FWBO NEWSLETTER 47

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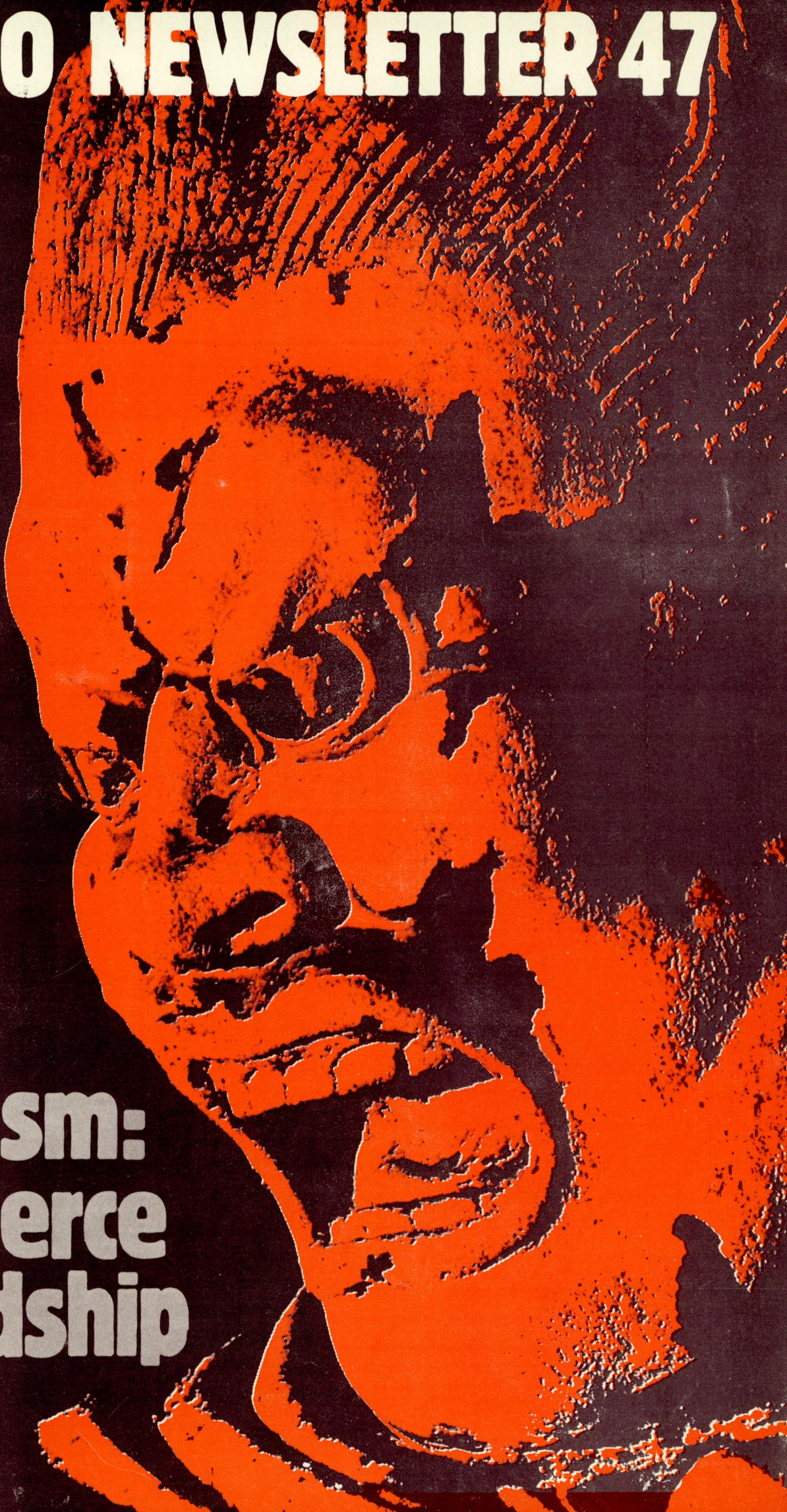
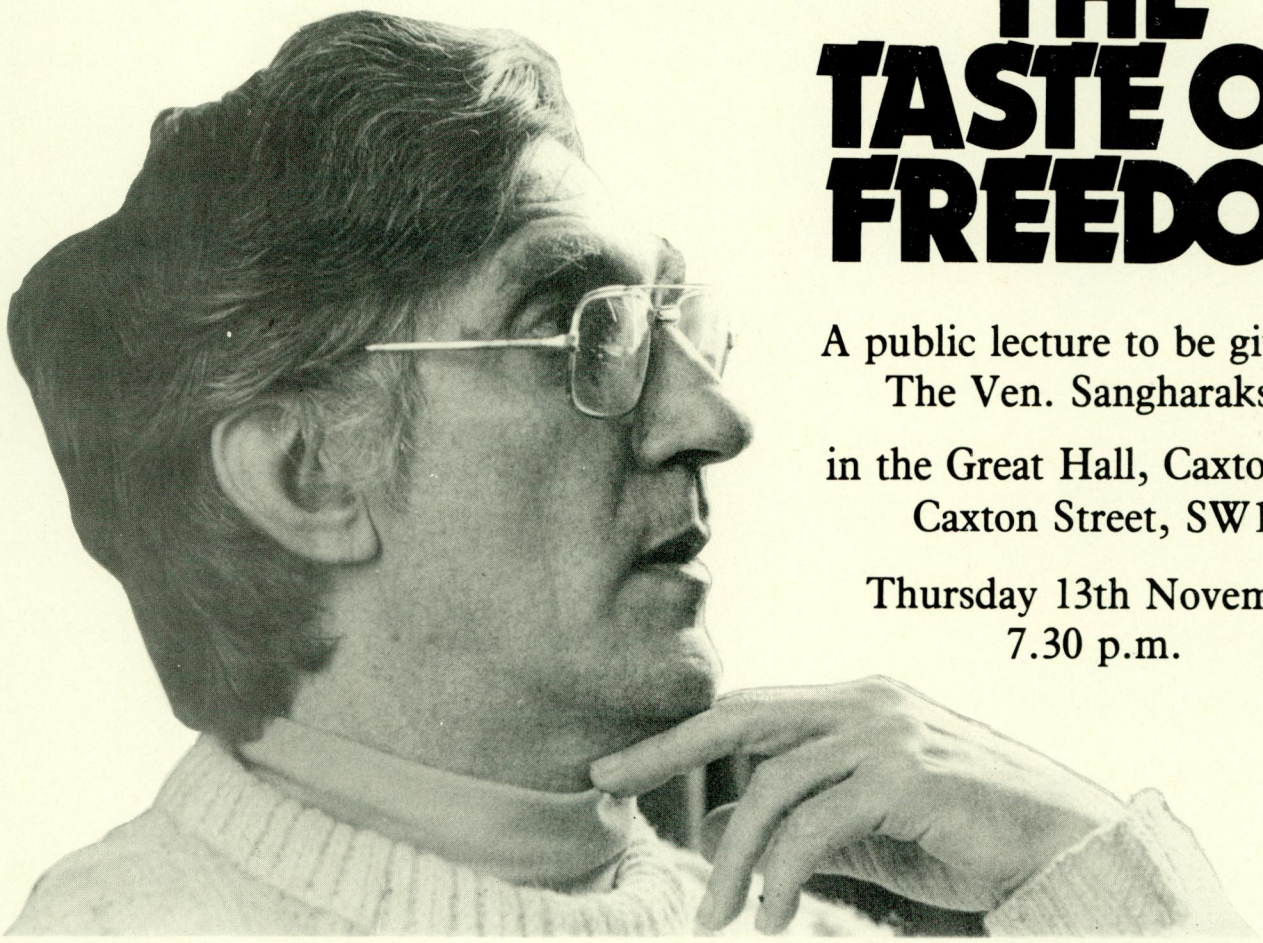


Criticism: The fierce friendship



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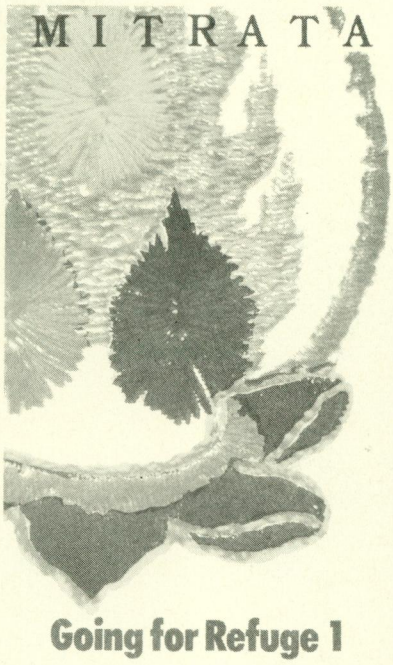

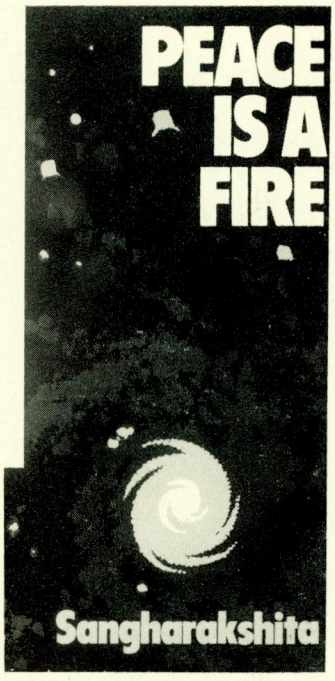

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Editorial

An inevitable element of spiritual growth is the development of a critical faculty. If you are meditating regularly, if you are paying any attention to the shifts and turns in your state of consciousness, you naturally find yourself beginning to exercise descrimination. You realise, for example, that some of your activities leave you feeling dull and drained of energy, while others lift you up and keep your mind alert. Or, you may discover that some kinds of music leave you feeling restless and dispersed, while others refine your mind, filling you with the warm thrill of inspiration. And so you begin to make choices. You discriminate. You become a critic. It is not that you go around holding yourself and the world up to the light of purely abstract criteria, nor that you make snap judgements on the basis of a passing mood. Rather, you begin to see things in the light of a critique — an expanding and deepening vision of life that is being constantly purified, tested and refined.

This development is a natural and essential symptom of spiritual growth. If your life — your pastimes, pleasures, opinions, and habits, have remained utterly unchanged by your spiritual practice, then either you came into contact with the Dharma from an unbelievably healthy basis, or, more likely, you are not really growing at all.

Just as it is not enough to develop feelings of loving kindness in the shrineroom without making them a part of your daily dealings with others, so you need also to take your critical faculties out into the world. If you keep your views and opinions to yourself, then you will rarely experience the benefits of having them challenged. More important, your discriminative vision — the product of so much effort, and so much experience — is a tremendous gift that you have to offer. When a friend of yours is lost in confusion, or clearly caught up in a tangle of misunderstandings, you may of course feel that you have no right to impose your views on him. You may hold back, afraid lest he reject or even resent your still tender shoots of wisdom. But what do you gain by keeping silent? What does he gain? Surely it is better to take some risks?

Of course the *Dharmapalas*, those wrathful looking archetypes of uncompromising dedication to the truth are by no means tentative. They are afire with wisdom, afire with love, afire in their concern to see the truth preserved, protected, and followed. So if we are a little diffident at first, we should not forget that if we offer criticism on the basis of spiritual friendship then we are entering the ranks of the *Dharmapalas*, and that our final aim is to proclaim the truth and attack ignorance with a lions roar of compassion and fearlessness.

Perhaps it could be suggested that some of the principles underlying individual development apply also to the growth of a spiritual movement. The FWBO is growing, not just in numbers but also in depth and scope of collective experience and wisdom. False and misleading views are being tracked down and exposed, general principles are being articulated and assimilated. It could maybe be said that the FWBO has now reached a point at which it needs to be, and can afford to be, a bit more outward going — not just through its centres, communities and cooperatives, but also through the medium of criticism.

To criticise, to point out shortcomings and failings, is every bit as loving an endeavour as is the pointing out of what is true and worthy. To criticise is not to sit in cold judgement on others; it is to enter into intimate communication with them, in which only what is best will do. To criticise is to demonstrate the desire to develop a fierce friendship.

Nagabodhi

Manjughosha

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CRITICISM AND SPIRITUAL GROWTH

Padmapani

by Asvajit

The last issue of the Newsletter turned on the theme of Inspiration. This issue examines 'Criticism', and here we shall look at criticism in the context of Kalyana Mitrata or Spiritual Friendship. We need to appreciate, right from the outset of our Spiritual development, that criticism is an important, even indispensable aspect of our development as individuals. If criticism is well-founded, it shows us the best way to proceed, and if it is ill-founded, then it is an opportunity for us to practice forebearance.

Whereas the feeling of inspiration is an indication that the goal of spiritual practice and effort is relatively 'near', or that we are at least facing the goal and travelling towards it, criticism tells us that we are relatively 'far' from the goal, even facing in the opposite direction and travelling away from it. Criticism indicates that we have lost sight of That to which we Go for Refuge, or have begun to confuse it with something quite mundane.

What was the Buddha's attitude to criticism? There is the story in the Pali of the Buddha entering a 'royal rest house' in Ambalatthika Park, where He learns that His disciples have been discussing the case of Brahmadatta and Suppiya his mendicant teacher, who are 'camp followers'. Young Brahmadatta has been praising the Buddha, His Doctrine and the Order, even though Suppiya has been maligning them. So the Buddha says:

> 'Bhikkhus, if outsiders should speak against me, or against the Dharma, or against the Sangha, you should not on that account either bear malice, or suffer heart-burning, or feel illwill. If you, on that account, should be angry and hurt, that would stand in the way of your own self-conquest. If, when others speak against us, you feel angry at that, and displeased, would you then be able to judge how far that speech of theirs is well said or ill?'
>
> 'That would not be so, Sir.'
>
> 'But when outsiders speak in dispraise of me, or of the Dharma, or of the Sangha, you should unravel what is false and point it out as wrong, saying: "For this or that reason this is not the fact, that is not so, such a thing is not found among us, is not in us." '[1]

This reveals the Buddha's refuge in the face of criticism: He does not say the critic is to be vilified or pooh-poohed; animosity is not the answer. The criticism is to be considered *objectively*. There *may* be an element of opinionatedness, of subjectivity in the criticism, but that can be set aside and dealt with later on, if necessary. First one considers the criticism simply as to its truth. Does it accord with what one knows, from tradition, or from one's own observation and reflection, to be true, or not? How refreshingly 'cool' and 'loose to life' is this attitude, how unattached to any false sense of self.

The offering of criticism by a spiritual friend, unlike dispraise, really is an act of friendship, for it shows a living concern for the person being criticized, — a refusal to be indifferent to their shortcomings. What could be more loving than that? Of course, for criticism to be really effective, a positive response is required. We need to change in the direction indicated by the criticism. For instance, we may be told that our communication is poor. So, if we are open to this criticism, if we are *willing* to change, we will respond by trying to communicate better. If someone says that they cannot hear you, you speak louder, you do not protest in a whisper that they are wrong. Furthermore, it is a truism that one cannot enter into communication with someone who holds back his response; thus one's action, one's wholehearted reply, is required. This creates the possibility of involvement and change, of spiritual development. Where previously there was stagnation, mutual incomprehension and even animosity, there is now the possibility of movement, of understanding, and friendship — friendship 'in opposition', through criticism — *real* friendship, not the soft and easy flattery that is really spiritual enmity.

In criticising our friends we need to be careful not to become too abstract, however; criticism is heart-to-heart communication between two people concerned for each others' welfare. It is therefore practical, down-to-earth, readily understandible, capable of being acted upon, sensible in its implications. Whether criticism is offered in the context of work, play, or exercise, the results of acting upon it should be immediately apparent and of obvious benefit. If this was not the case, one would be acting in blind faith, which is definitely not a Buddhist virtue. The co-operation of *all* one's faculties, *including* the intelligence, is needed to effect change in the direction of integration. So, our response to criticism is not one of abject servitude, but of responsible, appropriate, 'willing' activity, which seeks to improve upon what has been shown to be inadequate, and to harmonise the relationship between critic and criticized.

Criticism is relatively commonplace, but acting upon it, unfortunately, is not. It is uncommon, especially outside the context of spiritual friendship, for us to act upon the implications of criticism because it requires effort, determination, what is popularly termed 'will-power', to change and develop. To change ourselves and change the world, is very very difficult, but such a transformation is more than ever necessary, faced as we are with the prospect of a cataclysm of suffering on a global scale.

As we have seen, inspiration may be sufficient for someone who is already in touch with the positive emotions, already in sight of the spiritual Ideal, but it does seem that many people nowadays find it very difficult to get 'out of their heads' and firmly into their feelings. Unfortunately they do not respond readily to the example of people living energetic, creative lives, and until they are told in no uncertain terms that they are neurotic, lazy, or even worse, nothing happens. For such people, criticism is an emotional co-relative of physical irritation — it causes them to remove, or try to remove, the irritant. We may, if we are careful, and if we are lucky, avoid the grosser forms of physical suffering, and we are indeed fortunate if we do. However, without some form of discomfort, the human personality very quickly begins to stagnate, so a consciously-applied irritant may be necessary from time to time — even quite frequently in some cases — to cause us to make fresh effort, and criticism ideally fills this requirement for a sort of 'spiritual itching powder'.

Criticism, then, though not comfortable, is for that very reason necessary. As the Ven. Sangharakshita says, "The besetting sin of... Buddhism [is] laziness and indifference."[2] A number of reasons, some of them of a very profound metaphysical nature, might be adduced to account for this, but perhaps we should content ourselves with the reflection that the worst fate of the spiritual aspirant is to get stuck in a rut — whether it is the rut of a rather dilute 'happiness' or 'success', or a rather glib, a rather smug 'disgruntlement' with worldly affairs. All too easily we become complacent, get too 'laid back', and the moment that happens, we begin to stagnate — we stop developing, and before we know what has happened we may have lost the ground that we thought we had put behind us months or even years ago. So it is very important that each member of the Spiritual Community sharpens and weilds the double-edged blade of criticism, in order to foster Kalyana Mitrata, and to encourage the development of his brothers and sisters in the Sangha.

We should criticise not so much out of an aspiration to uphold the truth, noble though this may be, but rather out of a living concern for the welfare of others. The great Buddhist poet-saint Santideva says "Both directly and indirectly one must act only for the welfare of sentient beings. One should bend everything to their welfare and to their Enlighten-

[1] *Digha-Nikaya No. 1. Dialogues of the Buddha*. Translated from the Pali by T. W. RHYS DAVIDS. (London & Boston 1973). Part 1, pp. 2-3.

[2] Sangharakshita, *Peace is a Fire*. Windhorse Publications.

ment".[3] It is from the thought 'how can I help others?' that all good seems to spring. So much of the world's misery — perhaps most of it — comes about through selfish thought and through misguided attempts at help. So if we can criticize, if we can point out where others are going wrong, where there is 'something missing', whether material, emotional or spiritual, then the way is open for progress. If we can even supply 'what is missing' so much the better!

Criticism is thus the goad, the spur to development, for many people. It is for them the impetus towards improvement, and even to perfection. To refuse to give or to take criticism, or to be rather 'precious' about it, is to refuse, or to be reluctant, to grow — to refuse to accept the challenge to transform oneself and the world, to refuse to accept the responsibility of being human. What could be a more damning indictment than that?

Is there anything that may be said to constitute a method, a critique of criticism? At its most basic, criticism is just seeing clearly what is there, and communicating that vision. But this implies the ability to sustain one's vision — to have the energy, and the confidence in that energy, to penetrate the multiple layers of habitual thinking and emotional reactiveness which prevent us, most of the time, from 'just seeing'. This energy and confidence is developed through the systematic practice of meditation, and through the many other indirect methods of growth and self-development. Gradually we learn to see, and to communicate, without prejudice, without colouration, whatever is there. We learn to listen, to be receptive to criticism, to act upon it, on whatever is aimed at our own inadequacies, our incompleteness and imperfection.

A modern physicist was reported recently as having said that all religions are about wholeness. Whether or not this is true, 'wholeness' is certainly vital for the critic. One's effectiveness as a critic will be in proportion to the wholeness of one's vision. The 'method' of criticism, then, may be said to lie in the development of wholeness, of completeness.

We could say that, in the spiritual life, we start with vision, ascend to inspiration, and 'descend' with criticism. We start with a Vision, an intimation of the Ideal, perhaps quite early on in our practice of the Buddhadharma. That Vision shows us what we can become, if only we make the effort. The example of others, and further contact with the Three Jewels, inspires us to develop and perfect ourselves, and provides us with the energy needed to rise to the highest of which we are at present capable. And then, criticism of self and others provides the means of 'descent' from that vision — or rather, a means of sustaining that vision in the midst of the world *without* 'descending', without falling back to some lower, less integrated state. Even more, criticism helps us to keep moving forward, to go beyond our present limits, and to develop even higher states of being and consciousness.

There are numerous paradigms — conceptual and symbolical models — of the Ideal, in Buddhism. To the uncommitted, one's goal, one's aim and purpose in life should be to Go for Refuge, simply to start on the Path. To the Committed, one's goal is perfection, completion. The Buddha, the One who is eternally perfected, and the Bodhisattvas, the Ones who exemplify Buddhahood in action, provide us with our finest paradigms, our greatest exemplars. To the extent that we do not emulate *their* activity, to that extent we are unenlightened, and to that extent something is missing. The Noble Eightfold Path is also a paradigm, a conceptual basis, for criticism. To the extent that we do not exemplify that Path in our own lives we are (spiritually) ignorant, unenlightened. The Ten (or Five) Precepts that we take, or aspire to observe, are a basis for criticism. Our friends, the company we keep, our homes, our surroundings, our manners, our lifestyle can also be a basis for criticism. Everything that we do, whether we like it or not, can be understood as a criticism of others, and is in its turn a basis for others' criticism of us.

We should not hesitate to use whatever we can in the wonderfully rich and truly cultured heritage that is Buddhism to both inspire and to afford us a basis for criticism of ourselves and others. We need to be provoked and urged to constant effort if, as often we must, we fall short of the Ideal.

Criticism deflates the inflated, reveals the shallowness of the immature and uncommitted, and discomforts the selfish and mean. It inspires the aspirant, encourages the devoted, vindicates the victorious. Criticism at its best is an intimation of perfection, it is the Voice of the Buddha, the purifying activity of the Bodhisattvas. Never let it be said of the Spiritual Aspirant that criticism is unwelcome, or criticism witheld!

3 Santideva, *The Bodhicaryavatara*. Trans: Marion L. Matics. Macmillan.

Vajradipa

Puja provides us with a way of forming an emotional rapport with the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas. This kind of link, a living contact with the highest ideals of Buddhism, can serve as the basis for a truly Buddhistic approach to criticism of self and others.

CRITICISM AND THE BUDDHIST WORLD

by Subhuti

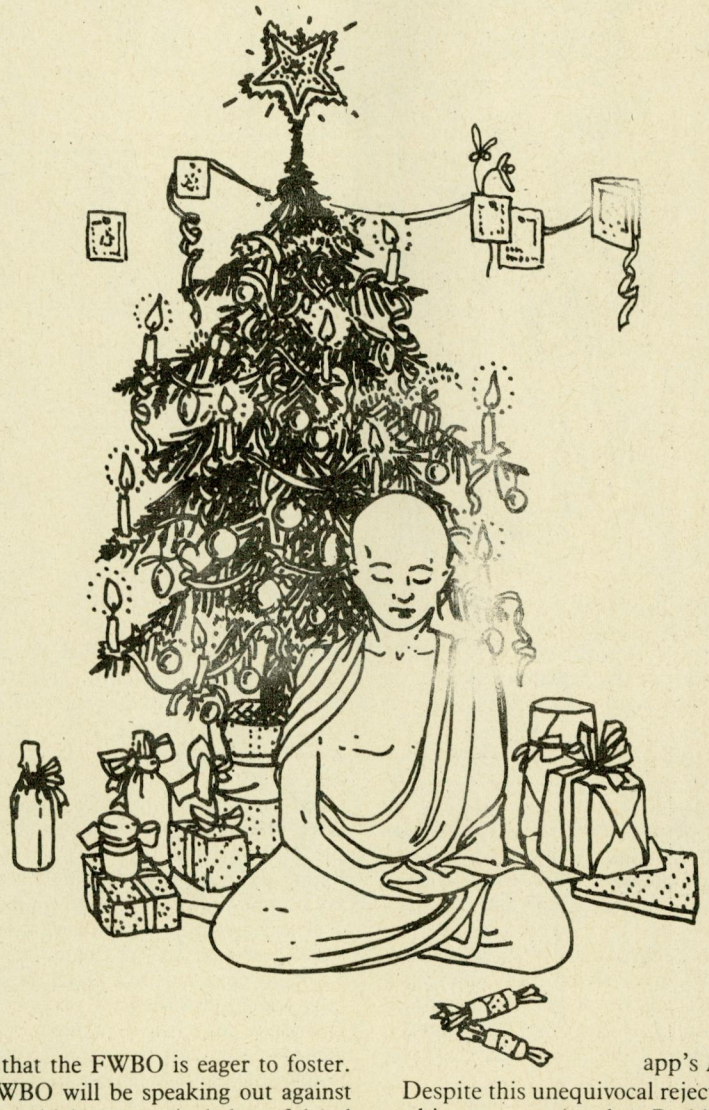
A recent opinion poll showed that Buddhism was one of the fastest growing religions in Britain. Indeed, many new groups are springing up throughout the West — followers of this or that Eastern tradition or of new syntheses of Buddhism and, say, psychology or science. This plethora no doubt includes many sincere, even committed, Buddhists yet there is much that is frankly odd and which seriously distorts and misrepresents the Dharma.

Faced with this mass of confusion, what is the committed Buddhist to do? - Smile meekly, saying that everyone is entitled to his point of view, and that the Truth will out? Yet confusion begets confusion and the truth only emerges if it is actively persued and openly declared. Maintaining silence here is not observing the 'thunderlike silence' of a Vimalakirti but rather squeeking with mouse-like timidity.

After some unpleasant experiences of contact with 'Buddhist' groups in its early days, the FWBO has judged it expedient to minimise contact — at least at an 'official' level. Clear of the muddle to which the modern Buddhist world seems so prone, Order members and Friends have been able to get on with the main tasks of personal growth and of building the facilities within which more and more people may develop. The time has now come for the FWBO to stand forth — in the world at large and in the Buddhist world.

We are increasingly ready to make contact with Buddhists the world over: friendly contact, that is, between *individuals* — not groups or organisations. There can be no contact at a purely formal, organisational level without a basis of real personal friendship and mutual commitment. It is this kind of communication that the FWBO is eager to foster.

However, increasingly, the FWBO will be speaking out against those features of modern Buddhism which seem actively harmful and misleading. We hope that we will also have occasion to rejoice in the merits of those who do make the Three Jewels shine out more brightly. Given the present condition of Buddhist groups it is, however, likely that we will have much criticism to make. Criticism should not be mistaken for spleen; we are as willing to talk things over in a friendly way with those we criticise as with those we praise. Criticism should be taken as a mark of real concern; let us hope that its result is a unity of genuine understanding and common vision rather than a hollow pretence constructed of shared platforms and vague legalistic formulae.



Annie Leigh

Our first criticism must be of those Buddhists who do not accept Buddhism — who fit Buddhism to suit their own presuppositions. Nowhere is this more evident than in the attitude of many 'Buddhists' to Christianity and to belief in God. The Buddha Himself — according to scriptures common to all Schools — explicitly rejected any belief in a God who is creator and ruler of the universe. His attitude, in common with later tradition, was to treat it as a belief worthy only of ridicule, born of insecurity, self-interest, or mere ignorance. Those in any doubt on Buddhism's position should read the anthology of scriptural material on this question in Von Glasenapp's *Buddhism: a Non-Theistic Religion*.[1]

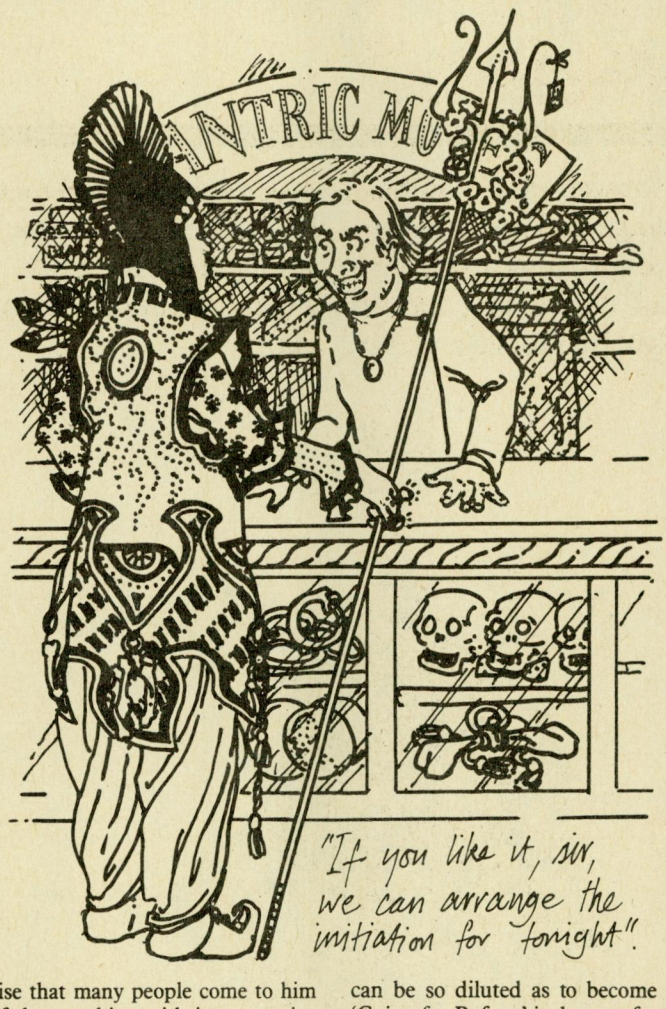
Despite this unequivocal rejection of theism by Buddhists throughout history many 'modern Buddhists' in the West go out of their way to present Buddhism as, in its own fashion, talking about God.

"When I started to train in the Dharma I experienced something akin to severe culture shock when I was told that there was, most definitely, a Cosmic Buddha... perhaps the Cosmic Buddha was not *really* God, but merely a useful symbol? This soothing thought lasted about a week in the face of the teaching I was receiving, and eventually I had to concede that the terms 'Cosmic Buddha' and 'God' were indubitably synonymous." — Rev. Chushin Passmore, Priest-Trainee: 'The Cosmic Buddha IS in 'The Journal of Throssel Hole Priory', November-December, 1979.

'The Order of Buddhist Contemplatives' at Throssel Hole Priory use Christian nomenclature, style, and teachings extensively — Priors and Abbots, Revs., Parish Churches, and St Francis of Assisi. The implication seems to be made that Christianity and Buddhism are two forms of a single truth or, worse still, that Buddhism is a kind of Christianity. Since the Order consists mainly of Westerners it is surprising that they have not been more aware of the *dissimilarities* between Christianity and Buddhism and not happier to rejoice in them.

Some Eastern Buddhists who teach Westerners use the concept of God, and other Christian terminology, in naive ignorance of the effects and influence of Christianity. They think that the use of Christian terms will provide a useful bridge to an understanding of Buddhism. The problem is that the idea of 'God' — protests to the contrary notwithstanding — is inextricably bound up with authority and dogma, and cannot fail to convey the very opposite of the freedom and bliss which is at the heart of Buddhism.

Lama Thubten Yeshe, for instance, in his book *Silent Mind, Holy Mind: a Tibetan Lama's reflections on Christmas* suggests that 'the teaching that says God created everything, including ourselves, can be a very effective antidote to our false pride'. He further offers Christ visualisation to those Buddhists who 'feel great devotion to Jesus'. He says 'Unity — in an actual, realistic sense — would be for everyone to follow the teachings of his or her religion exactly as they were given'. Here we have the core of the problem: the Lama — a sincere and learned Buddhist — has no idea of the effects of Christian teaching 'exactly as it is given'. He has never had any experience of the crushing burden of psychological guilt which many have derived from their Christian upbringing. He does not realise that many people come to him emotionally crippled as a result of that teaching with its repressive influence still buried deep in their psyches. To encourage them to follow the teachings of their Christian upbringing is to encourage them to persist in the crippled condition to escape from which so many have turned to Buddhism.



Annie Leigh

Ven. Akong Rimpoche, a Tibetan Lama from Samye-Ling Centre in Scotland, in a talk to the Congress of Faiths at St Alban's Cathedral in May this year, equated the Trikaya Doctrine with the Christian Trinity. No doubt he himself does not conceive of the Dharmakaya as an omniscient, omnipotent, personal, creator God but he has — by giving expression to an admitted ignorance about Christianity — passed on a totally distorted idea of a very subtle and important Buddhist teaching.

The Ven. Saddhatissa, certainly no theist, unwittingly gave a similar impression when he attended a Commonwealth Day Inter-Religious Service in March this year at Westminster Abbey, London. At the service the congregation — reported as including the Buddhists present (among them presumably Ven. Saddhatissa) — affirmed four principles, the first two of which run thus:

1. We affirm our common faith in the Eternal Being, the Creator of all things, beyond and within all things.
2. We affirm our common faith that the lives of all men are in the hand of God, and that he is wherever men are.

Presumably the Ven. Saddhatissa was not aware that this was to be done. Buddhists should, however, be far more careful about sharing inter-faith platforms which usually serve only to endorse the beliefs of the organisers. It is much more useful to make clear what is distinctive about Buddhism, rather than suggesting a spurious identity with Christianity, or any other point of view, whether by design or — as appears to be the Ven. Saddhatissa's case — by simple carelessness.

Some Western expositors of Buddhism take up the position that the Buddha neither affirmed nor denied the existence of a supreme creator God or else suggest that Buddhism is God-centred, though applying a different understanding to the term. One cannot help wondering at such attachment to a word which has caused so much trouble in the past.

In his best-selling book *Buddhism,* Christmas Humphreys, the President of the Buddhist Society, lists the 12 Principles of Buddhism which he persuaded a number of traditional Buddhist Schools to accept. Part of one principle reads 'Buddhism is neither pessimistic nor 'escapist', nor does it deny the existence of God or Soul, though it places its own meaning on these terms'. Any meaning which it did place on those terms would be so different from the usual understanding of them that it would render them virtually useless.

Mr Humphreys has, unfortunately, become the leading public exponent of Buddhism. So authoritative is he considered to be that a recent affidavit on the subject of Buddhist belief placed by him before the Court of Appeal was accepted as major evidence. The South Place Ethical Society, a rationalist religious society, was appealing against the Inland Revenue's decision not to register it as a religious charity since its members did not worship a Supreme Being. An important argument in their case was that Buddhism — a recognised religion whose organisations had charitable status — also did not accept a Supreme Being. Mr Humphreys, in his affidavit, argued that whilst Buddhism denies the existence of a personal creator God it affirms the existence of a Supreme Being or Principle. It is a pity that such dubious Buddhism was used to help destroy an honest attempt to expand the legal definition of a religion.

Distortion of the Dharma is not a matter only of misrepresentation. Fundamental principles can be so diluted as to become almost meaningless. For instance, 'Going for Refuge' is the act of commitment by which one becomes a Buddhist. In Going for Refuge one gives expression to a deep feeling that to develop as an individual is the whole purpose and meaning of one's life. The formal ceremony of Going for Refuge only has significance when it expresses a real reorientation of the life of the individual concerned. It is a step to be taken very seriously indeed, both by those who take the Refuges, and by those teachers from whom they are taken. In much of the modern Buddhist world the fundamental importance of Going for Refuge has been forgotten. The emphasis has shifted from commitment to a specifically monastic lifestyle. A 'real' Buddhist is not seen as one who is committed to the Three Jewels but as one who has simply 'become a monk'.

It is Tibetan Buddhists more than any others who have kept alive the central importance of Commitment in the act of Going for Refuge. Yet many modern Tibetan teachers in the West give the Refuges with little explanation and even without any personal contact with the individuals concerned. One young Mitra from the FWBO — who had not at that time even thought of asking for ordination into the Western Buddhist Order — went to a meeting conducted by the Karmapa — a prominent Tibetan Lama. Afterwards he was informed that he had been ordained as an Upasaka and was given a Tibetan name. Worse still, he discovered that he had taken the Bodhisattva vow — a step

which is normally regarded as the expression of a high degree of spiritual development. Such casual dispensing of teachings of the deepest spiritual significance trivialises them to the point at which they become almost meaningless.

The founders of the Manjushri Insititute, Lamas Thubten Yeshe and Thubten Zopa, are known to introduce their followers very quickly to quite esoteric practices. Monks from the Institute were conducting an Avalokitesvara visualisation for complete beginners at the 1979 Festival of Body-Mind-Spirit in London. One Mitra reported that on attending an introductory course at the Institute's parent Centre at Kopan, Nepal, she was given instruction *only* in visualisation meditations and never in basic concentration techniques. Indeed, at the Institute it is possible to get initiations into meditation practices normally given only to advanced practitioners by simply paying to attend a course. Many will be bewildered by this approach, perhaps even put off the Dharma, yet even those who do find it appealing will be able to respond to little more than the aesthetic attractions of the practices rather than to their real, deep, spiritual meaning.

Perhaps the worst brand of distortion to which Buddhism is subject in the modern world is what is best described as 'Buddhist Politics'. For instance, in 1978 the Buddhist Society claimed in the pages of its magazine, *The Middle Way*, that it had been recognized by the Government as the official representative of the Buddhist community in Britain. It turned out that, in fact, the President of the Society, Mr Humphreys, had been invited to a service in honour of the Queen's Silver Jubilee. Quite rapidly this had been inflated into 'official recognition'. The claim was, in fact, quite false since the Society had certainly not been asked to represent the FWBO which accounts for a sizeable proportion of the Buddhists in Britain nor yet, so far as we know, any other group. Dishonesty apart, the claim had possible serious implications. By making such claims frequently and loudly enough it is likely that eventually they will be taken seriously. The Government might actually come to see the claimant as *the* representative and make decisions affecting the lives of Buddhists not connected with the Society on the basis of their representations — decisions, say, about prison visiting, conscription, immigration, legal status etc. After all, Mr Humphreys has, as we have seen, already been able to misrepresent the Buddhist teaching in the Court of Appeal to the sad disadvantage of the South Place Ethical Society.

"So there I was sitting on my cushion twelve hours a day, knees feeling like they were about to fall off, when suddenly I started to feel this amazing feeling at the top of my head..."

Annie Leigh

Apart from our dismay at this violation of elementary democratic principles, we were alarmed that the Society could consider itself to represent Buddhists when the Society makes no requirement that even its leading members should be Buddhists. It is well known that some prominent — even powerful — members of the Society do not consider themselves to be Buddhists. Too often in the past supposedly Buddhist Organisations have been controlled by people who have no Buddhist commitment. The most telling example is that of the Maha Bodhi Society of India which has, at times, been governed by a Council with a Hindu majority — some of whom were openly *anti*-Buddhist. It is, surely, of the utmost importance that Buddhist organisations are in the active control of the spiritually committed.

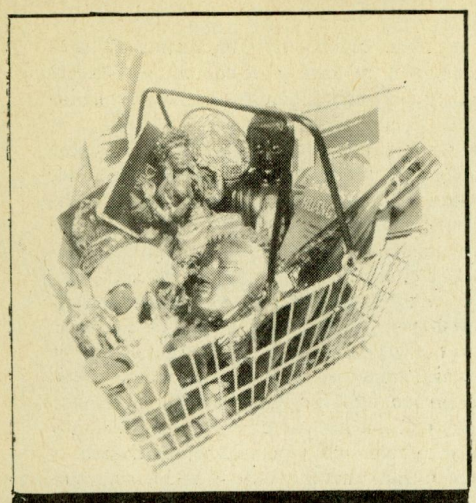
Fortunately, the Buddhist Society responded well to our criticism of the claim to representation and, though no official repudiation was made, no further claims of that kind were put forward. However, the Society has been involved in another incident which has given rise to suspicions of a similar unilateral declaration of representation. Two years ago the Society became the British member of the European Buddhist Union — an organisation which recognises but one representative body in each country. By implication, the Buddhist Society has become the representative body for Britain. In fairness to the Society, they have — in private discussion — repudiated any such intention and some members of the Society are committed to reconsidering membership if they cannot get the European Buddhist Union to change its structure.

We have watched with some concern the growth of the European Buddhist Union itself. We have found in the past that some people seem to make a sort of vocation out of calling Buddhist conferences and organising unions without themselves being truly committed to the Three Jewels. One might almost say 'Those who are committed practise, those who are not call conferences'. The terms on which the conference, fellowship, or union meets are those of the organisers and any possibility of true fellowship or union is precluded. The European Buddhist Union itself has shown an alarmingly authoritarian tendency to dictate the basis on which Buddhist groups should meet. As yet, without further information about its aims and origins, it is difficult to decide whether it is of any real spiritual value or whether it is simply another quasi-official platform for self-appointed representatives of Buddhism. The tendency to think that the cause of Buddhism is furthered by simply gathering people together for a conference or ceremony is one which has echoes in other 'religious' circles. Indeed, a conscientious hierarch, of whatsoever religion, and howsoever appointed, could spend his whole life going from one gathering to another — from the Interfaith this, to the World Congress of that, to the Festival of the other.

One such gathering is taking place at the opening of a 'Peace Pagoda' by the Japan Buddha Sangha in Milton Keynes. Ordained Buddhists from all over the world are coming to assist in the inaugural ceremonies. The Japan Buddha Sangha sees this gathering and the opening of the Stupa as a major step towards world peace and the establishment of the Dharma in the West. Whilst the sincerity and vigour of the Japan Buddha Sangha are admirable it must be said that the mere gathering together in one place of Buddhist dignitaries cannot truly constitute a significant assembly in spiritual terms. A spiritual community comes about through shared commitment and deep communication; its basis is the personal contact between the different individuals concerned. Such real Sangha requires much time and effort to mature.

Let those who are concerned for unity — a worthy enough cause, if rightly conceived — foster their personal spiritual contacts with *individuals* from different spiritual communities. Let them, for instance, attend FWBO Centres, come on retreats, make friends with Order members. Let unity be unity of commitment, of Going for Refuge; unity born of shared higher states of consciousness developed in meditation; unity through metta mutually experienced; let unity be a unity of spiritual vision. Unless there is some element of unity of this kind all the resolutions and ceremonies of conferences and assemblies are worthless.

1. Published by George Allen & Unwin.



The KALAMA SUTTA

A Guide through the Spiritual Supermarket

by Nagabodhi

What is the appeal of an exhibition like the Festival for Mind-Body-Spirit? Why do so many bookshops give over shelf-space to books and magazines on the occult, Yoga, mysticism, and astrology? Why do people flock to Indian ashrams, or to English town halls, to hear the words of all the latest 'supreme Teachers' as soon as they emerge?

Probably, a great deal of this preoccupation with the 'esoteric' is a hangover from the drug ethos of the '60's, a continuing search for new kinds of exotic experience. There is also a large element of simple curiosity invoked, academic and otherwise. But none would deny that, to put it in the way it is most often put, 'People are looking for something'.

The search for Truth is as old as man himself. There have always been seekers, and there have always been gurus. Ancient India, for example seems to have had its fair share of both. When Siddhartha left home to become a wandering ascetic he was in no way unique; he was joining a vast army of similar seekers. His fourth 'sight', after all, was of just such a man. And he found no shortage of teachers: men with huge followings who were teaching meditation techniques, extolling the virtues of certain ascetic observances, and peddling their metaphysical speculations. Indeed, from the Pali texts it is easy to gain an impression that the jungle pathways of northern India constituted one vast, eternal Festival for Mind-Body-Spirit!

Indian society of that time was divided into three broad categories. There were the orthodox Brahminical priests, ordained by caste to recite the prayers and offer sacrifices at religious functions. There were ascetic practices in their pursuit of liberation. And there were the householders, ordinary people living worldly lives, steeped in folk-religion, yet always ready to listen to the ideas of the wandering holy men who passed through their villages.

What did those villagers make of what they heard? How did they begin to unscramble all the conflicting and confusing messages they received? A poignant insight is offered by a question that was put to the Buddha by a group of people from the Kalama tribe, inhabitants of a town called Kesaputta in N.W. India:

"There are some monks and Brahmins, venerable sir, who visit Kesaputta. They illustrate and illuminate only their own doctrines; the doctrines of others they despise, revile, and pull to pieces. Some other monks and Brahmins too, venerable sir, come to Kesaputta. They also illustrate and illuminate only their own doctrines; the doctrines of others they despise, revile, and pull to pieces. Venerable sir, there is doubt, there is uncertainty, in us concerning them, 'Which of these reverend monks and brahmins spoke the truth, and which falsehood?'." (Trans: Soma Thera)

The Buddha's answer provides the body of a short text known as the *Kalama Sutta* (Anguttara Nikaya), and as some of us saw when we attended a study seminar on this text with the Ven. Sangharakshita some weeks ago, its relevance extends right up to the present day.

"It is proper for you, Kalamas, to doubt, to be uncertain; uncertainty has arisen in you about what is doubtful." In this way the Buddha begins His reply. Perhaps the Kalamas were expecting Him to offer them yet another doctrine to file away with the rest, but the Buddha, as ever, chooses to enter into a heart to heart communication with them, penetrating right to the source of their problem. The religious world is full of fantastic claims, it is a jungle of conflicting opinions. How is one to know the good from the bad, the right from the wrong? Certainly one is right to doubt what is doubtful; better honest doubt than weak compliance. But doubt breeds uncertainty. Where there is doubt there is hesitation, a holding back from commitment to a course of action; doubts have to be resolved if progress is to be made.

What the Buddha says next constitutes the heart of the Sutta. In a short statement He points to ten ways in which people are apt to allow themselves to be seduced by a teaching, and in so doing he provides the Kalamas, and us, with an effective tool for cutting through bewilderment.

"Come, Kalamas. Do not go by what has been acquired by repeated hearing". To live is to be conditioned. From the moment we are born we are being bombarded by the attitudes and beliefs of the groups to which we belong. Our entire outlook on life is based on what we have acquired by repeated hearing: from our parents, our teachers, our colleagues, the television, and so on. Actually, we would probably find it impossible to survive in society unless we had been conditioned to some extent, but if we want to evolve beyond group membership we have to go beyond all that. Sooner or later we have to question our received ideas, attitudes and assumptions, and think for ourselves. If you are a Buddhist for example, is it because you have been brought up in a 'Buddhist country', or because you have truly Gone for Refuge?

Then, *"nor upon tradition"*. Certain beliefs and institutions may seem to demand our respect simply because they have come down to us from the distant past; they have always had a certain authority within the context of the group. Some traditions may be good and healthy, others perhaps not. But we must be careful to ensure that we give our respect to things because they genuinely merit it, and not simply because they are traditions, which are sometimes little more than a sort of glue which holds the group together.

Then comes, *"nor upon rumour"*. It is interesting to observe just how much rumour forms a kind of currency in the religious world. 'This guru never sleeps; he meditates all night'. 'That shroud contained the body of Christ.' 'This Teacher is Enlightened'; 'that meditation cures all sickness'. How many of the stories that circulate are true? How many are even based on documentary evidence? And yet we seem to hear these stories all the time. It is as if people want so desperately to believe in something, or someone, that they are willing to accept claims — often the bigger the better — on the basis

Do not go upon what has been
acquired by repeated hearing
nor upon tradition
nor upon rumour
nor upon what is in scripture
nor upon surmise
nor upon an axiom
nor upon specious reasoning
nor upon a bias towards a notion
that has been pondered over
nor upon another's seeming ability
nor upon the consideration
'The monk is our teacher'.

of the flimsiest evidence. If we genuinely want to evolve we have to be a little hard-headed.

Then comes, *"nor upon what is in a scripture"*. Here, the Buddha is not suggesting that scriptures have no value at all, but reminding us that they are not to be regarded as ultimate authorities. Perhaps to the theist who regards his scripture as the revealed word of God there can be no appeal from that which is written, but a Buddhist has to learn how to *use* the scriptures. He has to apply them, make them relevant to his own spiritual needs. By means of the scriptures we are permitted to overhear a vast number of conversations between the Buddha and people of all types of background, temperament, and at different levels of attainment. Not all that we read will be relevant to us. A scripture should inspire us; it should put us in touch with a higher level of insight and consciousness. If it does then we can make use of it; if not, then we should not feel bound to it.

We now come to, *"nor upon surmise (takkahetu* — logic); *nor upon an axiom" (nayahetu* — method: 'through inference'). All the time we are using our reason; we depend on it. But can we absolutely rely on it? We see smoke and infer the existence of fire. Usually we are right, but not always. We see a teacher in flowing robes, with a deep resonant voice; are we right when we infer that he is highly evolved? So often we have to proceed from the known to the unknown, from the seen to the unseen. We have to make inferences — especially, perhaps, in the spiritual life, where there are so many unknowns. But we must be open to the fact that reason has limits, our inferences may be wrong. Above all we must be wary of those who can use words and subtle, logical-seeming arguments to beguile us into belief. Reason is a valuable tool, but it is only as useful as the raw materials it is given to work on. Moreover, there may be kinds of truth which, while beyond the ambit of reason, may have more relevance to our development than all our cautious reasoning. Those people, for example, who reject *puja* on the grounds that it is irrational are, I believe, missing out.

Next, *"nor upon specious reasoning"*. If you are going to apply reason then make sure that you really are applying it. Sometimes we want to believe in something so much, yet it does not make sense. So we turn the problem over and over in our minds until our very familiarity with the illogical argument smooths out our resistance to it.

"Nor upon a bias that has been pondered over", may sound like a repetition of the point that has gone before. The subtle difference is in the word which is here translated as 'pondered'. The Pali word *(dittihinijjhanakkhanti)* suggests a particular *depth* of involvement in an idea. We sometimes get very deeply immersed in a belief. It might have tremendous power for us. People have been known to die for their beliefs. But does the strength with which a conviction is held actually guarantee its truth? Truth is truth; it is not a 'trip'. By virtue of our intense meditation practice we feel that we have arrived at an experience of God. We may feel this, experience it, very powerfully. But does the power of our feeling prove the existence of God? Should we not at least be open to other possibilities? The Buddha says that we should.

Finally we have, *"nor upon another's seeming ability; nor upon the consideration, 'The monk is our teacher'."* Certainly, there are people who can help and advise us, but we must be careful not to be swayed by superficial elements. Someone might have a very impressive, charismatic personality, but what does he really have to say? Or, he may be highly placed in the ecclesiastical heirarchy, a prominent figure in the Buddhist world. But is his level of attainment commensurate with his title, his position, or even with the high regard in which he is commonly held? We must be able to discriminate. We have to go beyond outward show. This way we will not only avoid being fooled, but we will also be able to open ourselves and be genuinely receptive to those who really can guide us.

So by means of these ten criteria the Buddha was not telling the Kalamas, and us, what to ignore or reject, so much as pointing out the need for care and integrity in the matter of choosing and following a teaching. The sutta is an appeal to our common sense, and to our self respect. We do not have to be fooled. We do not have to act like helpless innocents just because the path is not always easy to discern. He also reminds us that the most important truth is truth that can be applied and realised. No matter how exalted it may seem, merely abstract truth is of little use to us.

"Kalamas, when you yourselves know: These things are bad (akusala); these things are censured by the wise... these things lead to harm and ill', abandon them." Thus He continues. In our hearts we do have some idea of what is good and what is bad. We know that greed, hatred and delusion bring us harm. We do not need to go scrambling for supreme teachings and metaphysical paradoxes. And we also have an idea of how good, sensible people behave. Spiritual growth, the real business of the religious life, often demands of us nothing more than that we should use our wits, pay regard to our own ideals, or turn to the people we respect for example and advice. To aim 'higher', to get ourselves involved in fanciful speculation, or other people's need for fawning disciples often only hinders us. He concludes by suggesting that by proceeding simply and sincerely in this way we will have no cause for regret: here and now we will be making ourselves happier, healthier and freer. And if there is some kind of after-life, all our expeditions to the spiritual supermarket will profit us not a jot more than a life sensibly and skillfully lived.

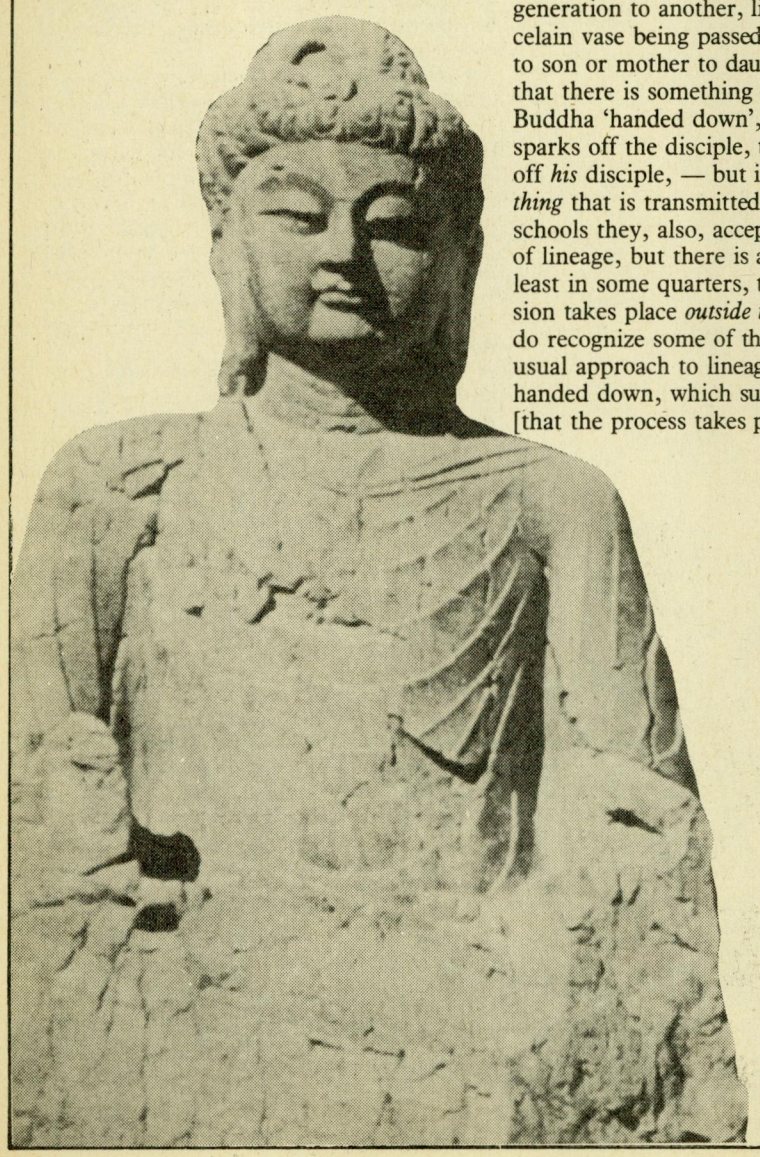
The *Kalama Sutta* is a tremendous teaching. It should appear in letters of fire wherever people gather in search of new truths. We are responsible only to ourselves. We do not have to be in a hurry; we do not have to be gullible. And we are probably far more capable than we may think of taking responsibility for ourselves.

Nagabodhi

What's your ? lineage

Whenever the Ven. Sangharakshita leads a study seminar, the proceedings are recorded on tape. The tapes are transcribed, and then edited for general publication. Although a complete transcript of the seminar on The Kalama Sutta, *which was held during the course of a recent Order/Mitra event at 'Padmaloka', is not yet available, here is a highly condensed extract from it.*

Subhuti: [The question of lineage] is quite often raised, particularly by Tibetan [Buddhist] groups. I gather [Chogyam] Trungpa lays great stress on the lineage from which he derives, and there's a Manchester group which has said, more or less, that we were in no position to teach because we had no 'lineage'.



Sangharakshita: This raises the question of what one means by lineage in this context. In the *Kalama Sutta* the Buddha clearly rejects mere tradition as a reason for accepting religious teachings, and in the *Diamond Sutra* there is a passage where He says that the Tathagata does not transmit anything. Thus the whole idea of lineage is based, almost, upon a literalistic way of thinking, [upon the thought] that something is actually *handed on*, from one generation to another, like a precious porcelain vase being passed down from father to son or mother to daughter. It is true that there is something of the *spirit* of the Buddha 'handed down', — the master sparks off the disciple, the disciple sparks off *his* disciple, — but it is not a sort of *thing* that is transmitted. In the Zen schools they, also, accept this whole idea of lineage, but there is also the notion, at least in some quarters, that the transmission takes place *outside time*. It seems they do recognize some of the limitations of the usual approach to lineage — as something handed down, which suggests, of course, [that the process takes place] *within time*.

Nagabodhi: Do you think, though, that in your own case you could have benefitted more from the teachers you met in Kalimpong had you been trained for years in their particular tradition and, therefore, been more receptive, more able to receive from them.

S: As far as I can recollect it made no difference at all. I can't help thinking that, in a way, more training or whatever might have made one more closed and less receptive. Because what is the important thing? That one should, as an individual, be open and receptive to another individual [without preconceptions]. That is the basic thing.

If you look at this question of lineage and tradition in Buddhism, well, there is the fact that, as we know now with our better historical knowledge, many things have been handed down which could not have been handed down from the Buddha Himself. They must have crept in at some later period. So even if one accepts the idea that one should follow what has been handed down from the Buddha, one is justified in inquiring, in any given instance, 'Has this *really* been handed down from the Buddha, and if so, what is the proof?'... If we have to follow and accept what has been handed down through the generations from the Buddha, we must be very very careful to make quite sure what the Buddha did actually hand on in the first place.

For instance, what about all the fancy hats that Tibetan lamas wear?... All right, they are very 'traditional', and if you join a Tibetan Buddhist group, no doubt you'll have to wear some of these on certain occasions, or see lamas wearing them. But do they *really* go back to the Buddha? Did the *Buddha* wear any of these sorts of hats? *(laughter)* I suspect, if you go far enough back all that you'll encounter is the Buddha's own experience of Enlightenment, together with a few quite rudimentary descriptions of that, and a few quite rudimentary indications, quite sufficient for practical purposes, of how to get there.

Vajradaka: Maybe what concerns people [is] purity of teaching...

S: Then the question arises, what is purity of teaching? The Zen schools insist on this, the Theravada schools insist on this... But [doctrinal teaching] is only pure, presumably, if it goes right back to the Buddha. Does it *all* go right back to the Buddha? Quite a lot of it doesn't. And in any case, if you go right back to the Buddha, how much doctrinal teaching do you [actually] find? So what does one mean by 'purity of teaching', 'purity of doctrine'? One can only go back to a particular kind of spiritual experience. But you can't rely upon any particular doctrinal description of that experience. You haven't got it [i.e. the experience] just because you've been ordained in a certain way or because you accept a certain doctrinal teaching... How do you know, then, that you've got what the Buddha [had]?

Clive: Haven't subsequent teachings been established by people who've gained Enlightenment?

S: Yes, but what is the criterion that their Enlightenment was the same as the Buddha's Englightenment? One rough-and-ready way [of telling], which is a pretty good way, is just by seeing the fruits. We have some idea of how the Buddha lived and how He treated other people, — some idea of what the fruits of His Enlightenment were, — so we would expect that people who were Enlightened as the Buddha was Enlightened would manifest at least something of those sort of fruits, and as far as we can tell that is what actually was the case. Not that such people imitate, not that they copy the Buddha, but the same sort of fruits are there in their lives [as in His]. If you take the life of Milarepa, the life of Hakuin, the life of Hui Neng, the same sort of fruits are manifested. So you assume that the tree is pretty much the same tree.

But there's another point which needs to be made. We were speaking of somebody's Enlightenment being the same as the Buddha's Enlightenment. But doesn't that presuppose a certain kind of thinking about Enlightenment? What sort of thinking?

Abhaya: That it's something that you can attain. Some sort of *thing*.

S: Yes: it's a sort of effect which can be duplicated... But to what extent can we speak of a person having the same experience as another person?

Abhaya: You can't, can you?

S: It isn't the same in [a] mathematical, quantitative sense, is it? It is the same, I would say, — if it *is* the same, — only in a functional sense.

Manjuvajra: Isn't there a basic kind of human trust that goes there, that says that our experiences are somewhat similar because, if they weren't, then you'd have no basis for communication?

S: [From this point of view] it's as though the Buddhist Spiritual Community throughout the world and throughout the ages is in communication. It's not that you duplicate the Buddha's experience but that you're all interconnected. The Enlightened Buddhas and Bodhisattvas and teachers of various kinds and others, perhaps less spiritually gifted, they're all interconnected. They all have a sense of one another. You can speak of them sharing a world, even sharing a sort of experience, provided you use that sort of language poetically.

Subhuti: People seem to be very naively satisfied [about traditions and lineages]. You can read out a list of names which ends in Tibetan or Chinese or whatever. They are sort of satisfied.

S: What are they wanting? They are asking for *parampara* ['tradition'], actually. I am not saying there is nothing more in it than that, but what they are looking for is a group identity, a group history.

Manjuvajra: Security.

S: Security. For instance, people have said to me, regarding, say, such-and-such Rimpoche, 'Oh, he's the *Fourteenth* Rimpoche [of his line].' Well, so what! What does that mean, 'He's *fourteenth*,' any more than if he'd been, say, the seventh or the ninth? I mean, we've got an archbishop of Canterbury who's the 102nd. There's a pope who's the 300th-and-something... If we are impressed by that sort of thing we ought to be more impressed by Christian bishops than we are by Tibetan lamas! The Dalai Lama himself is only the *thirteenth* Dalai Lama. What's the thirteenth Dalai Lama? (*laughter*)...

The Buddha took His stand on His own experience, without tracing it back to anybody. When the Buddha does refer to previous Buddhas, it is to say that He discovered what had been lost... So there's an element of rediscovery for every individual, and perhaps you can see how it links up *out of time* with the discoveries of other individuals *out of time* only after you've discovered it. You can only get back, as it were, into the past, and know what past Enlightened beings experienced, when you've got, in the present, *out of time* altogether. But you can't go back *through time* and know it and validate yourself in that way. In a way the Tantric emphasis [on the Guru] is right. If you can depend upon anybody, it's only on your own teacher with whom you're in contact here and now. You can't go back to the Buddha because you are not in contact with the Buddha. You are not even in contact with your teacher's teacher's teacher. So you've only got your own experience, and your own contact and communication with your own teacher. That's all you have got. There is nothing sort of handed down in the literal way.

Transcribed by **Alan Miller**
Edited by **Michael Scherk**
Checked by **the Ven. Sangharakshita**

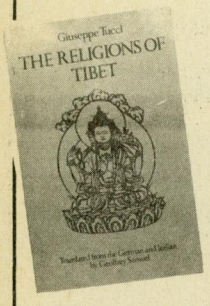
Words in square brackets have been added by the Ven. Sangharakshita for the sake of clarity.

NEW BOOKS ON BUDDHISM

(Part One)

Every year the number of books on Buddhism published in English is increasing, and more and more of them are showing signs of a deeper understanding of the Dharma than was often the case even twenty years ago. It is no longer a question of having to distinguish the partly reliable from the totally unreliable so much as a question of having to distinguish the partly unreliable from the almost totally reliable. It is also a question—so far as the FWBO is concerned—of having to distinguish what is relevant to the needs of the Buddhist Spiritual Community in twentieth century England, New Zealand, Finland, and India (to begin with) from what is not relevant to those needs. Many of the books now appearing are of sufficient importance to demand full length review articles. All that can be offered, on the present occasion, is short notices of a random but not unrepresentative selection of the books already received for review this year.

Guiseppe Tucci, **The Religions of Tibet.**
Translated from the German and Italian by Geoffrey Samuel.
Routlege & Kegan Paul, London and Henley, 1980. Pp.340. £8.95 net.



According to the publishers, Giuseppe Tucci's *The Religions of Tibet* is the first comprehensive account of Tibetan Buddhism to be published in English since Waddell's *Buddhism of Tibet* appeared in 1894. This does not take into account Hoffmann's *The Religions of Tibet* (1961), but there is no doubt that this rich and readable book by 'one of the greatest scholars whom Buddhist studies have so far produced' (E. Conze) is far and away the best 'overview of the Tibetan religious world' (p.ix) that we have yet been given. Despite its comprehensiveness, it is no mere historical survey of religious developments *ab extra* but a sensitive exploration of the depths of the Tibetan religious spirit. After summarizing the diffusion of Buddhism in Tibet in two admirably concise chapters, Professor Tucci plunges into the heart of his subject with three masterly chapters on the general characteristics of Lamaism, the doctrines of the most important schools, and monkhood, monastery life, the religious calendar and festivals. These chapters, which form the central part of the book, probably bring us closer to the real nature of Tibetan Buddhism than all the previous lucubrations on the subject put together. There are also chapters on the folk religion of Tibet and the *Bon* religion. Throughout the book Professor Tucci draws on an extensive knowledge of Tibetan texts, as well as on personal observation and research in Western and Central Tibet. In order to illustrate a point, he is even able to refer to his own experience when he obtained the consecration of *Kye rdo rje* in *Sa skya* (p.82). Yet great as his learning is he is never overwhelmed by it. At every turn we are impressed by his easy mastery of his complex material, his capacity for lucid exposition and his great power of expression. Whether expounding the views of the different Buddhist schools on the nature of the relation between light and mind (*'od gsel* and *sems*), describing the economic structure of the monasteries, or explaining the origins of the New Year's Festival, he is invariably well informed, penetrating and judicious.

Echoes of folk religion in Tibet.

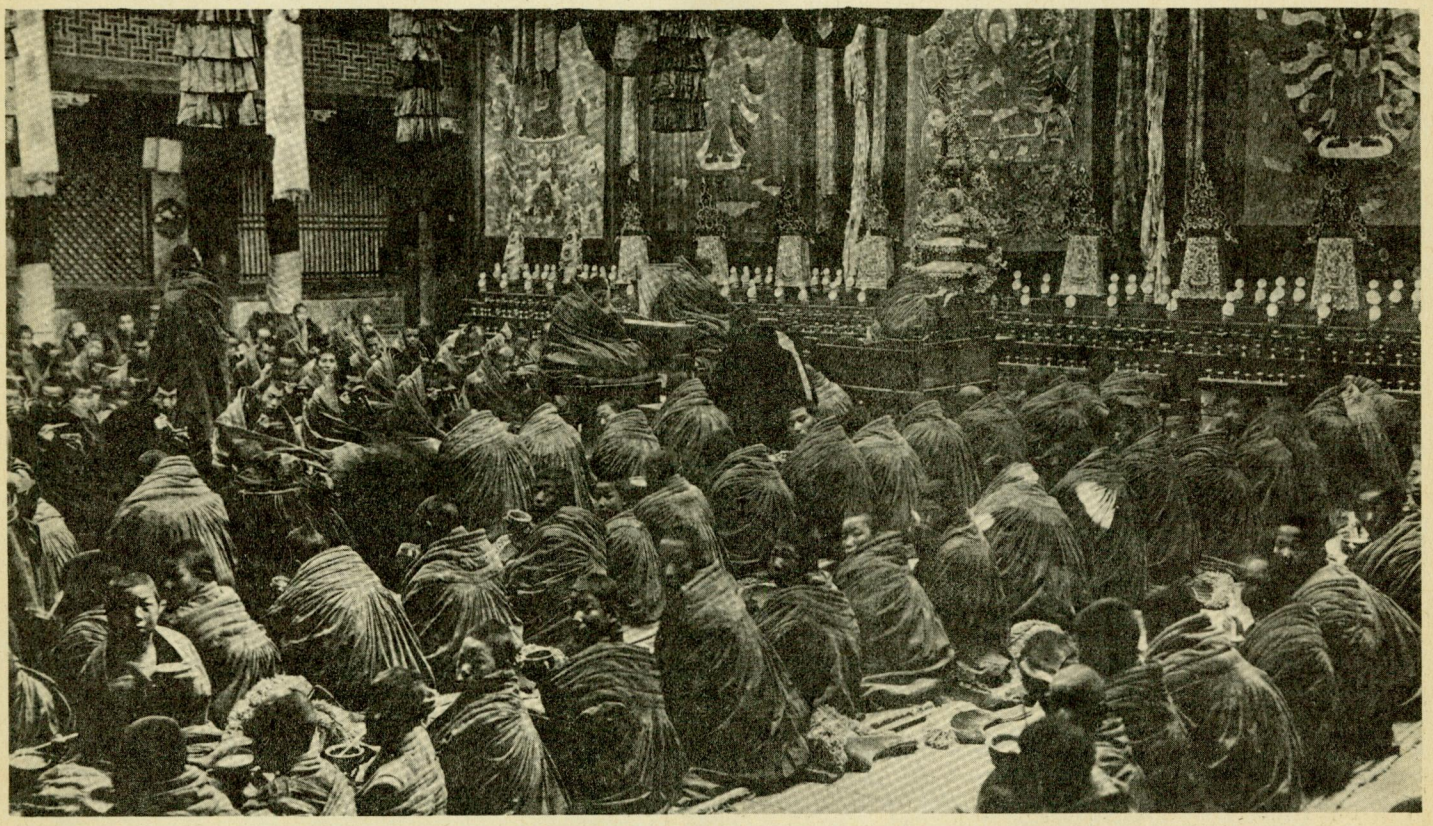
With much of the book representing the results of previously unpublished research, a number of things not clear before are clarified, while things that were already clear receive further clarification. We are made aware of the extent to which political motives were involved in the introduction of Buddhism into Tibet (p.6), as well as of the fact that the monastic communities were institutions of economic power, and therefore decisive factors in Tibetan history (p.25). Indeed, we are told that the secular power of the religious communities released 'a militant attitude which aspired to hegemony in the temporal world as well as in the spiritual.' (p.27) Emphasis is laid on the experience of pure, undifferentiated light as the common fundamental trait of the entire course of the religious experience of Tibetan man, and on the fact that 'the magical and gnostic foundations of Tantrism lend their unmistakable imprint to the whole Lamaist way of thinking and practice.' (p.93) In connection with this latter point Professor Tucci finds it necessary

to stress the importance of soteriological goals for Tibetan Buddhism. 'It would be a great error, and reveal an insufficient understanding of the special nature of Tibetan Buddhism,' he says, perhaps with some of his more 'academic' colleagues in mind, 'if one were to disregard the soteriological goals permeating and dominating it. It is not a question here of a purely intellectual process, not of the acquisition of theoretical knowledge, but rather of the alignment of the entire cognitive activity towards the goal of salvation. All along the line intellectual understanding remains subordinate to lived experience.' (p.93) This could hardly be better expressed. Soteriological goals may, however, be obscured by the magical and exorcistic preoccupations of the folk religion. In speaking of the 'particular psychic disposition of the Tibetan' Professor Tucci more than once reminds us that the Tibetan 'lives in a permanent state of anxious uneasiness' (pp.172-173), and that 'the entire spiritual life of the Tibetan is defined by a permanent attitude of defence, by a constant effort to appease and propitiate the powers whom he fears.' (p.187) He also draws our attention to the fact that a remarkable characteristic of Tibetan religiosity is 'its striking lack of social compassion.' (p.210) Though the Bodhisattva vow is recited daily, 'the teachings enshrined in the vow rarely receive more than a vague theoretical assertion.' (p.211)

One of the most interesting features of Professor Tucci's book is the way in which he regularly describes the Buddhism of Tibet as 'Lamaism'. For most scholars this term, first apparently used by Kōppen (1859), and presumably coined by him, is now obsolete. As long ago as 1914 Waddell himself, writing in Hastings' *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics* (Vol. VII, p.784), characterized it as 'in many ways misleading, inappropriate, and undesirable,' adding that it was 'rightly dropping out of use.' Rightly or wrongly, Professor Tucci has now revived the term. This is not so surprizing as it might seem. One of the facts which emerges most strongly from his whole 'overview' is the extent to which Tibetan Buddhism is the product of creative interaction between Indian Buddhism, on the one hand and, on the other, the 'pre-Buddhist beliefs, myths, rituals and invocatory formulae of Tibet'. (p.30) For so distinctive a synthesis a distinctive term is needed, and it may well be that the old term Lamaism is the most appropriate. The use of such a term is not without its advantages for Western Buddhists. It reminds us that Tibetan Buddhism is quite as much Tibetan as Buddhist, and that inasmuch as it is, in part, the product of a culture very different from our own, there can be no question of the whole system being transported bodily from Tibet to the West.

The Life and Teaching of Geshe Rabten. A Tibetan Lama's Search for Truth.
Translated and edited by B. Alan Wallace (Gelong Jhampa Kelsang).
George Allen & Unwin, London. Pp.204. £7.50

In *The Religions of Tibet* the life of the monastic communities is one subject among many, and we hear about it from a sympathetic observer. In *The Life and Teachings of Geshe Rabten* it is virtually the only subject, and we hear about it from one who, for more than twenty years, experienced it for himself. Though he tells us little that we cannot learn from Professor Tucci (the Professor, indeed, tells us much that we do not learn from the Geshe), he gives us an incomparably more vivid and fascinating picture of daily life in a great Tibetan monastic establishment than we could possibly obtain from any second hand account, however informative. Born in Kham (Eastern Tibet) in 1920 (?), of farming stock, the young Tadin Rabten grew up more familiar with horses, dogs and guns than with books. When he was fifteen he noticed how 'simple, pure and efficient' the lives of the monks were, and at seventeen decided to join one of the monastic universities. Two years later, having made the three month journey to Lhasa, he was admitted to Sera Monastery, the second largest in Tibet. From then onwards his days — and sometimes his nights as well — were devoted to study and religious practices. Only in 1959, at the time of the Lhasa uprising, was



"...nothing to think of but the practice of the Dharma."

he affected by the presence of the Chinese. By that time he had decided to take the Geshe examination, which he eventually passed in India, as a refugee, after twenty-four years of hard work. In order to qualify he had to pass through fifteen classes, familiarizing himself with such subjects as Logic and Epistemology, Abhidharma, Vinaya, the Perfection of Wisdom, and Madhyamika. The first subject he was taught, however, was the relationship between the four primary and eight secondary colours. Besides engaging in doctrinal studies he memorized thousands of pages of texts, participated in endless formal debates, practised meditation, recited prayers and mantras, and rose before dawn to perform prostrations. Such was his zeal that he was content with a minimum of food and clothing, often going hungry for days on end and wearing nothing but rags held together with bits of wire. Not surprizingly, when he visited his old home after six years of monastic life he found that his outlook had changed. 'Even when I looked up at the pastures where I had loved to roam as a child, I felt no attraction. The same was true of my home. Nothing interested me. It was all rather depressing. I found that my way of thinking had changed entirely.' (p.74)

Despite the hardships, life at Sera Monastery suited Geshe Rabten very well. Study and meditation brought their own rewards, while the kindness with which the monks treated one another — older monks making personal sacrifices in order to assist younger monks and newcomers — helped to create an atmosphere of warmth and spiritual friendship. His strongest emotional ties were with his teachers, for whom he felt boundless reverence and devotion — a devotion that finds heartfelt utterance in a letter written to his principal guru, Geshe Jhampa Khedup, which appears in the first part of the book, containing the story of his life. Devotion is, in fact, the keynote of Geshe Rabten's character. Combined with deep understanding, and wide learning, it is very much in evidence not only in the first but also in the second part of the book, containing his teachings. In this part the Geshe deals mainly with the 'three principles of the path', i.e. with renunciation, 'an awaking mind' (i.e. the *bodhicitta*), and the ideal view. He also gives us an Introduction to the Buddhadharma, an explanation of the (Tantric) Preliminary Practices, and instruction in 'mental quiescence' (i.e. *samatha*). Reading these clear and practical teachings, one cannot but conclude that they represent the noble fruit of a noble life.

Such is the nobility and disinterestedness of Geshe Rabten's life, indeed, that one is reluctant to make even the smallest criticism of the system that produced him. Criticism based on modern, secular notions of education would be irrelevant in any case. As the Geshe himself points out, a monastic university like Sera differs from a Western university in that only the Buddhadharma is studied, and in that because the field of training is the Dharma, the mind experiences greater and greater happiness, regardless of physical hardships. Nonetheless it must be said that, reading the story of Geshe Rabten's life, one gets the impression that under the Gelugpa system of monastic training there was a distinct overemphasis on doctrinal and scholastic studies. The Gelugpa system in fact seems to have favoured intellectual *cramming*. It is not without significance, perhaps, that Geshe Rabten more than once has recourse to the image of the factory. Speaking of his early years at Sera, for example, he says, 'Many people working in a factory have nothing to occupy their attention but their daily routine. Similarly in the monastery throughout the day and night, I had nothing to think of but the practice of Dharma.' (p.53) Some Western Buddhists might find the idea of a monastery being a *factory* less than appealing. They might wonder whether it was *really* the function of a monastery to produce geshes — even geshes as devout and learned as Geshe Rabten. They might even wonder whether an exhaustive study of all the different schools of 'Buddhist philosophy' was *really* necessary to the attainment of Enlightenment. Considerations of this sort become all the more pressing when, towards the end of his career, we find Geshe Rabten receiving from six to ten 'empowerments' (i.e. *abhisekas*, or 'consecrations' as Tucci calls them) every day for weeks on end. Significantly, he says of the daily recitations of the corresponding rituals that they never took so much time that his studies were impaired. (p.111) It would seem that much as Geshe Rabten gained from his twenty-four years of intensive study, something was also lost.

Walther Heissig, **The Religions of Mongolia.**

Translated from the German edition by Geoffrey Samuel.

Routlege & Kegan Paul, London and Henley. Pp.146. £7.50

Both geographically and culturally, the step from Tibet to Mongolia is not a very great one. Walther Heissig's *The Religions of Mongolia* is the companion volume to Guiseppe Tucci's *The Religions of Tibet*, the two having been first published together in German as parts of a single work. It is, however, a very different kind of book. Not only is it much shorter, but it devotes far more space to the shamanistic folk religion of the Mongols than it does to Mongolian Buddhism. There are two reasons for this. In the first place, judging by the twenty-nine items listed under this name in the Bibliography, Professor Heissig is more interested in Mongolian shamanism than in Mongolian Buddhism, having personally collected from the libraries of Europe seventy-eight manuscripts containing prayers, invocations and so on. The part of the book dealing with the non-Buddhist folk religion of the Mongols is in fact firmly based on original sources. In the second place, 'the forms of Northern Buddhism in Mongolia correspond to those of Tibet from which they originated,' (p.ix) and there was no point in Professor Heissig describing what Professor Tucci had already described. 'Although numerous Mongolian lamas made substantial contributions to Lamaist theology [*sic*], which were significantly all composed in Tibetan, the church [*sic*] language of Lamaism, the Mongolian theological schools developed no divergent doctrinal interpretations. Only in those cases where... the Mongolian folk religion was incorporated in a syncretic fashion into the doctrinal edifice of Lamaism, did there take place any truly local development.' (p.34) This about sums up the matter. Professor Heissig is therefore left free to concentrate on the 'beliefs and concepts which belong to the non-Buddhist folk religion of the Mongols,' (p.ix) such as those relating to the mythical Cinggis Khan, the deity of fire, and the 'White Old Man,' giving us only a short description of the spread of Lamaism in Mogolia, though there are also chapters on the relation between Lamaism and the folk religion and the Lamaist suppression of shamanism. (In case anyone should raise the cry of 'intolerance' against Buddhism on this account, let it be noted that the suppression consisted in the abolition of human and animal sacrifice and the burning of the felt Ongghot dolls.)

Even the short description that Professor Heissig gives us of the spread of Lamaism in Mongolia is not without significance for Western Buddhists. As with the dissemination of Buddhism in Tibet, political as well as spiritual factors played an important part. Chinese emperors favoured the spread of Lamaism into Mongolia from China, where it had flourished since the Yuan dynasty, mainly as a means of boosting their political prestige. 'Conversion' tended to take place 'from above'. In 1578, on the occasion of his first meeting with the Third Dalai Lama, Altan Khan had a number of noblemen, princes among them, 'enter the priestly state [*sic*].' (p.29) As Professor Heissig observes, 'It is difficult to avoid the impression that part of the conversion consisted in acts of the government.' (p.29) Earlier on, there were the usual misunderstandings about 'Tantrism', i.e. the Vajrayana. Tantric ritual was understood as a more eficacious form of worldly magic than shamanism, while Tantric sexual symbolism was taken quite literally, with disastrous results. Eventually, Lamaism was established throughout Mongolia, retaining its influence until the middle of the twentieth century. According to Professor Heissig, the downfall began with the decay of Manchu power, and when 'the divergence between preaching and reality [on the part of the monks] was no longer to be bridged.' (p.35)

(to be continued)

FACETS

Suvajra

Sona leads a Yoga session during the mixed 'European Retreat' at Stenfors, in Sweden. Sona later visited Stockholm and Helsinki, and plans to initiate FWBO activities in Stockholm in the near future.

Europe

UK

It is impossible to overstate the value of going on retreat. To spend a while away from normal habits, cares, and distractions, giving oneself totally to spiritual practice, is as rewarding as it is joyful. From the earliest days of the FWBO, retreats have been regarded as essential events and, these days, with all our centres organising day and weekend retreats, and with the new meditation centre at Tyn-y-ddol offering an uninterrupted programme of intense meditation retreats, there is one going on somewhere in Britain on just about every day of the year.

Summertime is a particularly popular time of the year for retreats, and during the months of July and August there have been no less than seven major retreats catering for more than 200 people in all.

One characteristic of any retreat is that few of the people on it ever want it to end. But end it must; once again the world has to be confronted, though not necessarily in the same way as before. A retreat changes you, and as you contemplate your return you inevitably look for ways in which you can consolidate, and even extend the changes that the retreat has sparked off.

Communities

To many people the idea of moving into a Friends' community presents itself as the ideal way to preserve some features of the retreat situation in the midst of daily life. It is hardly surprising, then, that more communities are formed, or reshuffled, during the summer months than at any other time. In the last two months a new men's community has been formed in Norwich, and at least three new communities have emerged in the area close to the London Buddhist Centre. In East London, in fact, a housing co-operative has just been formed by the FWBO, so as the LBC expands and matures, it is not hard to imagine a time when there will be several hundred Buddhists living within a mile or two of the Centre.

There has also been a major rearrangement in East London. Eight Order members and mitras have just moved out of 'Vajrasamaya' into 'Sukhavati', in order to be more fully involved in the Co-op and Centre. Partly to make extra space available at 'Sukhavati', but mainly in response to the demand for more communities, Tejamati and Mahamati are leaving 'Sukhavati' to set up a new men's community in the area.

Down in Surrey, the women who form 'Khadiravani' community, invigorated by the addition of two mitras from Glasgow, are soon to move into their third home, this time in Brixton, while three men from Aryatara will be moving down to Bristol in just a few weeks time, in order to initiate FWBO activities in that city.

For a few months, a community of women who are involved in the West London Centre have had to live way down south in Streatham, far away from 'Mandala'. Soon, however, they will be moving back into their chosen area of activity and setting up a community near the base of 'Friends Foods', West London's already thriving wholefood business.

No doubt the next few months will see the formation of yet more communities, but in the meantime many

communities are at least expanding, and it is not uncommon now to find people 'doubling-up' in rooms. Finally, we hear from Danavira that 'Heruka', one of the men's communities in Glasgow, and home of the Centre there, is being redecorated.

Businesses

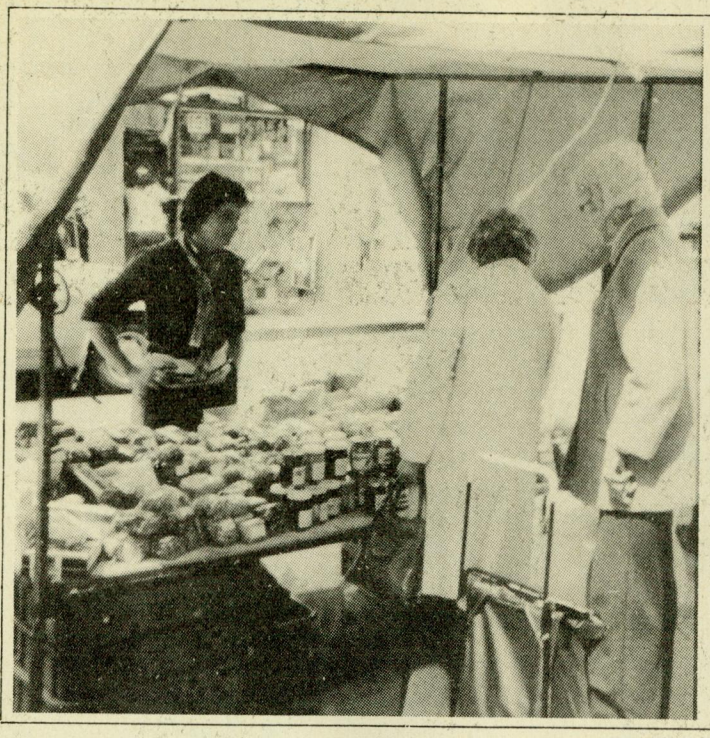
It is hardly surprising that our Right Livelihood businesses should also be showing signs of increased activity and expansion. These days, anyone who wants to get more fully involved in the FWBO naturally looks for an opening in one of our co-ops. Throughout the Movement here, new businesses are being formed, and already established ones extended.

Some men from West London are currently on retreat, gaining a final burst of spiritual impetus with which to start up a gardening business on their return to the city. This will be a companion venture to the wholefood project, which involves a team of four who sell their wares at five London markets. Ratnavira reports that this time, after one or two false beginnings, the Right Livelihood aspect of activities in West London seems to be off to an excellent start. Of the wholefood business he writes, "...it is an expanding business based on enthusiasm and inspiration, where it is continually emphasised that work has to be *right* livelihood; nobody should be working with their nose to the ground."

Some of the women who are moving up from Streatham aim to set up a vegetarian cafe in West London, thus bringing the total number of Friends' vegetarian restaurants to five. The other four are all doing well. 'Oranges' in Norwich is on the lookout for new, bigger premises, while 'Sunrise' in Brighton has been enlarged. Rooms above the restaurant have been converted into dining space for about twenty customers. In Bethnal Green they have just finished preparing the patio behind 'The Cherry Orchard' for use as an out-door dining area. 'The Garden' in Croydon is now a single sex project for men, while the wholefood shop is now run entirely by women. Padmavajra writes that since this reorganisation of the work force both businesses are more efficient and taking more money. "This seems to be because of a greater sense of teamwork and friendship which the single-sex situation seems to heighten."

'Ink', the silk-screen and printing business in Glasgow has recently added a new press and photo-copying facility to its services. 'Windhorse Press' at 'Sukhavati', too, are buying a new printing machine, so what with yet another press recently acquired by Windhorse Publications, the FWBO has access to no less than six printing machines.

Businesses need to be managed and administered. A team of workers from 'Friends Building Services', one of the Pure Land Co-op's businesses have recently created a lot of new office space above 'The Cherry Orchard', from which the business affairs of the LBC and Pure Land Co-op will be managed. This does not, however, mean that we are breeding a race of desk-bound bureaucrats; most of the LBC's administrators spend as much time as they can working in other areas of the co-op, and all of them are fully involved in the classes given at the Centre.



The gardening business.

Right Livelihood in West London; the markets

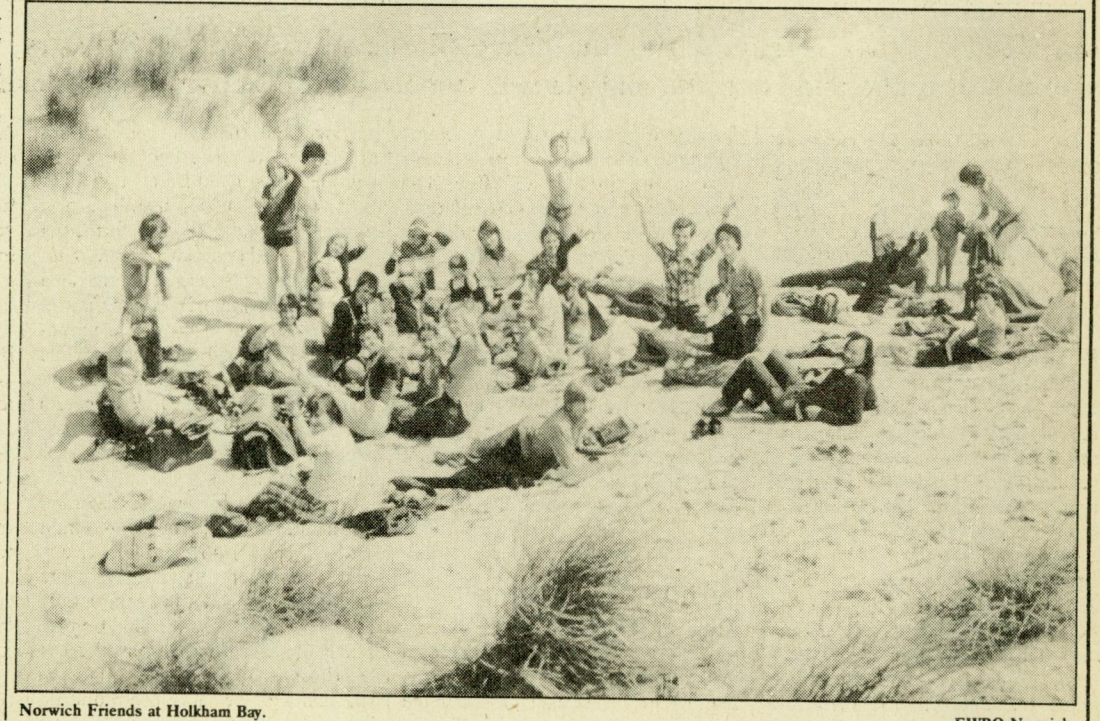
Ratnavira

Fun for Funds

There are no new businesses in Manchester, but Ratnaguna has recently formed a fund-raising team. Their first venture will be a sponsored walk in aid of the publication of *Human Enlightenment*, the book based on Bhante's first series of New Zealand lectures. After that event they will no doubt follow the lead of fund-raisers at other centres who are busy raising money to send to India to help the FWBO in its work there (see India report). In Croydon they are hoping to raise at least £2,500 over the coming year by holding special evening meals at 'The Garden'. They have also been holding sponsored walks and film evenings in aid of the India project. Such events which bring people together in a more social context have a value that goes far beyond their fund-raising potential. The heart of any FWBO centre is the local Order chapter, the nucleus of the New Society in that area, and the life-blood is the positive group of involved, joyfully interrelating Friends. These events therefore give people opportunities to come together in ways different, yet no less important than those in which they come together at classes. Film evenings are becoming a fairly regular feature of the programme at the LBC, Padmapani has been giving his multi-media slide show in Glasgow, and in Norfolk 46 men, women, and children spent a day picnicking, and sack-racing on the beach at Holkham Bay.

One Friends' business has been directing its income almost exclusively towards India. 'Padmaloka Candles' have just completed a massive 'Dodo Candle' project: filling attractively designed tins with scented wax. Another two contracts are now in the bag, so about £5000 should be heading out to Pune quite soon.

Back in London, Kulamitra has recently taken over one of the new



Norwich Friends at Holkham Bay.

FWBO Norwich

The Windhorse Emporium stall at the Festival. Nagabodhi

offices and has registered a new charity: 'Aid for India'. A fuller report on this development will appear in the next Newsletter, but suffice it to say for the present that he and Tim Lilly, a Friend with experience in professional fund-raising, hope to find a regular income for the India project of £25,000 per year in covenants.

Festival of the confused

This June, for the third year running, the FWBO had a presence at the Festival for Mind-Body-Spirit, a presence that was more consciously commercial than in previous years. 'Oranges' came down from Norwich to take up one of the two main catering contracts: a tea and snack bar on the upper floor, while the Windhorse Emporium from Brighton set up a bright and busy stall from which they sold clothes, incense, candles, and other 'fancy goods'. A team of Order members and mitras, mainly from the LBC, manned an information stall beside the snack bar.

Although a constant stream of visitors eddied its way around the New Age evangelists, Tarot readers and biorhythm analysts, the usual crowds were not there. Perhaps people were unable to tear themselves away from watching the Wimbledon Lawn Tennis Championships on television, but it seems more likely that widespread interest in whatever the Festival represents is on the wane. Perhaps this is not such a bad thing. Indeed, the FWBO's presence at this event has always been a subject of debate, with several Order members and Friends feeling that we should leave the Festival well alone. After his experience at the Festival this year, Vajramati, Chairman of the FWBO in Norwich, writes, "I feel that we must not go to the Festival again. To have a stall and to compete with other so-called spiritual groups is to devalue what we have to offer. The whole feeling of the Festival is one of lost, frightened and confused people; we had more in common with the people selling roller-skates than with the other stalls. At least they seemed to be healthy human beings." No doubt the debate will continue.

'Oranges' went to the festival with high hopes of making a good profit in aid of the India project. There was usually a fair sized crowd of people sitting in deckchairs on the 'lawn' beside their stall, eating pizzas, curries and sandwiches, but unfortunately, the organisers of the Festival had allowed a great many more people than usual to set up small food stalls in the main exhibition area, so turnover on our stall was way below expectations.

In the end, 'Oranges' came out with a small loss — which they soon recouped at one of the summer fairs they have been visiting with their 'Mobile Kitchen'. The Windhorse Emporium, on the other hand, came out with a profit, and also with valuable experience which they will put to good use at a mini-Festival, soon to be held in Hove.

Whatever objections there may be to the Festival, it does give us an opportunity to make contact with the public. About six people contacted at the Festival have recently attended the mixed retreat at Seaford, and no doubt others will be making their way to our centres. But there are other ways to reach the public. For example, the LBC has recently begun a new experiment in advertising: posters in London's underground train system. And a group of students from the Open University spent an afternoon at the Norwich Meditation Centre, listening to a talk, and entering into a two hour discussion on Buddhism with Vajramati and Achala.

Classes and Celebrations

Although the summer has brought an increase of activity on the co-op, community, and retreat fronts, it is usually a time of lull at our Centres. With many people away on retreat or on holiday, or simply wanting to spend the long summer evenings out of doors, attendance at classes usually drops. Not so this year.

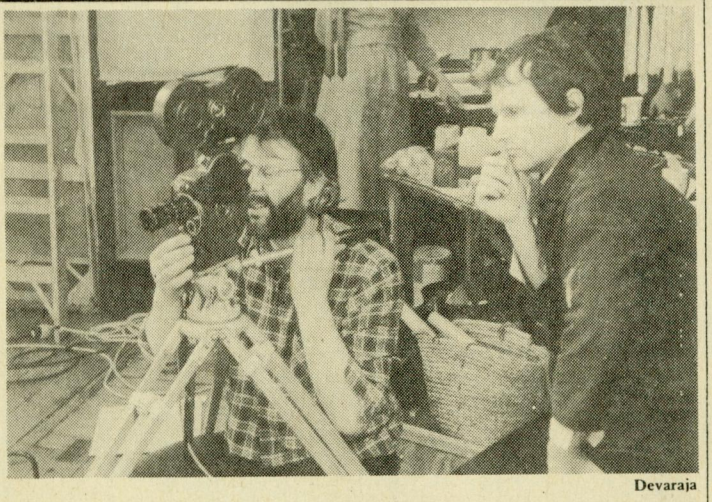
Mangala in Brighton reports that his classes are getting bigger all the time, and suspects that a series of talks by Order members, injected a lot of new enthusiasm into the Centre. Several centres report that they are having to add more classes and courses to their programmes to cater for the increase in demand for the Dharma.

Certainly, the fact that in the last two months all of our centres have celebrated the important festivals of Dharma Day and Padmasambhava Day must have something to do with the high level of energy and inspiration — out of which all the other developments in the Movement so far described have arisen.

It seems that people in the FWBO are developing a knack for celebration, and many centres report that the latest festivals were their best ever. There is no fixed form for these events; some centres place the emhasis on meditation, while others put forth a whole array of activities: sutra readings, talks, plays and tea-ceremonies. Two things are standard: a sumptuous feast, and an elaborate 'festive' puja. Here, Padmavajra describes part of the puja at Aryatara: "There was a reading from *The Life of Padmasambhava* which described offerings, and the benefits resulting from making the offerings, to Padma's image. As this was being read everybody present came forward to make each one of the offerings mentioned, which they had prepared before. The Puja ended with the chanting of the Padmasambhava mantra — which didn't want to end."

One aspect of the Dharma Day celebrations at many centres was a dana appeal for Windhorse Publications. Subhuti and Nagabodhi gave talks at five centres on the significance of Windhorse Publications in the work of the Movement. Our publishing wing may still be at a very early stage in its development, but both speakers made it clear that Windhorse Publications has a tremendous part to play in the spreading of the Dharma in the West. In all, the appeals raised £650, which will go to-

Friends Filming



Devaraja

Windhorse Associates, the media co-op based at Golgonooza have just completed their first venture into the movies: a half-hour promotional film for a firm that makes candle-making kits. Film-making is an area in which Windhorse Associates are particularly rich in expertise, so they are hoping to be able to use the profits made on such commercial contracts to finance films of more directly Dharmic interest.

wards the publication of *Human Enlightenment*.

If some Centres are extending their programmes, others are extending, or changing their facilities. Mandala has now outgrown its base in Telephone Place, so the West London Centre is soon to be closed down. Although classes will have to be held in a temporary base for a while, the hunt is already on for a new, bigger, brighter permanent centre, more appropriate to the scale of the potential in that part of the city.

Finally, in Glasgow, the local authorities have just given their approval to the latest plans for the new Sauchiehall Street Centre, so work on the project can continue without interruption. This project is taking longer, and costing more than was originally envisaged, but this is largely because, as the work progresses, the plans for the Centre are becoming more and more ambitious. Sounds familiar.

Nagabodhi

SCANDINAVIA

Stenfors Retreat

This year is the third in which I have lead the Summer European Retreat in Sweden. Each year, thanks to the hard work of Aryavamsa, our Swedish Order member, we have been able to hold the retreat in the beautiful house, situated in the forest in Southern Sweden, known as 'Stenfors'. This year with the excellent weather we had, I think all the thirty people who attended the retreat were able to deeply appreciate the stillness of the forests, the lakes and the rugged, boulder-strewn countryside. We have always been lucky with the weather on this retreat, but this year the sun shone brightly almost every day, and this helped to make it one of the friendliest and happiest retreats I have ever been on.

This year there were nineteen people from Sweden, while the rest of the retreatants came from England and Germany. Gradually, the 'European' retreat is turning into a Swedish retreat, so next year we are hoping to hold a separate retreat in Swedish, for our Swedish speaking friends, as well as the annual European retreat.

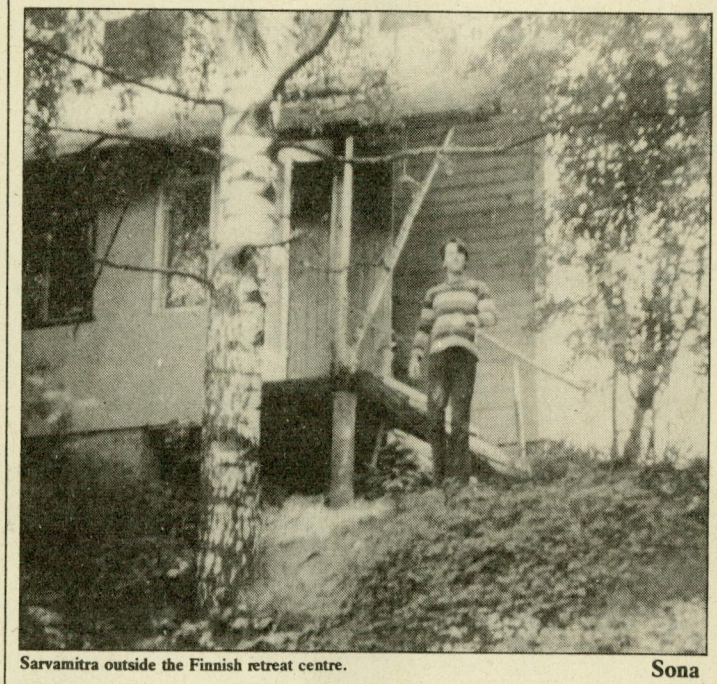
The European retreat is particularly good for people whose knowledge of English is insufficient to enable them to fully appreciate a retreat in England. The talks and instruction for meditation and yoga are given in English but in a way that enables all present to understand at least some of the basic principles of Buddhism, meditation and the FWBO. Occasionally translation is given in the different languages when a particularly difficult term or sentence is used. At meals it is very interesting to listen to the different languages that are simultaneously being spoken, and one gets an opportunity to try speaking the few words or phrases one knows in those languages.

Stockholm

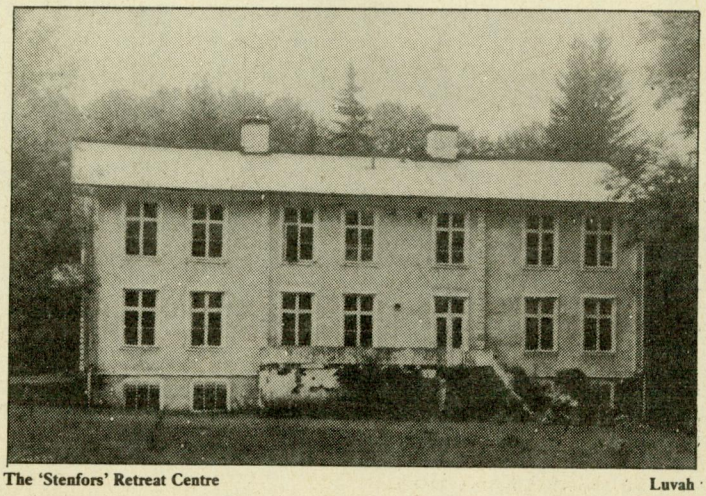
Many of the people attending the retreat this year had already been in touch with the FWBO, some since last March when Kulamitra and I held meditation and yoga classes in Stockhold to get some idea of the response to the FWBO there. About fifteen people attended the meditation course and a similar number attended the yoga course. In the second week in Stockholm we held a weekend retreat with twenty people attending. Of the two Germans who came to Stenfors this year, one had only been in contact once before, on the three day retreat I led in West Germany in June, while Werner has been a frequent visitor to retreats in Holland, Sweden and even to an Order/Mitra weekend in England. There were also several completely new people.

Later this year I am hoping to return to Sweden for a three month stay in Stockholm, where, if all goes according to plan, I will attend a full time course in Swedish and spend the evenings and weekends holding meditation, yoga and study classes, plus a few weekend retreats. The object of this visit is to establish more contacts, so that we can open an FWBO Centre in Stockholm next year.

One of the activities that our Scandinavian Friends really enjoy is meditation, and during the meditation sessions there was very little moving and shuffling around throughout this summer's retreat. The periods of silence were often so peaceful that there would be a certain reluctance to start speaking once they finished. Since there was general agreement about the beauty of silence we decided not to speak to each other from the end of the puja at night, until ten a.m. the next morning, when the work period started. The times between the end of breakfast and the work period were perhaps the best times in everyone's day. Many of us would sit in the sunshine, facing east towards the small lake at the bottom of the garden, listening to the chirring of crickets and other insects. Occasionally the silence would be broken by the sudden splash of a fish in the water or the sound of slow methodical rowing as someone in the small wooden boat made their way out through the water lilies into the open water of the lake.



Sarvamitra outside the Finnish retreat centre. Sona



The 'Stenfors' Retreat Centre Luvah

Finland

At the end of the retreat I went to Stockholm for a few days and then on to Helsinki to visit the Finnish Order members and participate in their summer retreat. This retreat was much smaller than the one in Sweden and most of the people attending were either Order members, Mitras or old Friends. It was held in an old farm about fifty kilometers outside Helsinki. The meditation and yoga sessions were held in the upper part of one of the barns which had been carefully converted for this purpose. Although the farm is not a working farm, we did have to share the buildings with three dogs, three cats, two horses, a goat and a tame hooded crow. The crow was very friendly; at four a.m. each morning he would find his way into the upper part of the out-building in which we slept and start pecking at our sleeping bags urging us to wake up and play with him. One day he managed to find his way into the meditation room where he sat for thirty minutes or so, before getting bored, at which point he decided to release the bunch of dried flowers hanging above my head. They fell at about the same time as the final bell rang.

Sona

HELSINKI

The most recent development here is connected with retreats. All these years we have been suffering from the lack of a proper retreat centre that we could use all the year round. One would think there were solitary places in Finland, and indeed there are many, just waiting for us. But since we do not yet have the necessary capital to purchase, or the numbers to make use of, a large old farmhouse in the countryside, we thought that it would be better to start off on a smaller scale and a bit nearer. With this in mind, we have started to convert Maitreya's house in Laaksolahti into a 'weekend retreat centre'. The house is situated at a comfortable distance from Helsinki — half-an-hour's bus ride — in a not-too-densely populated area.

Considering its size, the house is most suited to short study retreats for small groups. There are three rooms and a kitchen downstairs. Upstairs is an attic, which will eventually be used as a shrine room. The house also has a large cellar.

In addition to our regular mixed retreats, held in more ample surroundings, we have so far had three men's weekend retreats there. We started work on the place in May this year, mainly by cleaning up in readiness for the building and insulating work to be carried out later. We have had full periods of meditation and study every day with only a part of the day being dedicated to work. At the moment it looks like we may have to arrange work parties there later in the Summer in order to finish before the weather starts to freeze. An attic

shrine room needs a thorough insulation-job in these regions!

All is going well; our next winter will be the first with a retreat every month. We expect this change to make a tremendous difference to our activities in general.

Sarvamitra

N.Zealand

Homecomings

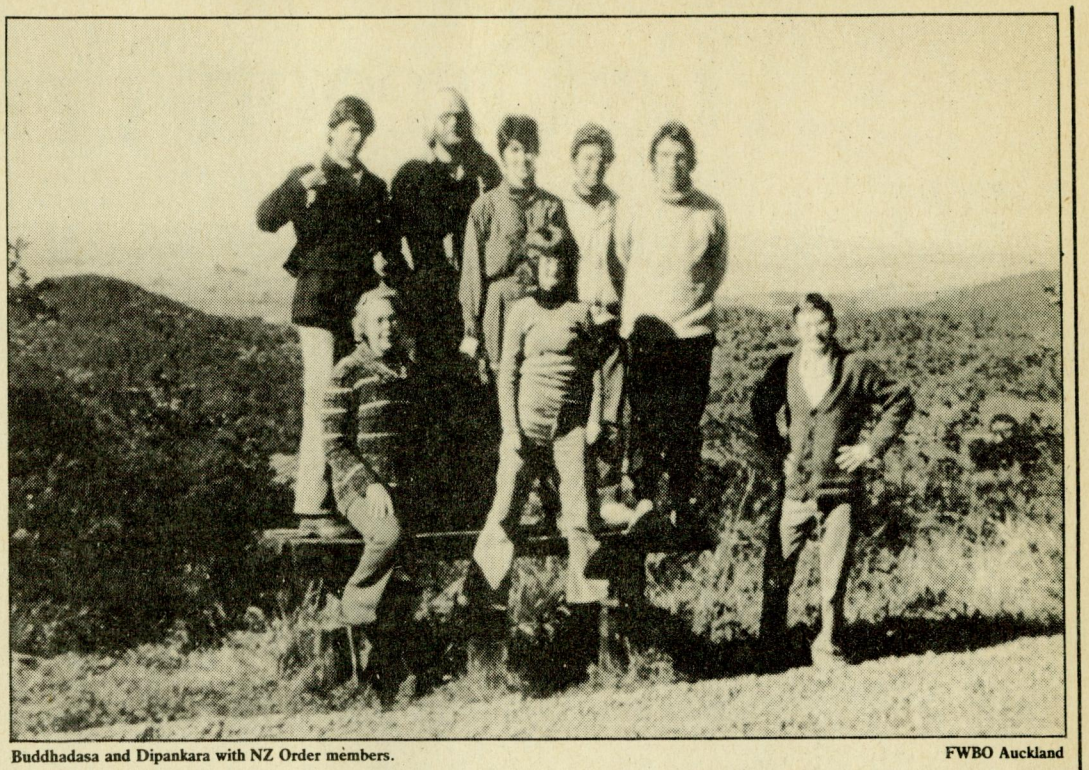
In the last three months of New Zealand winter six of the eight Order members from this country who went to the Convention in April have returned to Auckland. All have come back refreshed and carrying a vision of the possibilities for the growth of the Dharma here. Like waves thundering one by one onto an ocean beach each one has brought the energy and ideas from the Movement in Britain. In this time also the regular Centre classes have gone on unabated, highlighted by the Dharma Day celebration on the 29th June. At this event a special fundraising was held for the soon-to-be-published booklet *Human Enlightenment*, and $625 (approx £280) was pledged in one night. A record achievement for Auckland!

The FWBO in New Zealand is also being enriched by the visits of the three Order members who are soon to start a Centre in Australia — Buddhadasa, Dipankara and Dharmamati — who arrived during August. All three will be staying for varying lenghts of time, with Dipankara being here for only one month before moving on to Sydney.

Plans

The Order in Auckland has its sights set very squarely on development in three areas over the remainder of 1980. Firstly, through ongoing meditation and Dharma courses at the Centre, through retreats and other classes we will be intensifying our activities. The Centre itself is expanding slightly, renting an extra room at the front of the building for an office and study. Also this year, weekend and day-retreats will be happening every month, with two of them taking place in Christchurch and Wellington. There will be three long retreats in January — an open one and two Mitra retreats at Streatham near Wellington.

Secondly, there will be the firmer establishment of communities and already there are the beginnings of these, both in the inner-city suburb of Mt Eden. There is a men's community of three in a temporary flat, while they wait for the purchase of a house; and a women's community of three has also arisen. Community living will be the single most important factor in our growth in the next few months.



Buddhadasa and Dipankara with NZ Order members. FWBO Auckland

The third area will be the re-establishment of team-based Right Livelihood, initially working in painting and decorating and, with the amassing of some capital, in a suitable business — possibly a shop or restaurant.

At this time the potential in Auckland is great: the Movement can grow in more ideal circumstances than exist at present in Britain. There is a relatively stable economy with the greater possibility of capital investment in Right Livelihood. The environment is relatively unpolluted and the cities uncrowded and spacious. Compared with Britain and Europe people are generally more forward-looking and more prepared to discard their old beliefs and ways of life.

Priyananda

India

New Vihara

When Lokamitra, Purna and Padmavajra left for England in March this year to attend the Order Convention we lost the bungalow which had for the previous 1½ years been our centre. That problem has been solved as we have now got another bungalow nearby. Although it hardly meets all our needs, consisting of one room, with a small hall and kitchen, it functions as a shrine room and as the home for a community of three. On 8th June we held a dedication ceremony for the vihara, during which Lokamitra explained the meaning of the name given to it: *"Dhamma Vijaya"*.

Our activities in Pune will be very much boosted if our dream of building a centre comes true. FWBO centres outside India are kind enough to provide us with funds. We are expecting to get 1½ acres of land at Dapodi, a locality of Pune, but due to the complexities of the Hindu law relating to land, it is taking much longer than we had thought. We are planning to have on it a meditation centre, a training community, Right Livelihood workshops, and a medical centre and school to serve the very poor people of the area. At present Graham Stephen, a Mitra from England, is out here drawing up plans for the project. Once built, it will inspire Buddhists all over Maharashtra and indeed India.

Mention has been made in previous Newsletters of our contact with Buddhists in Aurangabad. Recently Lokamitra visited them again for two days, giving five talks and meeting many people. Each time he goes he has a struggle to leave, so enthusiastic are the people there for what we are doing. Many find the Trailokya Bauddha Mahasangha, Sahayak Gana (FWBO) to be the only Buddhist movement which is working effectively here in Maharashtra. Such is the situation in Aurangabad, with the large numbers of Buddhist students and teachers from all over Maharashtra, that it could well become the focus of our Movement in Maharashtra eventually.

Nagpur

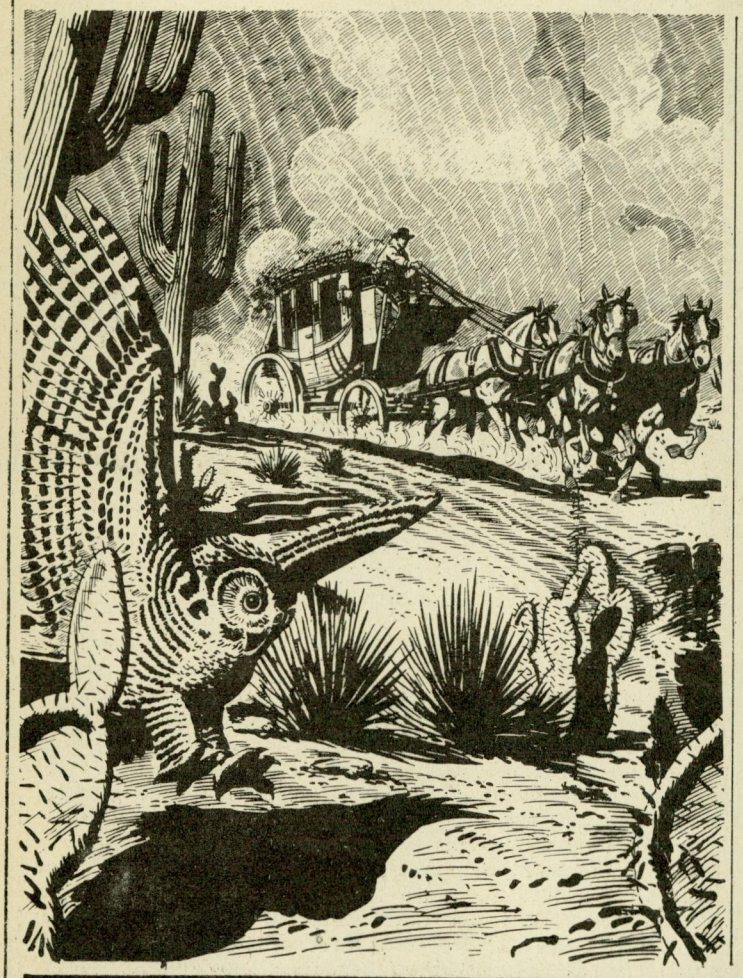
Recently Sudarshana spent a month in Nagpur, Maharashtra, right in the centre of India. The city was named after the Nagas who were supposed to inhabit the area. It was Nagpur that Dr Ambedkar selected for his historic conversion to Buddhism along with hundreds of thousands of followers in 1956. He selected Nagpur because historically it has been associated with Buddhism (especially Nagarjuna), and also because his followers there were much more determined in their efforts to rid themselves of the shackles of untouchability.

Since 1956 people in Nagpur have been struggling to keep the Dhamma alive. Festivals and ceremonies are celebrated, puja is chanted, some meditation is practised, and some viharas have been built, but because there is no clear guidance and direction, people don't always fully understand what they are doing. Buddhist youth is on the whole more attracted to social and political movements, for as far as the Dhamma goes they are bewildered. They can't really see how it can work. On the other hand many people have a deep faith that Buddhism can and might work; it *can* bring about the transformation of the Individual and society, but *how* is the question.

Sudarshana, who came from Nagpur originally, played a number of Ven. Sangharakshita's lectures in Nagpur and himself delivered a lecture on the Sangha as the nucleus of the New Society, and our activities in India. He also contacted personally many people, especially lecturers in the Buddhist colleges. Many have been following our work in Pune through the pages of *Buddhayana*, our quarterly Marathi language newsletter, and they are very happy indeed with the work we are doing. They are eagerly looking forward to the time when we start regular activities in Nagpur so that they can immerse themselves more deeply in the Dhamma. Perhaps after our proposed centre is functioning in Pune we will be able to do this — especially as it was, besides Pune, the main centre of the Ven. Sangharakshita's work in Maharashtra.

Sudarshana

The Oregon Trail



The odds were against it, but by a happy conjunction of luck 'n' pluck five FWBO 'identities' came together recently, through the good offices of mitra Robert Gerke, for the first FWBO event on the North American continent.

How Clackamas county in the state of Oregon found itself on the FWBO map was the result of a series of more-or-less chance encounters in which the devas were not idle. Buddhadasa and Dipankara, *en route* to Australia to establish a centre in Sydney, had decided to pay a courtesy call on Robert in the small town of Netarts on the Oregon coast where he was making his way as a builder and quietly contemplating the Pacific rollers. With them they brought mitra Phil Miller who, just back from India and Nepal, had picked out the Union Jack on Buddhadasa's backpack along Highway 101. Meanwhile, your correspondent, on leave from remote Papua, New Guinea, had got wind of the gathering and was speeding down from Vancouver to make a fifth.

After the usual round of reminiscences, de-briefings and updates, we settled down to the familiar Refuges and Precepts and Sevenfold Puja.

The next day we addressed ourselves to the question: How to make the most of our few days together? A retreat of some description seemed the answer, but there was the problem of a venue, for this was the 4th of July weekend and accommodation was at a premium. After a fruitless search of Netarts for a suitable retreat house, Robert, a tireless organiser on his home pitch, decided to take the retreat 'on the road'.

We loaded two vehicles with tents, portable shrine, beans, bread and veg. and set off east into the interior along the asphalted bones of the Oregon Trail. A meandering course and half a day later the roving retreat came to rest in Willamette National Forest in a glade ringed with pillar-like Douglas Fir. We erected our shrine room, a mini-marquee, while Phil created a miraculous shrine from Indian satin and a toolbox.

We moved camp once again to a more congenial spot by lake and pine with the snow-capped peak of Mount Hood away to the north. Here we spent our best days, walking in the woods and swimming in the lake by day: in the evening, in the warm embrace of the tent shrine-room, we celebrated the most powerfully-centred puja I can recall in 2½ years. In between times we had some great talks between old friends, though the real communication was not verbalised.... in Buddhadasa and Dipankara — the lucid and serene presence of the Unconditioned.

Though soon to be dispersed again we had come home.

Tim McNally

The Seaford Retreat

At 10 o'clock on the morning of August 2nd eleven Order members and Mitras arrived at St Peter's, a large school at Seaford on the South coast of England, and arrangements were soon under way for the two week mixed open retreat.

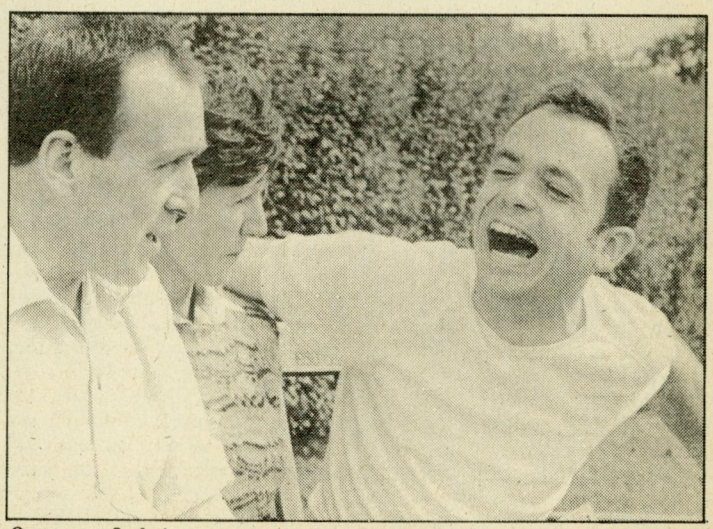
The retreat started at 4.00 and soon about 30 people were assembled for the first meditation. 90 different people each spent at least four days at the retreat and between 30 and 60 were present at any one time. A very friendly atmosphere developed almost immediately and new arrivals were soon accommodated. Negative emotions could not last long in the rapidly intensified ambience of metta, and they vanished after an initial squeak like mice scurrying for cover.

The experience of a retreat is an intensely personal one.Whilst one person's meditation practice gives rise to the sleepy fog of torpor, another's may produce the effervescent rapture of the second dhyana; or, as one friend wonders why he came at all, another 'muses in bliss' on his unbelievable good chance at having discovered the Three Jewels. Even so, all those who attended the retreat were affected by the spirit of metta and surprised by the creative power of openness and positive emotion. On this foundation a number of friends found their meditation practice deepening beyond all expectation and the evening puja touched the emotions of even the most sceptical.

The daily programme was so full with meditation, communication exercises, yoga and discussion that the abandonment of lunch was universally acclaimed as a good move, freeing time for walking and talking, and appreciating one another's qualities. In the evening we listened to either a tape recorded talk by the Ven. Sangharakshita, or to a live talk by Devamitra or Manjuvajra. Each evening concluded with a puja after which a silence was observed.

As the retreat progressed the sense of magic increased, the magical possibilities of transformation for each individual came into view, and new, fresh, wider perspectives and visions of life took shape. During the last puja it seemed as if Nature herself was affected by the aspirations of those on the retreat. The puja began as the sun was setting and the thin curve of the silver moon moved into view through the large bay window behind the shrine. Slowly she moved across and down behind the figure of the Buddha, and as the final strains of the last mantra were fading away she bowed her head in devotion below the horizon.

Manjuvajra



On retreat at Seaford. Brian Ferrier

Women's Seminar

Attentive faces during a study session. Dhammadinna

The Ven. Sangharakshita held a second seminar week for women at 'Padmaloka' this summer. The previous women's seminar had been held in winter when the trees were bare and the air outside a bit frosty. 'Padmaloka' this time was lush with summer blooms and thick green foliage — almost another realm.

We were studying further chapters from Gampopa's *Jewel Ornament of Liberation:* 'The Transitoriness of the Composite', 'Buddha Activity', and 'The Perfection of Patience' and of 'Strenuousness'. The texts spoke of factors which set up an enlightened attitude — how we have all the necessary equipment (a body and a brain), and just need something to activate it or to remove the obstacles: "Buddha nature is not a possession but a driving force."

It became apparent that there is an emotional hiatus between the 'lower' (biological) evolution which is unconscious, and the 'higher' (more spiritual) evolution which is conscious. We become conscious as our emotions become more conscious, as we become aware of our experience as emotional experience, and can begin to develop and refine the quality of our emotions and mental states in general.

We talked about spiritual friendship as the most effective way to develop and clarify emotions. Spiritual friendship means communication, which is a shared experience. This can only really happen in a shared 'field' of empathy which takes time to set up and continuity of effort to maintain: friendships can take years to build up and mature, and cannot be hurried. First you have to learn to see other people as other beings quite separate from you, as 'objects', and then, to experience them, as they themselves feel, as 'subjects' in their own subjectivity. Such empathy leads to patience, but patience is a very active, strenuous state of mind.

Bhante stressed that we should take good care of our bodies, our precious human bodies, since these are our working instruments, tools that need to be kept in good running order, not for their own sakes but for the sake of human higher development. He talked of our lives as mandalas — some people have very simple, pure, uncluttered mandalas, other people's are rich and complex: it is so important not to cut off or eliminate parts of oneself but to weave them all into this great developing pattern of one's life, one's own personal mandala. As your individuality grows and matures, so the continuity in the pattern displays itself.

Obviously Bhante talked of many things, but the most important was the inevitability of death. We have at least this one particular human life in which to develop ourselves. We should use it to the full, yet be willing to let go of life when that is appropriate too. A lot of the study was about the way we hang on to other things and other people, and the way we can apply effort to changing the flow of our energies, from 'lower' to 'higher' without losing our roots in animal and group consciousness. If we really learn to live with freedom, we "can resist being reborn".

Being on the seminar was like entering the land of a Great Magician, or Great Bodhisattva, one who through his compassion cast us under the spell of his care and his happiness, his intelligence and his subtlety, and drew us into a state of being where we could begin to experience little oblique shimmerings of the Transcendental. Transported by Bhante into this other 'magical' world, you could see everyone getting in touch with it themselves. Potential bodhicitta, potential Buddhahood, was fed and nurtured with immense kindness. It was even more special than we had imagined, it was extraordinary, a gift that one could not have dreamt of. We were alive and hearing the Dharma, and the Dharma was very clear and in everything around us — life was suddenly, vividly, an extraordinary adventure and very *real*.

Marichi

A Naming Ceremony

On July 30th a name giving ceremony was held at the Norwich Meditation Centre. It was a bright, cheerful occasion attended by a large number of Order members, Friends and children. We all seated ourselves in the shrine room, the parents, David and Daphne Luce, sitting with their children inside a circle of white cotton thread that ran over the shrine and rupa, through Bhante's hand, and through the hands of the Order members sitting in a semi-circle in front of the shrine.

Bhante spoke first of the significance of the ceremony, emphasising that it was in no way a Buddhist equivalent of a 'Christening'. There was no question of making the child a Buddhist, for only a mature individual can become a Buddhist by his or her own free choice. There was to be no mystical initiation into 'The Church', no sacramental washing away of original sin. Rather, the ceremony was to be seen as a joyous welcoming of the child into the positive group — albeit not into just any positive group, but that which springs out of, derives its values from, and is sustained by, the Spiritual Community. It was a welcoming which also indicated that the positive group as a whole, and not solely the parents, took on the responsibility for seeing the child grow into a whole, happy human being, one who will hopefully one day, of her own free will, choose to be a Buddhist. For those of us involved in the often painful process of breaking out of the nuclear family, and in the searching for a creative, truly human alternative, the far-reaching significance of this simple ceremony can be truly inspiring.

The ceremony began with the chanting of the Refuges and Precepts, and with the parents making individual offerings of flowers, candles and incense. Bhante then chanted the Mangala Sutta in Pali, traditionally heard on all auspicious occasions, with everyone joining in the responses at the end of each section. He went on to read his own translation of the Sutta in English. Holding the child, Bhante chanted a blessing whilst he broke off a length of the thread and tied it round her wrist. He then announced her names — Karen Karuna Luce, handing her back quickly to her mother before she was showered with a rain of flowers, to the accompaniment of three hearty shouts of "Sadhu!"

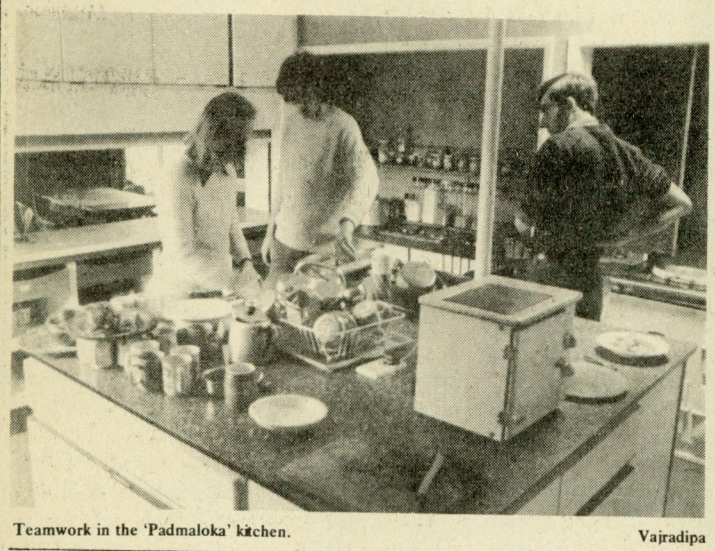
Daphne Luce

Permission Granted

Vajradipa

Since conversion work on our new meditation centre was completed, a shadow has been hanging over its future. Our original request for planning permission for a change of use was refused. However, our appeal against this decision, which would have placed severe limitations on our freedom to make best use of the place, has been upheld, so Tyn-y-ddol can now function without any fears of official intervention.

Friendship & Responsibility



Teamwork in the 'Padmaloka' kitchen. Vajradipa

Over the weekend of the 18th to the 20th July, between 50 and 60 male Order members and Mitras and Friends gathered at 'Padmaloka' for the third of this year's four Order/Mitra Events which have now become an established feature of the FWBO's Spiritual Calendar. Whether the Order/Mitra Event remains a stimulus to spiritual friendship as opposed to simply positive human contact, will depend upon the efforts made by individuals to grow and develop. This is not a matter of religious duty but of individual responsibility. Over the weekend it was shown how and why this responsibility embraced both 'self and others'.

The issues raised by the subject of spiritual responsibility were dealt with during the course of a symposium held on the Friday and Saturday nights — six talks were presented by Upasakas Mangala, Vajradaka, Abhaya, Subhuti, Aloka, and Nagabodhi. The object of the symposium was to offer guidance not dogma. Light was shed upon specific areas of interest ranging from personal to cosmic responsibility, thus setting up a framework for personal reflection and creative thinking.

The symposium made it clear that responsibility in the true sense is not a matter of social duty or ethnic obligation but is a natural and spontaneous expression of inner resolve and spiritual experience. It is the personal attribute of one who has assumed sole charge of his own conduct. No one can be conscripted into the Sangha. For spiritual growth to take place, however, the individual must as Subhuti showed, be ready to respond to the needs of others. He must take responsibility for both himself and others. If, as is nearly always the case, society discourages spiritual development, then it is the unavoidable task of the spiritual aspirant to clear such obstacles as hinder the teaching and practice of the Dharma. The sublime ideals of the Bodhisattva, to deliver both himself and all sentient beings from the pain of the samsara are not mutually exclusive opposites but two aspects of one spiritual path. The importance of teamwork in fulfilling this ideal was portrayed by Aloka with a depth and beauty of feeling that indicated an understanding greater than intellectual appreciation, and which was the fruit of personal experience. He showed that the Pure Land cannot be created by the sustained force of one person's will but must arise from teamwork, the activities of which represent a co-ordination of the commitment and capabilities of each member of the Spiritual Community.

This July's 'Order/Mitra Event' emphasized more than ever the need for teamwork within co-operatives, centres, communities and the FWBO. The basis of all genuine teamwork is metta, friendship and mutual concern between people. The Order/Mitra Events do not offer a 'refresher course in Buddhism' but are an occasion for *kalyana mitrata*. Alan Miller's mitra ceremony held on Saturday night was a reminder to all present that Spiritual Friendship is too important to be left as an unspoken assumption of the spiritual life. It requires positive effort. It is a personal responsibility. Over the weekend, whether during discussion in one of the study groups, performing puja, or passing a quiet moment with others in the surrounding countryside it was kalyana mitrata that was being shared and made to grow.

Karim Yasamee

Summer School & Structures

The regular meetings of Chairmen of FWBO Centres have been gathering momentum: every month there is a day-long meeting and every three months a two-day event at 'Padmaloka.' At these meetings the detailed experiences of each Centre are discussed, matters of principle affecting the whole movement are debated, and plans are made for activities and events which will have an impact on many Centres. Besides guiding the development of the Movement, the Chairmen are consciously developing their friendships one with another.

The two-day meeting in July considered, among other things, two major items: the running of an FWBO Summer School and the renovation of the FWBO's structure and 'image'.

The FWBO has become justifiably famous for its Retreats which are attended by several hundred people every year. Yet there are many people to whom a retreat does not appeal. A more diverse event with a broader range of activities to choose from — a Buddhist Summer School — would undoubtedly attract many new people. It is probably too late to find a suitable location for 1981, however a search is being made for a Summer School in 1982 which will probably be the first of a series of annual events.

We are looking for a spacious and comfortable place in quiet and beautiful surroundings with good accommodation for some 200 people. There will be a choice of courses, classes, workshops, and other activities: on meditation and traditional Buddhist texts and themes, Western cultural themes, yoga, judo, massage, poetry, music, drama, co-operatives, and communities. In this way the School will offer an enjoyable introduction to every aspect of the New Society, an opportunity to soak oneself in the atmosphere of the emergent alternative culture which is the FWBO.

The legal framework of the FWBO has grown up over the years based on fundamental spiritual principles, in response to immediate practical needs, and utilising the available legal alternatives. The structure employed so far has been very effective. However, the rapid expansion both of numbers and of diverse activities means that we need to rethink our organisational framework in the light of future developments. The trouble is that nothing like the FWBO has ever existed before; it is hard to convey to a lawyer the exact basis on which we operate and it is hard to interpret our activities within the existing legal systems. So the Chairmen are directing research into a new, simpler, and stronger organisational basis for the Movement.

So far, individual Centres have developed autonomously within a loose framework of co-operation. Increasingly it is important that the forces which draw the different Centres together are strengthened so that — without giving up the basic principle of local autonomy — the Movement remains one Movement. The Chairmen's meeting itself is perhaps the major cohesive factor but more attention is being given to the exchange of information, experience, and assistance, and in the sharing of ventures between different areas of the Movement. The monthly Co-op Managers' Meetings are notably developing a new vision of the possibilities of Right Livelihood.

The Chairmen are giving major consideration to the question of the image of the Movement — the impression which 'the general public' get from seeing publicity etc. Once more, without violating the principle of autonomy it is important that people realise that the FWBO is *one* Movement — that a whole-food shop in Bethnal Green is connected with a Centre in Brighton and a gardening business in Glasgow. Consideration is being given to using a single name for all FWBO businesses and having a common symbol and design style.

Within the next year major changes should take place in the structure and 'look' of the FWBO which will enable everyone to function far more effectively and which will bring many more people in contact with the New Society.

After much discussion of this kind at the July meeting, the Chairmen had a session of what the Maoists call 'fan shen' — mutual criticism. Each Chairman in turn has comments made upon himself and his Centre by the others. Particularly for those who work mainly without contact with other senior Order members this is invaluable. It is often difficult to see one's work objectively when one is involved 'up to the neck' and beyond. Other people — particularly those with equivalent responsibility — can offer crucial encouragement, suggestions, insights, and support. For all Chairmen the meetings are a major source of inspiration.

Subhuti

Atlantic College revisited

Atlantic College is a residential sixth-form school drawing students from 80 or more countries throughout the world. The founders had the inspiration that bringing together some of the brighter youth from many nations would make a significant contribution to world peace. The place has, certainly, an atmosphere of enthusiasm and enjoyment about it which made a return in July this year very welcome to me after my visit last summer.

The College is stunningly set in a lavishly restored mediaeval castle embellished with bits of Olde England — a tithe barn re-erected as a lecture hall, a painted wooden church ceiling plundered for the refectory. From the Castle, which stands on the Welsh Coast near Cardiff, formal gardens drop in terraces to the Bristol Channel beyond which Devon appears as a dark blue haze.

The College follows a teaching syllabus — 'The International Baccalaureate' — which attempts to establish an internationally recognised set of qualifications. All students have to take a paper in 'Theory of Knowledge' — basic philosophy, psychology, and religion. In contrast to the appallingly inadequate teaching of religion in most English Schools the College has begun to take this aspect of the course very seriously. Last year I had been invited to participate in a course on religion where representatives of different religions had been able to present and discuss their own particular teachings. The students had unanimously declared it to be the most interesting and important event of its kind and had particularly enjoyed the practical and experiential nature of my sessions. I was invited back this year for three days of a three week course held for International Baccalaureate students not attending the College.

The six Danes, 1 Italian, 1 German, and 2 Englishmen were completely overshadowed by 23 girls from a Convent School in Buenos Aires, Argentina, who had all come over specially for the course. At the beginning of their stay the Argentinians had apparently been extraordinarily docile, obedient to the cues of the teacher who accompanied them; by the time I arrived they were in a condition of perpetual near-riot bursting into cascades of giggles or explosive chatter at little or no provocation as they tasted and enlarged their new found freedom and vastly expanded horizons.

As I gave my first talk I became aware that I had been the subject of some advance speculation. Several girls anxiously asked their teacher — who herself confessed to me that she had never before met anyone who was not a Christian — how they were to approach this new teaching without a God. The good woman — by now quite clearly rather intrigued — told them that they must accept that others may have entirely different view-points than their own — a view revolutionary enough for young people from such circumscribed backgrounds. The presence of a Chinese Christian nun added an extra piquancy to the already confusing situation.

Though some were clearly interested in meditation and showed in discussion some grasp of what it aimed to do, most found it hard. One session collapsed in prolonged and helpless giggles. Nonetheless there will be two or three Argentinians who know — and rejoice — that there is an alternative to Christianity.

To the Europeans, by contrast, Buddhism did not seem such a strange phenomenon. Though some had the usual misunderstandings — regarding Buddhism as nihilistic and life-denying — two or three were deeply interested in the concept of Individuality, and in the FWBO's New Society, and will probably be returning for a retreat.

The College now plans to send three of their regular students to 'Padmaloka' for a week as part of a 'Theory of Knowledge' project. Since none of them has had any previous experience of the FWBO it will be interesting to see what they make of it.

Subhuti

The Other Indian Connection

This June, for the third successive year, I found myself taking part in the Festival for Mind-Body-Spirit 'on behalf of' the FWBO. One of the central features of this years festival centred around the North American Indian tradition which included daily performances of traditional Indian dances by the thoroughly English members of the British North American Indian Association. When not actually performing, members of this local tribe could be seen engaging in traditional Indian craft work or simply strutting up and down in their buckskin and eagle feathers on their reservation, where three or four teepees had been erected, in the midst of the National Hall at Olympia. However, perhaps in order to add authenticity to this theme, the festival organisers had endeavoured to engage four genuine red Indians to give a series of talks on their native tradition, but only one of them was finally able to come: Philip Deere.

Philip Deere is a medicine man of the Muskogee tribe (sometimes known as the Creeks) and is a well-known figure in the American Indian Movement. Two days after his arrival at the festival Philip and I met and rapidly established a firm friendship. My initial impressions of him, which I still retain, were of a man of great warmth, understanding and integrity. During his brief stay in England I was able to introduce him to a number of Order members and Mitras all of whom were deeply impressed by his quiet friendliness and great strength of character.

It was equally clear that he was considerably moved and impressed by the extent and quality of the friendship offered to him by those of us he met, and he commented that he had not encountered an organisation like the FWBO anywhere else in the world!

On two occasions I attended his talks which dealt with aspects of North American Indian tradition. What was most striking was the manner in which the talks were given. He extemporized about a particular theme speaking straight from the heart and communicated directly and immediately to his audience. He had the courage to speak his mind openly and frankly as occasion demanded and was not afraid to offer criticism of the barbaric treatment which his people have suffered at the hands of Christian missionary organisations and the U.S. government.

Outspoken though many of his comments were they were not offered from a basis of resentment, but rather from a genuine concern that things should be the way they are. I could not help but feel that the flair of individuality was vigorously alive in this generous-hearted man.

After the festival was over I placed myself entirely at his disposal for his two remaining days in London and helped him to conduct various bits and pieces of business. During this period he was a welcome guest of the 'Sukhavati' Community. I for one sincerely hope that we will have further opportunity to extend our hospitality to him and to deepen our contact and friendship in the future. **Devamitra**

Philip Deere with Vajramati. Nagabodhi

WINTER RETREATS

For women
at Loch Ard, Stirling, Scotland
From 19th December to 3rd January.
Booking through
The London Buddhist Centre
51 Roman Road, London E2 0HU. 01-981 1225

For men and women
at St Peters School, Seaford, Sussex
From 24th December to 1st January
Price £7.50 per day. Booking through
The London Buddhist Centre
51 Roman Road, London E2 0HU. 01-981 1225

About the Friends of the Western Buddhist Order

None of us is complete; more or less by chance, we are tossed up by our conditioning — biological, psychological, social, and cultural — as partial beings. Our future lies in each one of us making something of him or herself: making of that miscellaneous bundle of conditionings a happy, free, clear-minded, and emotionally radiant individual.

The conscious growth of a truly human being is the ultimate heroic act left to us. If we so choose, we can develop within ourselves a vivid awareness of existence, a powerful positivity towards all that lives, and an inexhaustible dynamism. Ultimately, we can become 'Buddhas', enlightened or fully awakened individuals who have totally liberated themselves from the bondage of subjective conditioning and who have a direct and intuitive understanding of reality.

One who commits himself or herself to this ideal of individual growth is a Buddhist. So the Western Buddhist Order is a fellowship of men and women who have explicitly committed themselves, in a simple ceremony, to furthering their own and others' development.

The Order forms the nucleus of a new society or culture in which the values of human growth are paramount. As a result of Order members taking responsibility each for their own lives and attempting to communicate honestly and openly with others, that new society is becoming a living reality. In those areas where Order members have gathered together there are found three things: Communities, Co-operatives, and Centres.

In communities, Order members and Mitras (literally 'Friends': people who, after some initial contact with Order members, have decided they wish to deepen their communication) live together in numbers varying between four and thirty. In these, a new and radical way of life is being forged, which encourages and inspires community members to grow. They are usually either for men or for women so as to break down the habitual psychological and social patterns usually found in our relationships with members of the opposite sex which so much inhibit growth. Often, community members will pool all their earnings in a 'common purse' from which all expenses, communal and individual, will be met. The flavour of the communities is as varied as the people within them.

In the Co-operatives, groups of Order members, Mitras, and Friends (those who are in contact with the Movement and participate in any of its activities) work together in businesses which financially support the workers and which fund the further expansion of this New Society. Present businesses either running or being set up in the Movement include a printing press, wholefood shops, a silkscreen press, a hardware store, cafes, a second-hand shop, bookshop, editorial service, metalwork forge, and graphic-design, photographic and film studio. Members of the Co-operatives are hammering out a way of working which is 'Right Livelihood': team-based so that each person has the opportunity to take responsibility for the work, and ethically sound: exploiting neither other people nor the earth's resources. Work is done not for remuneration, but for its value as a means of development (in what other situation might your workmates suggest that you go for a walk or do some meditation when you seem run down?) and from a spirit of generosity. Each worker either works voluntarily or is given what he or she needs to live.

The most direct and effective means to the evolution of consciousness is the practice of meditation. At the Centres, members of the Order teach meditation and conduct courses, study groups, talks, and discussions on the principles and practice of Buddhism. There are also ceremonies, festivals, and arts activities. Yoga, massage, and other practices are taught as valuable, though less central, methods of development. Centres are places where you can make contact with Order members and others already in touch with this burgeoning New Society. Above all, through the Centres, a bridge is formed over which those who wish may cross to a new and total way of life based upon the growth and development of individuals.

The Friends of the Western Buddhist Order ('the Friends') is, then, a movement, always deepening and expanding, of people who wish to be authentic, integrated and dynamic. It was initiated in 1967 by the Ven. Maha Sthavira Sangharakshita, who spent 20 years in India as a Buddhist monk. He there studied, practised, or had contact with all the main traditional schools of Buddhism and returned to the West with a clear awareness that, though its essence remains the same, Buddhism always expresses itself anew in each new age and climate. The 'Friends' is the response of the Buddhist tradition of insight and experience to the circumstances of the modern West. It is an increasingly widespread movement with some twenty Centres and Branches throughout the world.

FRIENDS OF THE WESTERN BUDDHIST ORDER

CENTRES AND BRANCHES

London Buddhist Centre, 51 Roman Road, Bethnal Green, London E2 0HU. Tel: 01-981 1225

Brighton Buddhist Centre, 15 Park Crescent Place, Brighton, Sussex. Tel: (0273) 698420

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

Grdhrakuta, 18 Burlington Road, Withington, Manchester M20 9PY. Tel: 061-445 3805

Heruka, 13 Kelvinside Terrace South, Glasgow G20. Tel: 041-946 2035

Mandala, Flat 6, 21 Fitzjohns Avenue, London NW3. Tel: 01-258 3706

Norwich Meditation Centre, 41a All Saints Green, Norwich. Tel: (0603) 27034

Lansimaisen Buddhalaisen Veljeskunnan Ystavat, FWBO
Albertinkatu 21 C 12, 00120 Helsinki 12, Finland. Tel: Helsinki 642 462

Suvarnadhatu, PO Box 68-453, Newton, Auckland, New Zealand.

FWBO Christchurch, PO Box 22-657, Christchurch, New Zealand. Tel: 795 728

Wellington Buddhist Centre, PO Box 12311, Wellington North, New Zealand.

Trailokya Bauddha Maha Sangha, Sahayak Gana,
Anagarika Lokamitra, 2A-Parnakuti Housing Society, Yerawada, Pune 411006, India.

Tyn-y-ddol Retreat Centre, Trerddol, Nr. Corwen, Clywd, N. Wales (visitors by arrangement only)

REPRESENTATIVES

Upasaka Aryavamsa, Elleholmsvagen 11, S-352 43 Vaxjo, Sweden.

Upasaka Bakula, Bakul Bhavan, Behind Gujerat Vaishya Sabha,
Jamalpur Road, Ahmedabad, 380001, Gujerat, India.

Upasaka Dharmadhara, PO Box 12311, Wellington North, New Zealand.

FWBO Netherlands Wichard Van Pontlaan 109, Arnhem, Netherlands 010 31 85 61 0275

CO-OPERATIVES

The Blue Lotus Co-operative Ltd., 34 Daventry Street, London NW1. Tel: 01-258 3706

Golden Light Co-operative, PO Box 68-453, Newton, Auckland, New Zealand.

Oranges Restaurant (Norwich) Ltd., 16 Dove Street, Norwich. Tel: (0603) 25560

The Padmaloka Co-operative Ltd., Lesingham House, Surlingham,
Norwich, Norfolk NR14 7AL. Tel: (050 88) 310

The Pure Land Co-operative Ltd., 51 Roman Road, London E2 0HU. Tel: 01-980 1960

The Rainbow Co-operative Ltd., 3-4 Saint Michaels Road, Croydon, Surrey. Tel: 01-688 2899

Windhorse Associates, 119 Roman Road, London E2 0QN. Tel: 01-981 5157

Windhorse Enterprises Ltd., 15 Park Crescent Place, Brighton, Sussex. Tel: (0273) 698420

Windhorse Wholefoods Co-operative Ltd., 13 Kelvinside Terrace South, Glasgow G20. Tel: 041-946 2035

COMMUNITIES
(Visitors by arrangement only)

Amitayus, 15 Park Crescent Place, Brighton, Sussex. Tel: (0273) 698420

Arunachala, 29 Old Ford Road, Bethnal Green, London E2 9PJ. Tel: 01-981 1407

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

Beulah, 95 Bishop's Way, Bethnal Green, London E2 9HL. Tel: 01-980 4151

Golgonooza, 119 Roman Road, Bethnal Green, London E2 0QN. Tel: 01-980 2507

Grdhrakuta, 18 Burlington Road, Withington, Manchester M20 9PY. Tel: 061-445 3805

Heruka, 13 Kelvinside Terrace South, Glasgow G20. Tel: 041-946 2035

Kalpadruma, 3 Saint Michaels Road, Croydon, Surrey. Tel: 01-688 2899

Khadiravani, 23 Tunstall Road, London SW9.

Padmaloka, Lesingham House, Surlingham, Norwich, Norfolk NR14 7AL. Tel: (050 88) 310

Ratnadvipa, 34 Daventry Street, London NW1. Tel: 01-258 3706

Sitavana, 141 Rosary Road, Norwich, Norfolk. Tel: (0603) 29965

Sukhavati, 51 Roman Road, Bethnal Green, London E2 0HU. Tel: 01-980 5972

Suvarnabhasa, 3 Massie Road, London E8.

Vajrakula, 41b All Saints Green, Norwich. Tel: (0603) 27034

Vajrasamaya, 30 Cambridge Park, Wanstead, London E11 2PR. Tel: 01-989 5083

329 Sauchiehall Street (top right), Glasgow. Tel: 041-333 0524

56 Walsingham Road, Clapton, London E5.

6 Birchfield Hse, Birchfield Street, Limehouse, London E14 8EY. Tel: 01-515 2226

The Office of the Friends of the Western Buddhist Order:
London Buddhist Centre, 51 Roman Road, London E2 0HU. Tel: 01-981 1225

The Office of the Western Buddhist Order:
Padmaloka, Lesingham House, Surlingham, Norwich, Norfolk NR14 7AL. Tel: (050 88) 310