one on the *Mangala*

Sutta. The attendance would fluctuate quite a bit, but otherwise they were very successful and stimulated people. I certainly learned a lot about how to work in the future.



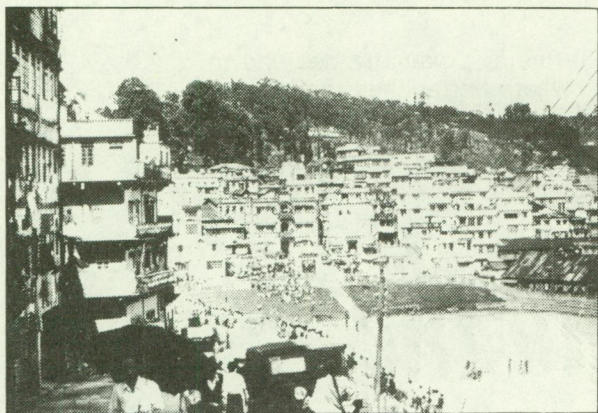
With Dharmajyoti at Nalanda

Could you say something about the retreat you took?

I wanted to finish my stay in Poona by giving as complete as possible an experience of what we really have to offer. The best way that I could think of was a retreat. It was quite difficult getting them all together, partly because people had no previous experience of such a thing and were a bit sceptical, and partly because on the whole they had not practised meditation and didn't appreciate its benefits. I had quite a bit of difficulty persuading people that it had to take place outside Poona, had to be residential and closed to casual visitors. I could see that it would have been chaotic otherwise! I managed to get my points across, and three days before the retreat was due to start we found a place 25 miles outside Poona. It lasted six days and had a very strong effect on the people there – and on me too. It was one of the most enjoyable retreats I've ever been on. They were new to study and meditation; it really brought the Dharma to life for them. It was a joy to be with them. In the evenings we would have a short meditation and then a long session of chanting. This is the main practice of most Buddhists who have any spiritual practice in Maharashtra, and it is very important to them. There are some very good chanters among them. They are very devotional; we didn't have anyone holding back.

What do you expect to be able to achieve out there?

It depends on how many Order members we have. Mr Gangawane, the secretary of the Ex-Sramanera Association (whose members have all been on a seven- or



Kalimpong main square



Market in Poona

fifteen-day course run by the Thai monks), reckons that we will revolutionise things out there. Eventually we will provide situations in which people can develop: Right Livelihood projects, schools – there's so much we can do: anything could happen. I hardly dare think of two or three years' time! As I've said before I think that quite soon it could become the fastest growing area of our activities. Certainly it will feed back a lot to other parts of the Sangha.

Will you be spending all your time in Poona?

Not at all. As we become established in Poona I expect to be doing more and more travelling especially in Maharashtra, which is the centre of the conversion movement, and Ahmedabad.

Why Ahmedabad?

Well, Bhante did quite a bit of work there, and during my stay I spent a week in Ahmedabad, at the invitation of the Gujarat Buddhist Society. There are two groups of Buddhists there. There are about 5000 Maharashtran Buddhists, and there are about 25 families of Gujarati Buddhists. In some ways the Gujarati Buddhists seemed much more positive in their approach to the Dharma than most people I met in Maharashtra. Most of the men practise meditation regularly. I really felt that they were thirsty for the Dharma and doing something about it. They have a magazine and they publish quite a few books. I think that the reason that they are like this is because they are not emotionally tied up with Dr Ambedkar. He was a Mahar, ie, belonged to the Mahar

caste, and came from Maharashtra, so in a way the Maharashtran Buddhists did whatever he said: when he converted to Buddhism they converted to Buddhism; but the Gujarati Buddhists, on the whole, didn't respond like that. They only converted when they felt, individually, that they wanted to become Buddhists. I intend to visit them as regularly as possible – and they are keen for as much contact as they can get. I think we could have a centre there quite soon.

Are you expecting to do any work with the Hindu population?

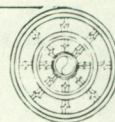
More caste Hindus are becoming open to Buddhism, especially intellectuals. They see the Buddha as one of the greatest Indians, if not the greatest – especially from the rational and philosophical point of view. They have great respect for him and, hopefully, we will have contact with these people. But for the moment, all I see in front of me are the ex-Untouchables in Poona and Ahmedabad.

How long are you expecting to be out there?

Well, I'm thinking in terms of five years – but really I'm making an indefinite commitment. It is important that there should be continuity, and I have made the commitment to see that there is continuity. They are very excited about what is to happen. We can act as a catalyst: we can provide situations in which Spiritual Community can develop – after which they will be able to do more for themselves. They are beginning to realise that Buddhism is something that can be lived, that is meaningful. They did have faith in the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha before, and they did have a deep conviction, but since Bhante left India, it seems that they have never been given the situation or the guidance through which this faith could come to life – until now.



A Dharma meeting in Ahmedabad





Towards the end of his stay in India, Lokamitra decided to spend a few weeks in retreat. Where better than at the Jeta Grove?

A retreat at the Jeta Grove

My last seven weeks in India were spent at the *Jetavana* (Jeta Grove) which Anathapindaka, the wealthy merchant from nearby Sravasti, purchased for the use of the Buddha and His disciples. Bhante had asked me, if I had time, to visit the Ven Sangharatana Nayaka Maha Thera who lived there. I was keen to do a retreat at a place associated with the life of the Buddha, because at that time I did not know when, if ever, I would get another chance, and Sravasti by all accounts was the most peaceful of the holy places.

I had felt the need for a retreat for some time. I had not done a long one alone for almost four years, and during those four years I had been working almost continually at Pundarika in administration, fund-raising, and Dharma work. In India much had happened to me which I needed time to absorb—especially the situation, so full of potential, in which I found myself with the ex-Untouchable Buddhists, and also the six weeks of intensive Yoga practice with Mr Iyengar in Poona. Being in robes had added a new dimension to my commitment to the Three Jewels. Although I had considered myself a 'full-timer' for the last several years, wearing robes was a declaration to that effect to all and sundry, and it made me intensely aware of those areas of myself that were

not integrated into my Going for Refuge.

However I was not quite sure how things would turn out at Sravasti. I had learned from experience never to pre-judge or rely on a situation in India. The Ven Sangharatana had replied to a letter of mine, saying that I was welcome to stay at his vihara for a week, but it was a busy time being the height of the pilgrimage season. I was determined to try and do a retreat at Sravasti and if necessary find alternative accommodation, if that was possible. But I had no idea what the place was like. Would it really be swarming with pilgrims and tourists? Was I just wasting my time? Would I have been better off doing a retreat in Wales? After all, Bhante had warned me, before I left England, that it was very difficult, if not impossible, to get away from people and noise in India.

It was in this state of mind and hot, weary, and filthy from 24 hours' travelling that I arrived at Sravasti on the afternoon of Sunday, 15th January. As the bus sped along the narrow road for Balrampur, the nearest town, scattering the bullock carts and cows, I could see across the flat rice fields the yellow pagoda of the Chinese temple. Gradually the Jetavana came fully into sight and also what was obviously Sri Lankaramaya, the vihara which the

Ven Sangharatana was building. I was the only one to get off the bus to walk the 400 yards to Sri Lankaramaya, and this was an encouraging sign. I met the Ven Sangharatana, was given a room, and after explaining my purpose, was told that I could stay as long as I liked. He was pleased, he said, to have someone meditating and studying there, using the place as it should be used. I spent the rest of the afternoon wandering round the Jetavana, almost floating around: no more travelling on Indian trains and buses for seven weeks; relieved to have found a place where I could do a retreat; so grateful to be at this place where the Buddha spent so much time; so delighted to be in such an ideal spot. How often one reads in the Pali Canon, "Thus have I heard: once the Blessed One was dwelling near Sravasti, in the Jeta Grove, at Anathapindaka's Park . . ." And here I was, not just visiting, but staying at this place where the Buddha spent so much time and gave so many teachings. He is supposed to have spent 25 rainy seasons here, and 80% of the Pali Suttas were given here: suttas like the Mangala Sutta, the Karaniya-Metta Sutta. It was here that the cruel Angulimala, who was on his way to complete his garland of 1000 fingers by killing his own mother, was con-



verted by the Buddha. It was here that the Buddha was cared for by disciples like Anathapindaka and Visakha, Migara's mother. It was here that Prasenajit, king of the mighty kingdom of Kosala, would come to seek His advice.

Sravasti, the ancient capital of Kosala, is situated between Lucknow and the Nepalese border. All that now remains are the mud banks which cover what must have been the walls and which extend for three and a half miles. Inside the walls is just scrub except for three ruined buildings. Firstly there is a Jain stupa. Sravasti is sacred to the Jains because the third Jain Tirthankara is supposed to have been born there. Before the Buddha came to Sravasti, king Prasenajit and most of the citizens were Jains. The other two buildings are said to be Anathapindaka's house, including the treasury out of which he must have paid Prince Jeta all that gold, and a stupa said to be built over Angulimala's remains.

About a third of a mile to the southwest is the Jetavana, a delightful grove forming a rather irregular oval shape, approximately 300 yards by 500 yards. Scattered all over the grove are Bel trees and Bodhi trees and the stone remains of a number of stupas and viharas. The most important of these is Gandhakuti, where the Buddha spent most of his time. The grove is very well kept by the Government of India, with many flowerbeds.

There are only three buildings in the vicinity, besides a few scattered mud and straw huts. Firstly there is Sri Lankaramaya, the only place where pilgrims can stay. Secondly there is a Burmese temple. This was built early in the century by a Burmese monk. When he died, he left it in the care of two young Burmese brothers, one of whom was then a monk. However both are now married with families, and along with a few Indian families they inhabit the temple. It is so sad to see a temple at such a place being used, or rather misused, in such a way. Thirdly there is a Chinese temple with its grounds jutting into the east side of the Jetavana. It consists of a nine-storeyed bright yellow pagoda, a shrine room, and residential quarters. The last Chinese monk died over a year ago, and the temple

is now under lock and key. However the police did not get in quickly enough, because apart from the shrine room, the whole building has been ransacked, and many images and ritual objects stolen. Trained as I have been to look out for empty properties and potential centres, I could not help bemoaning the fact that here stood an empty temple in perhaps the most suitable of the pilgrimage places. And something like this will not happen again.



Angulimala

It was certainly the most peaceful and least spoilt holy place that I visited. There were no tourist shops or traders lying in wait for the pilgrims. There were two or three old female beggars who would drag themselves along to the Jetavana when a coachload of pilgrims arrived, but they usually got there just as the coach was leaving. There is a main road a few hundred yards away, but apart from the hourly buses and occasional lorries, the only traffic consists of bullock carts. Three quarters of a mile away there is a village, and occasionally a radio was played through loudspeakers thus shattering the peace of the Jetavana.

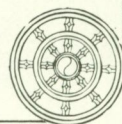
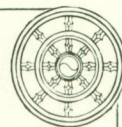
The Ven Sangharatana came to Sravasti in 1968 after retiring as the secretary of the Maha Bodhi Society. He came to carry out the wishes of his teacher, Anagarika Dharmapala, who wanted his dis-

ciples to continue his work of restoring the holy places so that they were worthy of their history and suitable for pilgrims to visit. When he came to Sravasti, the Jetavana was just jungle and uninhabited apparently by dacoits and jackals. Its present state owes much to the perseverance of the Ven Sangharatana. He has been building Sri Lankaramaya for a few years and reckons that he can complete it at the present rate within five years. The main outstanding work is the shrine room and the stupa which will surmount the building. Work is slow because money is slow in coming in, and building materials are often hard if not impossible to obtain.

The first evening I was there he told me much about Anagarika Dharmapala and communicated a very strong feeling of the latter, especially his total dedication to spreading the Dharma. What a pity that the spiritual dynamism of Dharmapala has all but vanished from India!

The Ven Sangharatana is very much as Bhante describes him in *The Thousand-Petalled Lotus*. He is very straightforward and does not miss an opportunity to ridicule superstition and belief in God. He did seem to have had quite a positive effect on the local educated elite. At the same time he is very warm and generous. The local people know that they can come to him if they are ill or if they injure themselves, and many of the sweets with which the Sinhalese pilgrims present him go to the local children. He was very kind and generous to me, seeing that I had everything I needed, plus occasional Sinhalese delicacies. He still remembers very clearly the time when Bhante and Buddharakshita arrived at Sarnath to ask for ordination, and even today he is still amazed that, when refused, they just walked off into the May sun.

Most mornings and evenings I would join him and the young Nepalese sramanera for puja. I was struck by his very strong devotion to the Buddha. It was clearly this and his feelings for Dharmapala that gave him the inspiration and energy to do what he was doing, instead of ending his days in comparative luxury in Sri Lanka. He was very



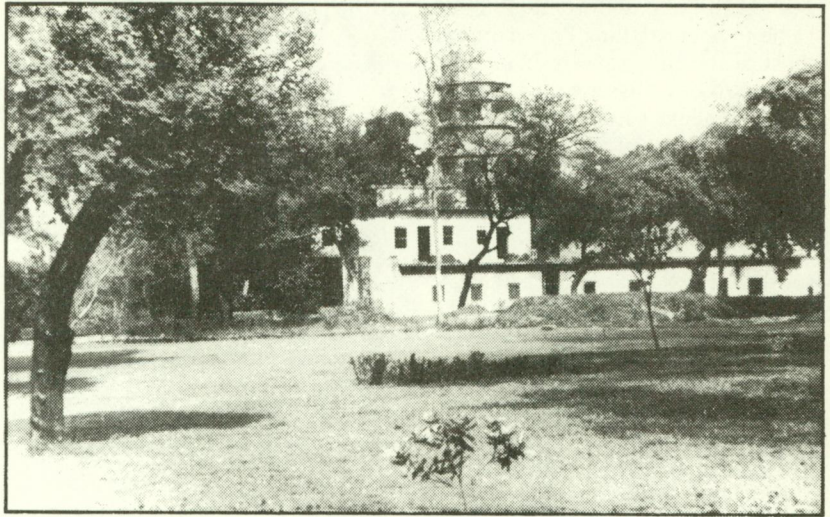
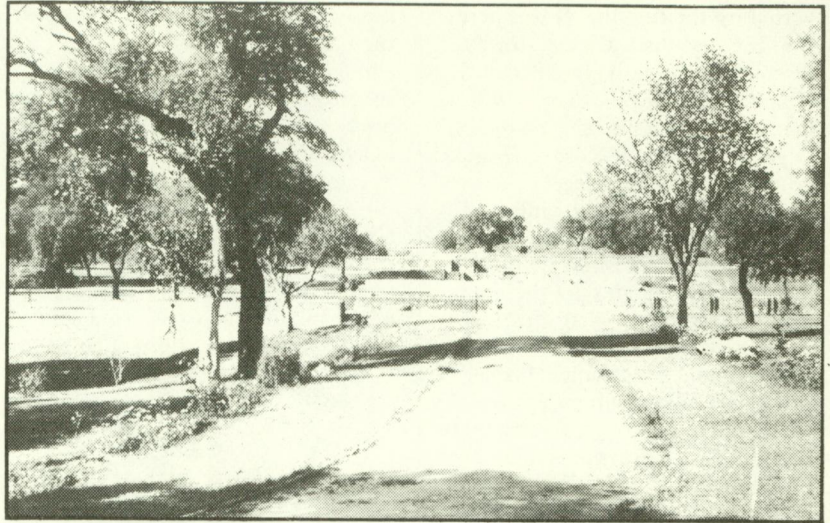
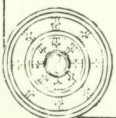


much appreciated by Sinhalese pilgrims, as one of the few Sinhalese bhikkus doing anything really constructive to help the Buddha-Sasana.

Because Sravasti is a little out of the way, and because it is not mentioned in the *Mahaparinibbana Sutta* as one of the centres of pilgrimage, there were not too many pilgrims. Sometimes there would be, at the very most, two or three coachloads a day. But sometimes quite a few days would go by when there were no coaches and a few pilgrims would come in twos and threes. The pilgrims came from all Buddhist countries and were quite different. The Japanese came in their air-conditioned coaches, wearing dust masks and very elaborate and bright kesas, and usually spent as little time as possible, hurrying on to the next port of call. Sinhalese and Thais would usually come in coaches but occasionally in very small groups. When they came in coaches they would usually stay for a few hours and bring their lunches with them, already cooked. They would always feed us along with the monks in their own party. The only time I had difficulty avoiding eating meat in India was when I was with other Buddhists. The Nepalese and Tibetan parties would usually come in battered old coaches and arrive late in the evening. They were the most colourful of the pilgrims, although also the noisiest and dirtiest. They would swarm noisily into the vihara, quickly appropriating the most sheltered corners for their families to sleep and eat in. In no time at all they had their stoves set up and a meal prepared. They would usually stay a night or two. I would rise soon after 4.00 am to get in a couple of hours of meditation before others in the vihara stirred. But when Nepalese and Tibetan parties were there, I was always woken up by them!

The Buddhist pilgrims, whatever their nationality, would always show great respect for the Jetavana, but the government officials, not being Buddhists, were

temperamental and could at times make things a little difficult for the pilgrims.



Top; The Jeta Grove. Bottom The Chinese Pagoda.

Many Hindus would also visit the Jetavana, especially on Sundays. They would bring their transistor radios with them and leave a trail of rubbish behind them. Some admittedly came to pay respects to the Buddha, thinking Him to have been an incarnation of Vishnu. To many Hindus, the more gods around (and as an incarnation of Vishnu, the Buddha was of course a god), the better, because the more gods they can pray to, the more likely it is that their prayers will be answered, or so they think.

As I have said Sravasti is also sacred to the Jains. In the Pali Canon there are many episodes depicted in which Jains would try to make things difficult for the Buddha and His monks. Six hundred yards from the Jetavana is a stupa commemorating the 'Twin Miracle', in which the Buddha outdid the Jains

in a display of miracles. Quite often before 8.00 am, when it could still be quite chilly, I would see walking past the vihara a number of Jain ascetics, always totally naked. They were always quite old men and obviously suffered from the cold. And they were followed by a number of seemingly younger women, all in white.

Although by no means a solitary retreat, I was able to keep up my practice of meditation and study, very rarely disturbed by events happening elsewhere in the vihara. The Ven Sangharatana had given me a room which was to the side and away from the centre of activity. Much of the day I would spend in the Jetavana itself, meditating, wandering, sitting, or writing. Most days I would spend half an hour to an hour cleaning around *Ananda Bohdi*. This was a tree

planted, according to a Sinhalese text, at the time of the Buddha. The local people were used to the Buddha being there, and others used to turn up at Sravasti during the rains, expecting the Buddha to be there, and all were disappointed when He was not. So they asked Ananda what to do. He passed this

on to the Buddha who instructed Maha Moggallana (because of his psychic powers) to go to Bodh Gaya and get a sapling from the original Bodhi Tree. It was planted and the Buddha spent a night meditating near it, thus dedicating it, and since then it has been an object of veneration by pilgrims. Every evening as

the sun went down I would sit at Gandhakuti (Perfumed Chamber) where the Buddha spent most of his time in the Jetavana. I felt so fortunate, so privileged. "Buddham Saranam Gacchami" took on a new dimension that has enriched my practice since then.

Visit to the Ven Dhardo Rimpoche

These days it is not easy for a westerner to get up to Kalimpong. One way and another Lokamitra and Surata managed it — there to have a truly memorable meeting with one of Bhante's greatest friends and teachers...



Surata and I arrived in Kalimpong after spending two weeks at Sarnath, Bodh Gaya, Nalanda, and Rajagriha. We stayed at Dharmodaya Vihara, now run by Shri Bhaichand Pradhan, who used to help Bhante with much of his work in Kalimpong. We visited Bhante's old vihara, which has now been sold, and paid our respects to the Ven Prajna-Aloka, a Tibetan who took the Sramanera ordination from Bhante. Through meeting people who had known Bhante well during his time in India we got a very strong feeling for that part of his life, of which most of us in the West have no experience at all. And with those who had known him best, we immediately felt strong bonds of brotherhood. This was especially the case with the Ven Prajna-Aloka.

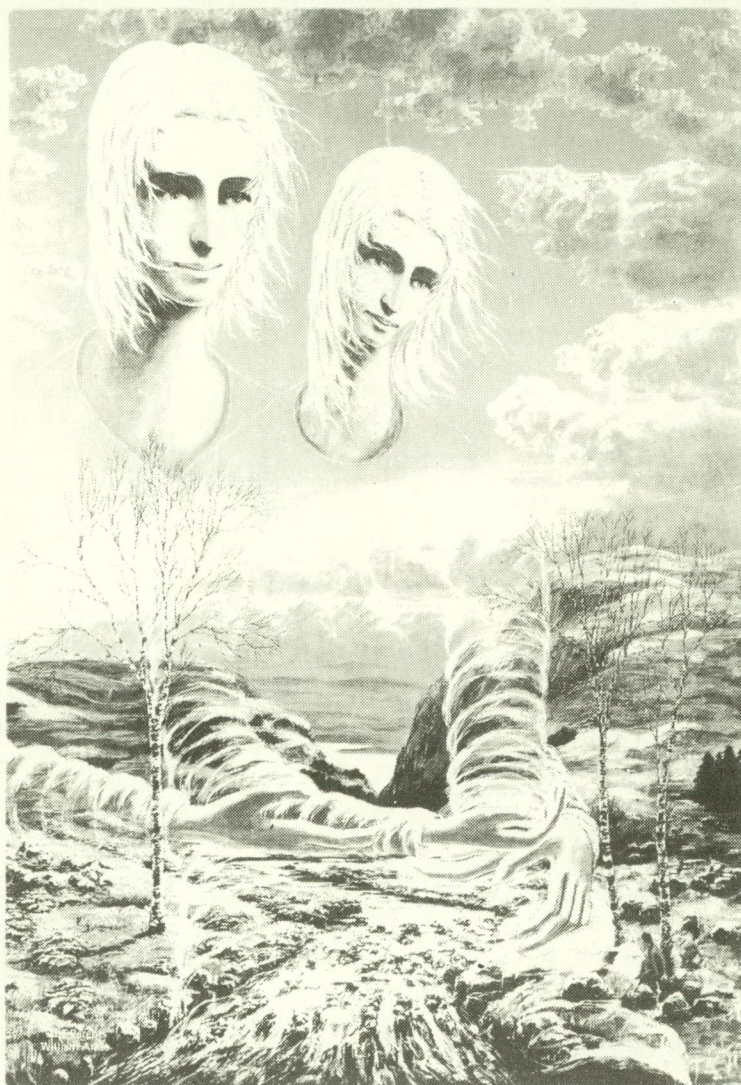
My main reason for visiting Kalimpong was to make my *Vandana* to

the Ven. Dhardo Rimpoche. He ran a school for Tibetan refugee children and had been a friend and teacher to Bhante throughout most of his time in Kalimpong. It was from him that Bhante had taken the Bodhisattva Vows. The spirit of the Bodhisattva Ideal permeates and perfumes the whole of our Movement, and all our individual practices, so I felt a very strong link with the Rimpoche although had never met him. We presented him with a silk scarf on Bhante's behalf, and a selection of our publications for the library, and an image of Vajrasattva made by upasaka Aloka. We gave him news of Bhante and told him about our activities — especially what we were doing at Sukhavati — with the aid of a number of photographs. He was so happy to hear the news, and talked of Bhante as his oldest friend in Kalimpong.

Bhante had asked me to find out how the school was doing financially. He himself had done some fundraising for the Rimpoche when he was in Kalimpong to express his own appreciation, and it was quite clear that the school was now in difficulties as never before. Since the closing of the Tibetan border, Kalimpong, which had previously flourished on the trade between Tibet and India, has become a much poorer town. Support from the West has come almost to a standstill, partly because of inflation. After leaving the Rimpoche I felt that I really wanted to do something for the school, and so, after consulting with Bhante, I decided to prepare an appeal on behalf of the school. It is that appeal which accompanies this Newsletter.

Sometimes we are lucky enough to come into contact with an individual who seems permeated by some higher dimension of consciousness, by the spirit of the Bodhisattva. In his presence our hard edges soften a little; we become more spiritually malleable, open, uplifted and spiritually nourished. This is how I felt when I met the Rimpoche. At the same time there was not the slightest trace of arrogance in him, no aura of mystery and confusion surrounding him. He was quite down to earth, practical, and straightforward, and so concerned for everyone and everything around him that one felt an immediate trust in him. Afterwards, on the plains, often with other Buddhists — monks and lay people — from whom I felt not the slightest trace of any higher dimension to their lives, I experienced, when recalling his image, that same feeling of spiritual refreshment.

The FWBO at Olympia



The offending poster

by Upasaka Devamitra

"Only rotters hunt otters!" was one of the more memorable slogans to be found on the various badges and T-shirts offered for sale by the Hunt Saboteurs Association, who occupied one of the stands at the second Festival for Mind and Body. Their stand was only one amongst 150 in the National Hall at Olympia, and it was located directly opposite the FWBO stand. At irregular intervals one of their representatives would blast a few shrill notes on one of the hunting horns which they sell, presumably for the purpose of confusing

struggling fox hunters.

The FWBO stand was situated on a corner. On one side we had the Liberal Catholic Church as our neighbours, or rather three of its members, one of whom complained to me rather indignantly, when one of the more tribal groups present at the Festival was giving a demonstration, that they were "working themselves up into a most irreligious fervour!" Before the Festival opened to the public

I wandered over to the adjoining hall to observe the relics of a previous exhibition; it looked cold and drab and was obviously conceived by minds very alien to those that gave birth to the Festival. Whatever else one might think of it, the Festival for Mind and Body was certainly a colourful occasion. I returned to our stand. We were ready for the public as soon as the doors should open. Our neighbours on the other side of the stand, however, had only just arrived. Their stand was empty and bare; three Europeans wearing turbans

sat on their suitcases looking as though they were at a loss as to what to do. This was the Humanity Foundation.

The Festival opened an hour late due to some difficulty regarding fire regulations, but now the first visitors began to trickle in and wander from stand to stand. What a bewildering collection of ideals and philosophies they were confronted by! There were the followers of various Indian gurus, fringe Christian movements, manufacturers of health foods, healers, psychotherapy groups, ecology groups, UFO groups, etc. It was noticeable that many people walking past our stand looked quite dazed. There was so much going on and so much to take in.

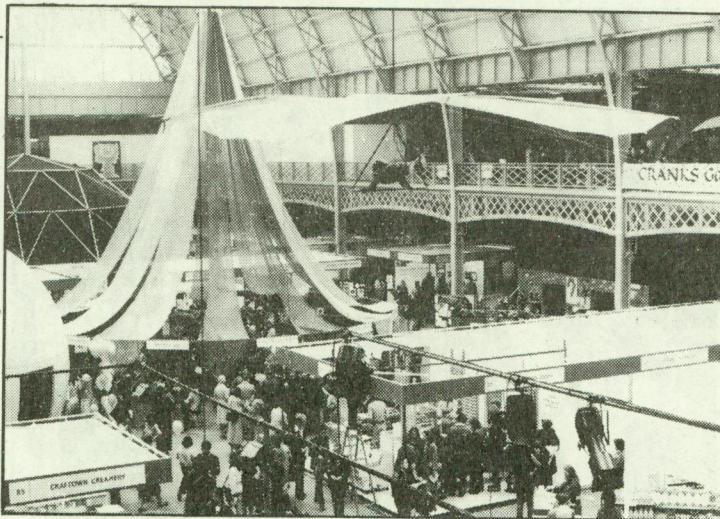
Anyone seriously looking for the key to a new way of life must have found it quite difficult to see anything clearly through the confusion of conflicting ideas and approaches. There is only so much one can take before mental indigestion sets in.

To the uncritical and the inexperienced eye perhaps there was nothing to distinguish the FWBO from anything else on offer at this 'spiritual supermarket', as one visitor described it. Indeed the whole approach adopted by the Festival organizers encouraged an uncritical and non-discriminatory attitude in its visitors. In his introduction to the edition of *New Life* magazine which served as the guide to the Festival, Graham Wilson, the Festival director, states that, "In order to bring some clarity to the immense scope and variety of material we have created groupings within the whole. These are not intended as rigid pigeonholes but as gentle guide-lines to show the inter-relatedness between everything." The organizers seemed to be at great pains to demonstrate that everything one might encounter at the Festival was all part of the same general trend, that we are all heading in the same direction

ultimately as we enter the 'New Age', and that it therefore does not matter what you follow just so long as you are a part of that general trend. One can see quite easily, therefore, that the four things that the FWBO has to offer would fit in very nicely with this

It is much safer for us to believe that "it's all one" because this will justify all points of view and we will not have to bother about making any painful changes.

But let us return once more to Graham Wilson's introduction to the Festival. He says of it that it is



The Exhibition hall

scheme of things, provided that one did not look too closely. After all, most groups will offer a method of personal development and no doubt they could tell you about their own vision of the true nature of human existence, etc. The trouble with this sort of approach is that it assumes a common ideal and it is very difficult sometimes to convince people that what the FWBO has to offer is different, that the FWBO is not a particular manifestation within a general trend, that the ideals of Buddhism have very little, if anything, in common with, for example, Arica, Krishna Consciousness, the Quakers, or Rajneesh. Perhaps in some cases the same terms may be used such as 'liberation', 'Enlightenment', 'Ultimate Reality', etc., but one must not assume that the same ideal is indicated by them. Unfortunately if you try to point out differences to some people they will accuse you of seeking to divide, claiming that this will inevitably lead to the sort of conflict that exists, for example, in Northern Ireland. Such a paranoid view stems from the fear that if there is an alternative viewpoint then there is the possibility that your viewpoint may be mistaken.

"... a show about you and me ... linking all psychologically and spiritually in the reciprocal recognition of the need to belong, to enhance and to serve." If, as the Buddha has made clear, one can attain Enlightenment by one's own efforts alone, then "the need to belong" must be cast aside even before one can embark upon the spiritual life. If you have a need to belong then a universalist viewpoint must surely be very attractive. If you feel yourself to be

part of a general trend in which the whole of life is taking part then you belong to that trend. If you then spiritualize that trend and call it a movement towards God, or reality, or truth, or whatever, how very reassuring this must feel. We're all going to make it together! This is the basic assumption of many of the contributors to *New Life* magazine and thereby, unfortunately, a theme of the Festival. One article by Clare Cameron even beings, "Since all life is one ...", and in another Sir George Trevelyan states, "We are grasping at the great truth that life is a stupendous whole ..."

Now perhaps there is a certain truth in what Cameron and Trevelyan have to say, but the fact that there exists an inter-relatedness between phenomena indicates nothing spiritual, it simply is a condition of existence. The force — some would call it a creative force — which is perpetually bringing forth new life (no pun intended!) into the world, and which we all have in common, is nothing more, in Buddhist terms, than the force of greed, hatred, and delusion. The transcending of this force constitutes the spiritual life. We all belong to it, but we

have to leave it behind. To spiritualize it is to spiritualize the mundane.

Some visitors to the Festival this year complained that it was not as 'spiritual' as the previous year. But then again it is debatable what exactly 'spiritual' is. For many people, no doubt, William

Arkle's painting *The Parents*, which was used to advertise the Festival, epitomises the sort of thing they would vaguely dub with the label 'spiritual'. The picture represents two youthful parents with sickly-sweet gazes in their eyes as they hover like gigantic disembodied spirits above some children capering below. There is an icy coldness about the painting which far from expressing any kind of spirituality is merely an expression of alienation

and emasculation. But is the Festival for Mind and Body a spiritual event — i.e., is it an event which can raise the level of consciousness of those taking part? I would say that on the whole it definitely is not, but at the same time it does provide those who visit with an opportunity for coming into contact with a few people who perhaps are leading a more healthy human life than themselves. If only for this reason it is a worthwhile and commendable event.

But why was the FWBO represented? In view of what I have so far said you might feel that the Festival was something that the Friends were best not associated with. Well the answer is simple — it offers the chance of coming into contact with about 100,000 people in the course of nine days. 'Contact' is the key word — direct personal contact with members of the Western Buddhist Order is the most tangible and unique thing that the FWBO has to offer anybody. Personal example is always far more impressive than the loftiest ideals eloquently written or talked about. One of the visitors to our stand who was merrily sporting a badge with the

slogan "Glad to be gay" casually remarked that this was the only stand that he had come across so far that did not appear to be selling any bullshit. On another occasion towards the end of the Festival an elderly gentleman who was working on the Quakers' stand

indifferent if not oblivious to our existence — but ironically enough the best communication I had during the six days that I was working on the stand was with people, on two separate occasions, who, if they had not been approached directly, might

have just walked past the stand and thought no more about it. They were both men in their early 20s. Neither of them was particularly interested in Buddhism, but both were open-minded people looking for something. They were the most receptive people I talked to. How different were they to the Krishna devotee who assured me that the only way to spiritual realization was by the constant repetition of the Hare Krishna mantra and service to God. The



The 'Friends' meet the people

came and talked with me about the FWBO. At the end of the exchange he commented that he had talked to many people during the past eight days, but that this was by far and away the most interesting talk that he had had.

The people that we talked to were of all ages, men and women from all over the UK and from other countries. There were people who knew about us, including old Friends, and people who did not; people who considered themselves Buddhists, and those who knew nothing of Buddhism; 'freaks' and 'straights'; professional people and tradesmen. On one occasion I noticed someone looking at me with a grin: "I know you!" he said. I did not recognize him. "Do you?" I replied, puzzled. . . . "Where from?" In hushed tones came the answer, "Blundeston!" It had been the glasses and walrus moustache that had fooled me. Now I recognized an ex-prisoner. We were glad to see each other again. [Devamitra has for some time been the 'visiting Buddhist minister' to Blundeston prison: Ed]

Of course it is not everybody who is interested in the FWBO — in fact most people are utterly

Buddhist way of life was an arrogant one because Buddhists thought that they could do it all for themselves; he knew this from personal experience because at one time he nearly became a Buddhist monk in Ceylon. I remained unimpressed. He left the stand, and I felt thankful that such a zealot had not entered the Sinhalese Sangha.

In the 11 years since the founding of the FWBO the overall tendency within the Movement has been inward-looking rather than outward-going. However, it is essential that this imbalance should be redressed in the course of the next few years. We must never forget that the spiritual life is both self-regarding and other-regarding and that both are equally important for our own growth and for the growth of others. A more outward-going tendency is the natural expression of the other-regarding aspect of spiritual development. The New World will not come into existence automatically just because we are entering, according to some, a 'New Age'. If we really want a New World then we have to create it for ourselves. We will have to go out to other people much more and try to involve as many of them as we can in our

activities. Taking part in the Festival for Mind and Body is one small step in this direction. In the six years of my association with the FWBO it is undoubtedly the most outward-going event in which we have taken part and one which was thoroughly worthwhile,

not only from the point of view of those who were contacted and who will as a result become Friends and possibly even Order Members, but also from the point of view of those taking part. Where else in this country can one have so many opportunities to talk to people

who actually want to know what you have to offer and have come specifically for that purpose? How invigorating it is to engage in communication with those who are receptive! I look forward with anticipation to taking part in the Festival again next year.

BOOK REVIEW

The twain shall meet

Yoga and Indian Philosophy, by Karel Werner.

(Motilal Banarsidass; Delhi, Varanasi, Patna, 1977). Pp. xii-192. Price Rs. 40.00

Unbelievable as it may seem, this is the first study of Yoga and Indian philosophy to be published in the English language. We have, to be sure, any amount of popular books on Yoga, and quite a lot of learned tomes on Indian philosophy; but never before, I think, have the two topics been brought together and dealt with in comparative fashion within the compass of a single volume. The reason for this is not far to seek. In England, at least, Yoga and Indian philosophy tend to be the pre-occupation of two different sorts of people, even of two different circles, one of them very much larger than the other. When one thinks of Yoga the picture that springs to mind is of the overweight British matron in breathless pursuit of health and beauty, whereas when one thinks of Indian philosophy the picture that presents itself is of a wizened academic poring over dusty oriental manuscripts in a remote corner of one of the less prestigious departments of one of our older seats of learning. Rarely, if ever, do the two circles overlap. The British matron pursues health and beauty with little thought of philosophy, Indian or otherwise; the academic pores over his manuscripts without ever suspecting that they might have some bearing on the conduct of his own life. At last, however, Yoga and Indian philosophy come together in the person of an Indologist who is at the same time a teacher of Yoga — or of a teacher of Yoga who is at the same time an Indologist. His conception of Yoga goes as far beyond that of the British matron as his conception of philosophy goes beyond that of the academic. The result is not only an increase of breadth but also an increase of depth. Yoga is not just a series of physical exercises but “a consciously adopted system of training or pattern of behaviour aiming at enlarging or deepening man’s direct experience of reality rather than his ability to describe or explain it” (p.xi). Similarly, philosophy is neither the history of philosophical opinions nor linguistic analysis but “a constant endeavour of the human mind to describe and rationally explain experienced reality in clearly defined concepts and create an overall and systematic as well as intuitively penetrative picture of the world including man which satisfies man’s

intellectual curiosity or urge for formulated knowledge” (p.xi).

Born in Czechoslovakia, Karel Werner studied Western philosophy and Indology and after obtaining his PhD in 1949 became a lecturer in Sanskrit and Indian Civilization in Olomouc University. In 1968 he emigrated to England, where since 1969 he has been the Spalding Lecturer in Indian Philosophy and Religion in the University of Durham. In addition to his academic work he teaches Yoga and has also published articles on Buddhism in English, German, and Czech. *Yoga and Indian Philosophy* is his first book in English and represents the fruit of more than three decades of study and personal involvement. The work consists of seven chapters. After a short introduction, in the course of which Yoga and philosophy are defined in the terms already quoted, the author opens with a widely ranging chapter on “The Existential Situation of Man” in which stress is placed on the fact that, “Unlike in Europe, philosophy in India has always been concerned with the individual, his existential situation, his destiny and salvation, i.e. with the final solution of the riddle of man’s existence”(p.14). There then follow three chapters on Indian philosophy and three on Yoga. In the first group of chapters Dr Werner looks at the nature of the world, as the stage on which the drama of man’s search for absolute freedom takes place, and gives us a survey of Indian cosmology. He then explores the essence and destiny of man and reviews the various Indian conceptions of salvation. Each chapter follows the same general pattern. The Vedic and Upanishadic contribution to our understanding of the world, man, and salvation having been considered, we are given an account of the more systematic teachings of the Sankhya, the Advaita Vedanta, and Buddhism, both Theravada and Mahayana, on each of these three topics. Reference is also made to the Vishishtadvaita and Dvaita schools of Vedanta and to Jainism, as well as to the philosophy of Aurobindo Ghosh, which according to the author is deeply influenced by Mahayana Buddhism. In the second group of

chapters Dr Werner deals with the origin and purpose of Yoga, as well as with its relation to philosophy, with the schools of Yoga, and with Yoga in the modern world. The second of these chapters, on "Schools of Yoga", contains sections on the Yoga of Early Buddhism and the Yoga of Patanjali, the first of these being a short but careful study of the Buddha's Noble Eightfold Path. Probably the most important chapters of the book and, with the possible exception of the last one, those of the greatest general interest, are Chapters I and V, on "The Existential Situation of Man as Reflected in European and Indian Thought" and "Yoga, its Origin, Purpose and Relation to Philosophy", and these will therefore be considered at slightly greater length.

Western philosophy begins with the cosmological speculations of the Milesian school, and it is here – according to Dr Werner – that we find the start of extraverted investigation of the world and, therefore, of that objective approach to reality, including man, that is so characteristic of European thought. Strengthened by the work of Plato and Aristotle, this 'objectivist' tendency eventually led to the birth of science and its domination over our lives and thought. Until quite recently Western philosophy did not really concern itself with the existential situation of the individual. Even though objective values exist only when experienced by individual subjects, in the quest for objectivity of values – for universally valid general ideas – the experiencing individual was finally lost sight of and, despite his rediscovery by the modern existentialists, "is still missing in the structure of our scientifically oriented, objectivist civilisation" (p.2). In India the situation is very different. For Indian philosophy the important and central problem of investigation has always been "the nature of man and the means of transcending his present limited situation" (p.14). Apart from not going to the extreme of totally objectifying reality and divorcing it from intelligent consciousness, Indian philosophy has always enjoyed a 'dialectical' relation to religion, neither becoming subservient to religious dogma, nor having the results of its investigations ignored by religious thought. Above all, it has been kept in touch with actual human experience through its relation with Yoga, which "has always been used in India on the one hand as a means of confirming or testing the results of philosophical investigation and speculation on transcendence and on the other as a source of inspiration and a stimulus for philosophical thinking" (p.15). From all this, as well as on account of its 'phenomenological' method and its humanism, it is obvious that Indian philosophy has much in common with modern existentialism. Like existentialism, it is concerned with despair or dread, with death, and with freedom. For Indian philosophy, however, freedom is no mere theoretical concept or philosophical problem. Freedom is an experience. It consists in one's actually rising above the limitations of the existential situation, i.e. in the experience of 'transcendence', and "the only way to the achievement of the experience of transcendence is individual Yoga practice of some kind" (p.21). While recognizing that Yoga in the broad sense of the term is not confined to India (p.96), Dr Werner clearly believes that (Indian) Yoga has a part to play in the West. There is, for instance, "the possibility of resorting to Yoga methods, or of deriving help from them when the

philosophical quest has reached its utmost limit in conceptual analysis" (p.98). At the same time, he sounds a note of warning. Owing to the separation of the two 'circles' already mentioned, "the popularisation of Yoga and its practice in the West is in the hands either of Eastern gurus with little or no understanding of the Western psyche and tradition or of Western amateurs with varying degrees of competence" (p.99). Experimental research into Yoga is therefore necessary.

Though by no means a big book, *Yoga and Indian Philosophy* covers quite a lot of ground, and inevitably there are a number of topics which one wishes the author could have discussed more fully. Querying the applicability of Western evolutionary thinking to the history of Yoga, for instance, Dr Werner rightly points out that at a later stage of its history a religious tradition cannot ever be regarded as spiritually higher than it was at the beginning. The point would have been made clearer, perhaps, if he had explained that, in this kind of context, evolution is a term which strictly speaking applies to the *individual* rather than to the religious tradition to which the individual is regarded as belonging. This would have involved defining the 'individual', as well as distinguishing him from the group and the group from the 'spiritual community'. There are also topics in connection with which the Buddhist might find himself disagreeing with the author. Is the state of deep sleep really one of 'unification with the essence' (p.54) or with the 'Universal Self' (p.75) as Dr Werner, following the Upanishadic teaching, seems to think? Was it in fact the 'storehouse consciousness' (*alaya vijñāna*) which was 'newly recognized' by C.G. Jung and by him called 'collective unconscious' (p.50)? Is traditional Buddhism really just 'silent' on the problem of what is the essence of man, and is the five-khanda analysis of the Pali Canon "purely an analysis of the empirical constituents of the human personality as accessible to his present experience" (p.61)? My own difference with Dr Werner relates to his implied disparagement of poetry. Speaking of the Rig Veda, which he describes as an extensive collection of hymns comprising "the reactions of the Indian mind to its encounters with experienced reality, both external and internal", he objects to the view of Western scholars like Macdonell that the Vedas are "imaginative creations of poets" (p.23). But is that view really so very far from the truth? According to Shelley a poem is "the very image of life expressed in its eternal truth", poetry "the record of the best and happiest moments of the happiest and best minds", and poets themselves "the hierophants of an unapprehended inspiration". If this indeed be so, then surely there could be no greater praise for the Vedas than to say of them that they were the imaginative creations of poets – especially when one considers what the word imagination meant not only to Shelley but also to Blake and Coleridge. After all, poetry is much more than versified fancies. Apart from whatever might be said on such topics as these, however, there is little in Dr Werner's book to which either scholar or yogi could reasonably object. Mature and balanced in its approach, this pioneering exploration of an important field is clearly the product not only of the study of Indian philosophy but also of the practice of Yoga, and as such merits our respectful attention.

Sangharakshita

CENTRES and BRANCHES

SUKHAVATI BETHNAL GREEN

For the past three years a community of up to 35 men has struggled to complete the conversion of a Large Victorian fire station so that it may become 'Sukhavati'. For 15 months of those years no work was done on the building whilst efforts were made to raise finance through a number of commercial enterprises. We are now well on the way to finishing and expect the Centre to be opened in November this year.

For many who have followed news of the project over the last three years, Sukhavati probably means a large men's community and lots of work and appeals for money. Many will have forgotten that Sukhavati is 'The New London Centre' of the FWBO, intended to replace Pundarika as the largest and most active centre. From November, after opening festivities, that is what Sukhavati will be, combining the three distinct elements of a centre, a Co-operative, and a Community.

The Centre will comprise the two shrine rooms and reception rooms on the ground floor as well as the shrine room and reception rooms down the road at the East End Meditation Centre. The latter will mainly be used for Yoga classes and for beginners' meditation. A team of six or seven upasakas and upasikas from neighbouring communities will be supported so that they can give all their time to the Centre and its activities. With the facilities the new Centre offers, they should be able to make contact with many people. When fully operational, a thousand people a week could be passing through the Centre's doors. It will be open throughout the day and evening for courses, classes, enquiries, and private meditation.



The retreat centre

We are at present negotiating to take a lease on part of a large country house near the Medway towns in Kent. This is only 50

minute's drive from the Centre, in quiet surroundings. With some conversion it will become a Retreat Centre for up to 20 people. Once Sukhavati is open this will be in constant use.

A shop next door to Sukhavati has been purchased and the top floor will house the offices from which the Centre will be administered. These will also act as a central office for the Movement as a whole, providing information, co-ordination, and research. Although one of our basic organisational principles is that each centre is legally autonomous, some degree of centralisation has become necessary particularly so that information and experience flows throughout the Movement.

In order to provide Right Livelihood for those attending the Centre and living in the communities, a co-operative company has been formed called 'The Pure Land Co-operative Ltd'. Apart from supporting its workers, the Co-op will be supporting the Centre and other FWBO activities. There are already two successful subsidiaries of the Co-op in the shape of 'Friends Foods', which has a wholefood shop at Sukhavati, and 'Windhorse Press', which has four full-time workers and is on the verge of expanding with a new press. We are probably going to take over a neighbouring hardware and tool shop which will also be able to provide wholesale building materials to the rest of the Movement. In another nearby shop we plan to open a restaurant. On the ground floor of the shop which houses the offices there will be a bookshop, access to which will be possible both from Sukhavati and from the street. Over the next few months, before the Centre opens, the Co-operative will expand greatly, bringing in much more money and involving many more people. Many ideas are being mooted and some much needed managerial skill is being imported from other centres.

The Community at Sukhavati will continue as a fairly intensive men's community with about 25 residents. Community members will be working in the Centre or the Co-op. As much time as possible will be given to meditation and study with members spending time both at Padmaloka and at the Welsh Meditation Centre. In this way Friends and mitras will be participating in a kind of 'training' situation which will be of particular benefit to people from overseas.

Already in the local area are four communities - Sukhavati, Amaravati, Golgonooza, and Beulah - containing in all about 60 residents. A co-operative housing association is being formed which will

enable more communities to be started. London's East End has thus already been infiltrated by a 'society within society'. In the next year or so, with the opening of the ground floor at Sukhavati, the expansion of the Co-op, and the development of new communities of different kinds, this society will take a step almost into another dimension, much more varied, diverse, and many layered. It will be possible to see the beginnings of a whole new culture. We have waited a long time to see this particular lotus push itself up through the mud and shake its petals clear over the water. In the meantime the bud has developed to a greater size and beauty than we ever envisaged. In one way or another, by labouring on site, by raising money, or by giving advice or encouragement, the whole Movement has participated in the building of Sukhavati, the Pure Land. When it is finally finished and open in November it will astonish us all

Subhuti

AMARAVATI WANSTEAD

Baggy pants, loose covers, painting and decorating, changes in FWBO (Wanstead) Council, lots of visitors, Amaravati Order members spreading across the country, Maggie to be ordained... these are just some of things happening at Amaravati.

Money was getting short and the house is well on the way to being finished - only a few rooms to decorate. So, our Right Livelihood projects had to be put into action immediately. First of all, to ensure regular money coming in, a couple of members of the community are working outside - Maggie and Marichi. Then Kusa Cushions started to advertise in local papers and have since been deluged with requests for loose covers, curtains, bedspreads etc. Next Anne Farnham came up with the idea of making baggy pants, which are particularly suitable for meditating in. She and Joan had already made some for members of the community, which had been much admired, so it seemed like a good idea. One small, one medium and one large member of the community were lined up as models and soon scissors and sewing machines were rolling into action. Posters are being sent out to all the centres and shops etc. in the Friends and already we've had quite a few orders. We'll also be selling them on market stalls.

After the summer retreat at Mandar-

ava, Maggie and Hilary will start our painting and decorating business. Maggie has been our works manager here at Amaravati for the last few months and so has built up quite a bit of experience. And even before we moved here she was talking about a painting and decorating business. So in the Autumn, her chance will finally come! Talking of Maggie, we are all very pleased that she will be ordained on the summer retreat and look forward to welcoming her into the Order. An interesting point is that the four women who as mitras set up the first women's community in the Friends (myself, Anjali, Sanghadevi and Maggie) will, with Maggie's ordination, all be members of the Order and all living at Amaravati.

I have now taken over from Dhammadinna as Chairwoman of FWBO (Wanstead); Sanghadevi is Secretary and Anjali is Treasurer. Dhammadinna is now more free to move around and see people and generally involve herself fully in being Convenor of Women Mitras. Marichi is going to take over as Community Organiser. This is the first time a team of women Order members has evolved and I feel very enthusiastic about the possibilities. At present there are 17 women in the Order and 83 men. This means that quite a few centres are without the support of a woman Order member. So we have been doing as much as we can to help this situation by taking study groups and retreats for women at other centres. Dhammadinna takes a weekly study group at Aryatara, and I have been taking one for women who go to the EEMC. We have organised and taken two weekend retreats in Brighton. Anjali set up the first women's community there some time ago although it has now split up, due to the lease of the property coming to an end, the positive affects of this community are still very much to be felt. Sanghadevi and Anjali also took a weekend retreat in Glasgow, with Kay taking yoga. Dhammadinna and I will be taking a small retreat at Court Lodge for Mitras from different centres. This is something we've wanted to do for quite a time, just working with a few Mitras at a time, so there will most probably be more of this type of retreat. In the summer, Sanghadevi will be going on the mixed retreat at Court Lodge organised by the EEMC; Dhammadinna and Marichi (plus Anne Farnham who'll be organising the cooking) will be attending the West Country retreat organised by FWBO North London and all the Order Members here will be on the 3 week women's retreat at Mandarava - leading, organising, taking yoga or just being there. In the Autumn we will be holding weekend retreats at Amaravati as well as Mitra days which we already hold here.

Visitors continue to come from everywhere. Over the next few weeks we have quite a few women coming to stay for a week or so at a time;

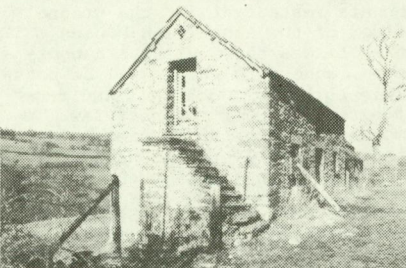
joining in the life and work of the community. Lisa from Helsinki is here at the moment.

There are lots of other ideas spinning around - the possibility of another community nearby, for example, mediation and dharma courses for women, hiring a hall in the neighbourhood to hold yoga classes, expanding into making other kinds of clothes, getting a solitary retreat cottage.... Energy and enthusiasm are flowing so anything is possible!

Anoma

MANDALA WEST LONDON

Life has gone on smoothly over the past few months in North and West London. Smoothly and quietly: in fact, maybe a little too quietly. Spring has come and gone, leaving in its wake a number of minor successes and failures, but no major changes; at least on the material level. The community at Ratnadvipa has got used to living in West Kilburn, and we are now holding meditation courses here, rather than at the church hall in Swiss Cottage which we were once using for this purpose. Ratnadvipa is eminently suitable for such classes, and not unexpectedly a much warmer atmosphere is generated than was possible in the hall. Mandala too has had successful meditation courses and more people are passing through the centre than ever before, yet it is too early to say how many will stay to become regulars and Order members.



Tyn-y-dol

Financially Mandala is not in a very good way. Our businesses have had mixed fortunes. Removals have done rather well recently. The bicycle business has not really taken off yet, but threatens to do so soon. And a wholefood shop in west London is a definite possibility. The Autumn will see a spate of more traditional fundraising events for Tyn-y-dol, in the form of a flag day and three jumble sales.

A branch of the FWBO has recently been formed in Cheltenham by several Friends and mitras there, and Ratnadvipans and Sukhavatins are going down there periodically to hold introductory meetings to the FWBO.



The Regulars' class

Maybe most important of all, Ratnadvipa is beginning to live up to its name. Ratnadvipa means 'Jewel Island', and steadily the place is becoming increasingly light and bright. It even sparkles occasionally. This is not due solely to the golds and yellows that have appeared to replace drab wallpaper and sombre blue in the kitchen and shrine room. Above all there is the fact of people changing, growing, which is the true measure of progress.

Ratnavira

AMITAYUS BRIGHTON

Like the launching of a new ship, all new ventures have to be put through their paces, to see if they can actually fulfill their promise. The same applies to a new centre.

Since April 8th, when Amitayus was formally opened, many events have happened here - Yoga and meditation classes three nights a week, talks, slide shows, the joint celebration of Wesak with FWBO Surrey, a large gathering of the Order, in fact all the activities one normally finds at a thriving centre. And like any good ship, Amitayus has not only stayed afloat, but has actually helped bear us, full speed ahead one might say, towards our ideal, by providing excellent conditions for practising the Dharma. These conditions are not only limited to formal classes and events however. Amitayus also houses a community of five men (one Order member and four mitras) besides being the base for our new business venture, "Friends Decorating".

As regards our established businesses, the Windhorse Bookshop has never been better, the place absolutely burgeoning with books, incense and myriads of colourful Indian clothes and objects. So much so, in fact, that plans are under way to expand next door into the old FWBO Office. Sunrise Restaurant has recently undergone a face-lift, or perhaps rebirth would be more appropriate, and is now really sparkling. Besides the regular customers it is now beginning to attract many of the tourists who in-

vade Brighton each summer.

Besides our classes and business ventures, we are also trying to raise £1000 for Tyn-y-dol. This has meant various fundraising activities including a jumble sale and an incredible sponsored walk across the South Downs. A street collection is planned for July 15th, which besides raising money will also be very good publicity, and should attract more people to our centre and activities.

All this means that FWBO Brighton really has a Centre now, and not just in name only, but in a real, living, dynamic way. And for many people the word Sangha (spiritual community) is now becoming an experience, rather than just an idea.

Mangala

HERUKA GLASGOW

Time marches on. It's hard to believe that we are now into our tenth month in Kelvinside Terrace.

Meditation courses come and go like the seasons; the wind and the rain blow in new people and the sunny weather keeps them away. The courses have proven to be the best way to attract newcomers with the walls bulging outwards to accommodate everyone. Our second course attracted more than sixty people. Some stayed for the continuation course and to take part in other activities, while some left: too gripped by the pull of samsara.

It is hard to list the major events that have occurred since the last Newsletter. So many things have happened. Perhaps there is only one event: Activity. With classes four evenings a week, including our mitra study group, retreats every other weekend, our activities are almost ceaseless. The number of newcomers has risen sharply, another community of like-minded individuals on the Buddha's Path is likely to emerge shortly.

At the end of May the Centre was vacated by all male persons for a week-end while the women had a retreat led by Upasikas from Amaravati. Women being in a minority in Glasgow it acted as a good boost to their morale, and was reported as being of great value.

For the first time in three years we participated in the annual "Sharing of Faiths" held this year in the Maclellan Galleries. With our posters emphasising the Individual as opposed to the Group, with sayings of Bhante's pinned to the walls like: "The Group is always wrong" and "The Spiritual Community is not a Group", we came over much stronger than in previous years. We hope we made the point that Buddhism is a Universal religion and not an ethnic one as are

so many of the other religions on 'display' there. Although it attracted no newcomers and opinions vary about its worth, some people of other religions may have a better idea of what we're about.

Our summer retreat in the Borders proved to be of great value to newcomers. Although it only lasted a week, we were able to build up an intense feeling for what meditation and the spiritual life are all about. The conditions being ideal, the cottages we hired being situated by a stream, and with the sun shining overhead (some of the time), a good taste of the retreat situation was imparted to them. No doubt they felt the contrast when returning to city life.

Our Right Means of Livelihood in the form of a Wholefood shop has still to emerge. With Windhorse Wholefoods Ltd now in existence it is just a matter of time until this comes about. With one or two setbacks in renting suitable accommodation for our shop overcome, we hope that shortly we'll look back on this Newsletter...and mark the change.

Vairocana

VAJRASANA EDINBURGH



The situation here in Edinburgh at the moment is very healthy as we now have our own gardening business, 'Friends Gardening', in operation. This is proving to be very successful with a good deal of work coming our way, providing us with an excellent Right Livelihood situation to support the Centre and our ever-expanding activities. We recently held a course based on the series of lectures about 'The Buddha's Noble Eightfold Path'. Between forty and fifty people attended the first night of this. We have also held a day retreat here at the Centre, mainly for those who have been coming to our courses, and who wished to know

more about the 'Friends' and our views on Western Buddhism. This was a most enjoyable day for all those who took part and I look forward to the next one.

At present only Uttara and I are living here as Jos has moved to Glasgow to help start a men's community there with other mitras and Friends. Despite this setback, the future looks good for the growth and development of this Centre and the furtherance of the Dharma in Edinburgh. All in all I cannot think of anywhere else I would rather be than living here at this Centre, working, practising, and helping to spread the Teaching of the Buddha.

P.S. As you can see, the Edinburgh branch now has a name: VAJRASANA, meaning 'the diamond throne', the seat where one can gain Enlightenment.

Derek Allon

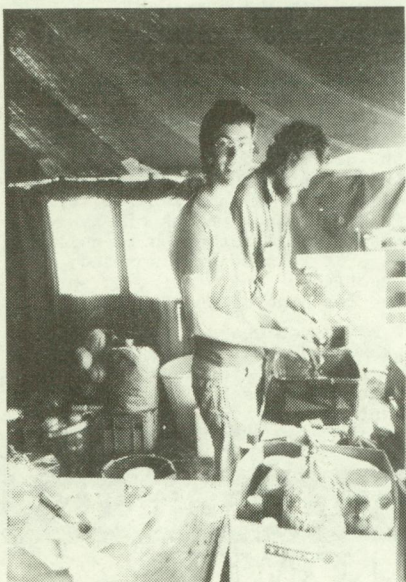
VAJRADHATU NORWICH

It's a beautiful early summer day in Norfolk. The sun is shining and the trees are full of fresh green leaves. In the grounds of a country house near the Suffolk border two 'Elemental Coordinators' are trying to concentrate cosmic energy with an assortment of Voodoo dolls, bells, baskets of feathers, flashes of gunpowder, and a burning goat's skull; behind them two horses from a gipsy wagon wait to see if they will succeed.

Further down the field a troupe of mime artists wink, shrug, smile, gnash their teeth, and nod their white faces while Pope Negligent and Cardinal Hustler ply the crowd offering a genuine, guaranteed ten years of purgatory - for only ten pence. Music fills the air, beer drinkers, children and dogs are everywhere, some of them even clustering around a faded army marquee which bears the cryptic message: Friends of the Western Buddhist Order, and the simpler sign: "Get Your Vegetarian Eats Here!"

Well, that was Brome Fair, one of half a dozen we'll be appearing at over the summer, selling vegetarian food to raise money for the Meditation Centre at Tyn-y-dol. We've bought a van, a marquee, tables and benches, an oven and a hot-box, as well as a lot of cooking equipment, and this ensemble, collectively known as "The Mobile Kitchen", is staffed for these weekends by volunteers from Vajradhatu and the Rainbow Restaurant. It is very hard work, but fun and good for the experience of teamwork. So far, in two weekends, we've made about £500. Of course we have to pay back our large investment, but we hope that by the end of the summer we'll be clear of debts and have

£1000 for Tyn-y-dol, as well as a well organised "Mobile Kitchen" for future fundraising in Norfolk and



Mahamati in the 'Kitchen'

elsewhere. If anyone, from any centre, would like to come and help us they would be very welcome, so don't hesitate to contact me. Our itinerary is as follows:

Mistletow Fair: 22,23 July
Rougham Tree Fair: 19,20 Aug
Eye Show: 26,27,28 August.

P.S. We are still teaching meditation at Vajradhatu every week, just in case you're wondering!

Kulamitra

MANDARAVA NORFOLK

Mandarava's 'Open Day' was held on Saturday last, June 24th: midsummer's day, and despite the less than midsummer-ish weather, was a resounding success.

Commencing at 2.p.m. with a 'Mad Hatter's Tea Party' (designed for children, but well attended by those adults who are still partial to jelly and jam tarts) the day included something for everyone: children's games and party, followed by puja, an evening meal, and live music which marked the start of general festivities lasting well into the night. Perhaps the most successful aspect of the whole event was the cosmopolitan flavour, being well attended by people from widely differing situations within the 'Friends'. Single people, people from communities and centres, married couples and their children: all were able to come and enjoy themselves while meeting and talking

with each other about their varying activities and occupations. Also it was good to see Friends from as far apart as Norfolk, London, Cornwall, and even Finland.

A great deal of work has been accomplished at Mandarava just recently, both in the garden and the greenhouses which are well stocked with tomato and marrow plants, and in the outbuildings which now have water and electricity supplies in place. It was therefore a particularly fitting time to have a celebration and open-day.

Everyone who attended, I think, enjoyed themselves and benefitted greatly from contact with others within the Movement - meeting old friends and making new ones. Certainly the youngest there enjoyed their chocolate cake, and many an adult drove back to London clutching a bag of left-over cucumber sandwiches.

Helen Johnson

ARYATARA SURREY

It's summer in Croydon and somehow the town feels different - and not in an inevitable and obvious way. A group of people dressed in black marching through the streets, mourning the killing of the whale, a supper introducing the uninitiated to the delights of wholefoods, a team of Morris men dancing outside the Fairfield Halls, a lone eagle with wings spread wide sculpted in flowers...

Welcome visitors from Cornwall, Finland, and Brighton, bringing news from distant quarters - and departures of stalwart Friends for fresh horizons... An influx of fresh faces to the activities at Aryatara and Kalpadruma (the community above our shop in Croydon): their curiosity and inquisitiveness as essential as the commitment and experience of the older hands... each contributing in their own particular way. New Friends set off to journey to the East. An older Friend flies in from America. An addition to the community in Purley.

Movement is in the air, and there's more to come. Retreats, solitary and otherwise, at Padma-loka, Mandarava, Broome House and elsewhere are looked forward to with eagerness and awe.

Meditation classes and a course have been held for the first time in Croydon. The 'Secret Garden Cafe' is now open to all who wish to enter. The Dharma has most definitely arrived.

Sumana

HELSINKI FINLAND

The Helsinki Centre, like many centres of the FWBO, has, for some time been selling books and other printed material related to Buddhism. We usually have available all the FWBO Publications as well as a selected range of other books on the Dharma. Most of this material is written in the English language and it seems that about half of our Friends and mitras are able to read English more or less fluently. While this is quite good and useful we have always known how much better things would be if some of the material were in Finnish. To produce this has been the job of a small group of people here. So far, despite the difficulties imposed by lack of funds, there are available several texts. Five of these are translations of transcripts of Bhante's lectures. In addition to these a part of *The Path of the Inner Life* has been translated as well as more than forty pages of *A Survey of Buddhism*.

The largest single achievement so far has been the translation of the whole of *The Three Jewels*, and this will be published some time during the next few months by the publishing section of the Helsinki vegetarian restaurant. We also have in Finnish *Puja*, our own Newsletter and *AMRYM* - a bi-monthly magazine containing Buddhist material from various sources as well as contributions from Friends, mitras and Order members.

There are, of course other books on Buddhism published elsewhere in Finland; in fact books relating to Buddhism have been published in Finland since the early part of the century. Unfortunately most of them are now out of print, and those that are available are not of a high standard. As to our own future, we will try and publish more ourselves. We will bring out *The Three Jewels* as soon as possible and continue to translate and print more of Bhante's lectures and writings.

From Vajrabodhi and Hridaya



RETREATS

RETREAT IN FINLAND

Jean Sibelius must have felt joy and wonder when he, according to a verified story, walking around the lake Vittrask discovered a striking red pattern drawn on the magnificent wall-like rock facing the waterfront. It was later proved by archeologists to have been produced by humans wandering on the same rocks about 4000 years earlier.

With something of a similar feeling I sit looking down at the emerald coloured surface of the lake, over the tops of the rowan trees, the pines and the birches I am translating the Dedication Ceremony into Finnish. We want to dedicate this spot to be a mandala, a focus for energies still deeper and higher than those captured by Sibelius' music: to witness the growth of Buddhism in Finland.

With gasps of rejoicing at the last minute miracle of a perfect setting, we settle down to experiencing the historical nine days of our longest retreat so far. Some of us have been on retreats in England and Sweden, but it is mainly thanks to Hridaya's expertise and dedication that things start flowing easily and smoothly; he is efficiently supported by Maitreya and Sarvamitra. There is harmony and energy, genuine togetherness and simple joy of life.

We have five meditations a day. We become more aware of each other and the landscape with exercising our ability to communicate: flowers grow and

birds fly! Each day ends with a puja of unprecedented energy; the readings range from Milarepa to extracts from Bhante's 'The Way of Emptiness' and *Mind in Buddhist Psychology*— and the words descend like sounds of blessing into our consciousness.

On the fifth day we are ready for intensive study; the Finnish group discusses translations of Bhante's lectures. The English group starts the 'Bodhicaryavatara Seminar'. Determination and receptivity grow, meditation sessions gather strength: "like the cry of the baby sparrow..."

The abundant energy also gets an outlet in swimming, sauna baths, extra early-morning meditations on the mountain top. Gardening, cooking, and other work is done with ease and enjoyment; Yoga is practised every day. In the deep silence of the evening we watch the sun setting on liquid rose and copper, insects humming above, the clouds vibrant with perpetual change, a solitary gull floating by...

It is with a feeling of intense gratitude for having received some experience of the Greater Mandala that I place a rowan tree blossom on the shrine in the last puja and read out a translation I have been working on during these days: "...jewel trees, lakes ornamented with lotuses, the endlessly fascinating cry of wild geese, these I offer mentally..."

Pirkko-Liisa Key

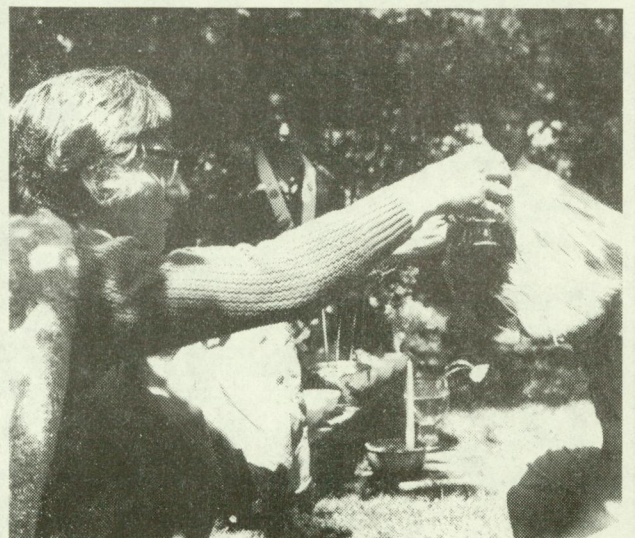


A break in the programme

Four Ordinations at Padmaloka

The last morning of a short retreat at Padmaloka saw van-loads of enthusiastic supporters arriving

from Sukhavati and Aryatara to witness the ordinations of Steve Pedder, John William Hunter, Markku Piiponen, and Maurice Cook. For the first time in FWBO history the public ordinations were held in the



The first open-air ordinations

open air. It was a warm, bright Sunday morning and a magnificent shrine was erected under a tree on one of the lawns. Bhante sat to the right of the shrine with the new Order members directly in front of it. They were enclosed by a circle of Order members, on the outer edge of which sat mitras and Friends. In the brilliant sunshine the setting was perfect. During the ceremony it was revealed that Steve had been reborn as Sumana, meaning 'cheerful heart', John as Kovida, meaning '“uncommonly” sensible’,

Marku as Mahindra, meaning 'Great Courage', and Maurice as Yuvaraj, meaning 'crown prince'. The four were welcomed into the spiritual community with three loud shouts of "Sadhu!"

There are now one hundred members of the Western Buddhist Order.

John Roche

ARYA MAITREYA MANDALA

I recently spent a week in Germany as the guest of the Rev. Advayavajra, who runs the Arya Maitreya Mandala (AMM) in Germany. This is the first contact that we have made with the AMM since Bhante was last in India in 1966, although there has been a little correspondence between us

over the last few years. Bhante was in fact present when Lama Govinda founded the Western branch of the AMM at Sanchi in November 1952. He also had a lot of contact with Advayavajra, especially in Ahmedabad, where for some years Advayavajra ran a hospital.

Although they are very much a

Vajrayana Order and operate quite differently from us, I did find that their approach is in many ways quite close to ours. Firstly they are an order – a spiritual community. It is only through joining a spiritual community that one can commit oneself fully to the Three Jewels. Secondly they appreciate the importance of Kalyana Mitrata – especially for those considering ordination. This is especially important for them, since it usually takes between three and seven years for someone to be accepted for ordination. Thirdly, they emphasize the necessity for developing a positive emotional base for their spiritual development. Fourthly, the Order is above all concerned to bring the Dharma to the West in a manner that is appropriate to conditions here. This was the hope of Tomo Geshe Rimpoche, Lama Govinda's guru, at whose inspiration the AMM was founded.

I personally had a very enjoyable time. One of the greatest joys of life is making new friends in the Dharma, and I hope that as a result of my visit there will be increasing contact between us and the AAM.

Lokamitra



Lama Govinda with Li Gotami and the Ven. Sangharakshita

Publications

Just to remind you... There is now available a beautiful poster - in red and gold - based on Bhante's poem 'The Song of the Windhorse'. It costs £1.00 (+20p p+p), and can be ordered (as can be all our publications from now on) from Windhorse Publications, 22 Macroom Rd, W.Kilburn, London W.9.

We have just produced, in booklet form, an essay by Bhante entitled "Aspects of Buddhist Morality". This very helpful and comprehensive introduction to Buddhist ethics costs 50p

(+10p p+p). PUJA is back in print. This booklet, containing the verses of our Seven-fold Puja, Refugees and Precepts, Ti Ratana Vandana, as well as several other short devotional texts, is now in its fourth reprint. It costs 65p (+10p p+p). In autumn we will be producing a completely new and expanded Puja book. Stay in touch for more details.

Meanwhile Ananda is busy compiling and preparing for publication an exciting new edition of Bhante's 'Sayings, Poems,

and Reflections'. This too should be available in the autumn.

Finally, don't forget to subscribe to the Newsletter, or renew your subscription if you think it is overdue. As you may know, we carry on sending it even if you do not subscribe - so the responsibility for keeping us solvent and able to produce books on the Dharma rests partly with you. PLEASE, PLEASE SUBSCRIBE IF YOU POSSIBLY CAN.

Nagabodhi

A NEW EDITORIAL SERVICE FOR THE FRIENDS

Since the end of May, Sukhavati has been the base of a budding new venture - an editorial team that hopes to edit not only FWBO publications but also works of other publishers, thus broadening the scope of our profit-making enterprises.

My background is as a reference-book editor. Largely on the basis of this experience a small group of Friends, mainly from Amaravati, is training to become proof-readers and editors. Within the framework of Windhorse publications, we will be proof-reading and providing (sorely needed: ed) editorial assistance for future issues of the *Newsletter* and *Mitrata*, as well as books and seminar transcripts. In addition we are available - free of charge - for editing, proof-reading, or advising on any other publications within the FWBO. So far we have worked

on the appeals for the Tibetan School in Kalimpong and for Tyn-y-ddol.

As a commercial editorial service, we are part of the Pure Land Co-operative. At present I am the only one doing commercial, outside work, proof-reading a dictionary and anglicising a thesaurus. But several of us have prospects of work on a medical guide and perhaps on a new encyclopaedia.

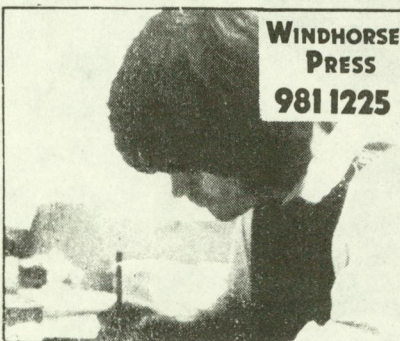
The editorial team is still improving its standards, and we are looking for more Friends to join us in proof-reading and editing. So if you think you might be interested in this kind of work, contact me at Sukhavati. Preferably you would have some academic or literary background, or an educated love of English as a written language.

Michael Scherk

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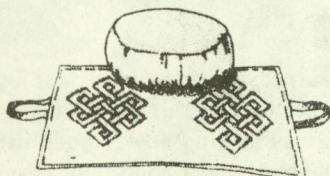


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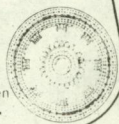
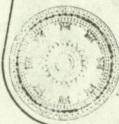
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About the Friends of the Western Buddhist Order

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. 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.

The Friends of the Western Buddhist Order is the legal body and organisational matrix, through which Order Members work. Order Members wish to create conditions whereby others can come into direct contact with the teachings of the Buddha in a practical, dynamic and living way. In our public centres and Branches we hold classes and courses in meditation and basic Buddhist teachings, yoga classes, lectures, seminars, courses in communication and retreats. We publish a quarterly newsletter and celebrate all the major Buddhist festivals. We are aware how difficult it is to develop spiritually in unco-operative surroundings and are therefore creating situations where people can live, work and practice together. We run two wholefood restaurants and a wholefood business, have our own printing press, publications department and design studio and many other businesses. Each centre and community aims to be as self sufficient as possible and new businesses and ventures are springing into life continually. In the main each centre and community is autonomous and has its own flavour through the ideal underlying all is the same. Thus we try to provide both unity and diversity and many different situations so that all those who come into contact with us can find a channel into which they can direct their energy.

The Friends is not an organisation, society or club and has no formal membership. Anyone who comes along, or who is in contact in any way, is a Friend.

FRIENDS OF THE WESTERN BUDDHIST ORDER CENTRES AND BRANCHES

The Office of the Friends of the Western Buddhist Order:

Sukhavati, 51 Roman Road, Bethnal Green, London E2. Tel: 01-981 1225

The Office of the Western Buddhist Order:

Padmaloka, Lesingham House, Surlingham, Nr Norwich, Norfolk Tel: 050 88 310

CENTRES AND BRANCHES

U.K.

*East End
Meditation Centre*
119 Roman Road
Bethnal Green
London E2
Tel: 01-981 1225

Mandala
86d Telephone Place
Fulham
London SW6
Tel: 01-960 3515

Aryatara
3 Plough Lane
Purley
Surrey
Tel: 01-660 2542

Grdhrakuta
9 Aylcliffe Grove
Longsight
Manchester
Tel: 061-225 3372

Amitayus
15 Park Crescent Place
Brighton, Sussex
Tel: 0273 698 420

Vajradhatu
41A All Saints Green
Norwich
Norfolk
Tel: 0603 27034

Heruka
13 Kelvinside Terrace
South
Glasgow G.20
Tel: 041-946 2035

OVERSEAS

FWBO Helsinki
Albertinkatu 21c 12
00120 Helsinki 12
Finland
Tel: Helsinki 669 820

FWBO Wellington
P.O. Box 12 311
Wellington North
Wellington
New Zealand

FWBO Christchurch
P.O. Box 22 — 657,
Christchurch
New Zealand

FWBO Auckland
P.O. Box 68 — 453
Newton Auckland
Auckland
New Zealand

COMMUNITIES (Visitors by arrangement only)

Sukhavati
51 Roman Road
Bethnal Green
London E2
Tel: 01-981 1225

Amaravati
30 Cambridge Park
London E11 2PR
Tel: 01-989 5083

Golgonooza
119 Roman Road
Bethnal Green
London E2
Tel: 01-980 2507

Beulah
95 Bishop's Way
London E.8.

Padmaloka
Lesingham House
Surlingham
Nr Norwich
Norfolk

Mandarava
Street Farm
The Street, Aslacton
Norwich, Norfolk
Tel: Tivetshall 344

Vairakula
41B All Saints Green
Norwich
Norfolk
Tel: 0603 27034

Ratnadvipa
22 Macroom Road
West Kilburn
London W9
Tel: 01-960 3515

REPRESENTATIVES

Malcome Webb
2 Valley View
Trescowe, Germoe,
Penzance
Cornwall

Upasaka Aryavamsa
Elleholmesvagen 11
S-35243 Vaxjo
Sweden

Upasaka Uttara
12 Bruntsfield Gardens
Edinburgh
Tel: 031-229 7940

Upasika Vajrayogini
Ringdijk 90
Postgiro 16 2586
Rotterdam
Netherlands

Upasika Jinamata
Gleditschstr. 44
1000 Berlin 30
Germany

Michael Cusak
6 Redwood Court
Fiddler's Green Lane
Cheltenham, Glos.
Tel: Cheltenham 38653