

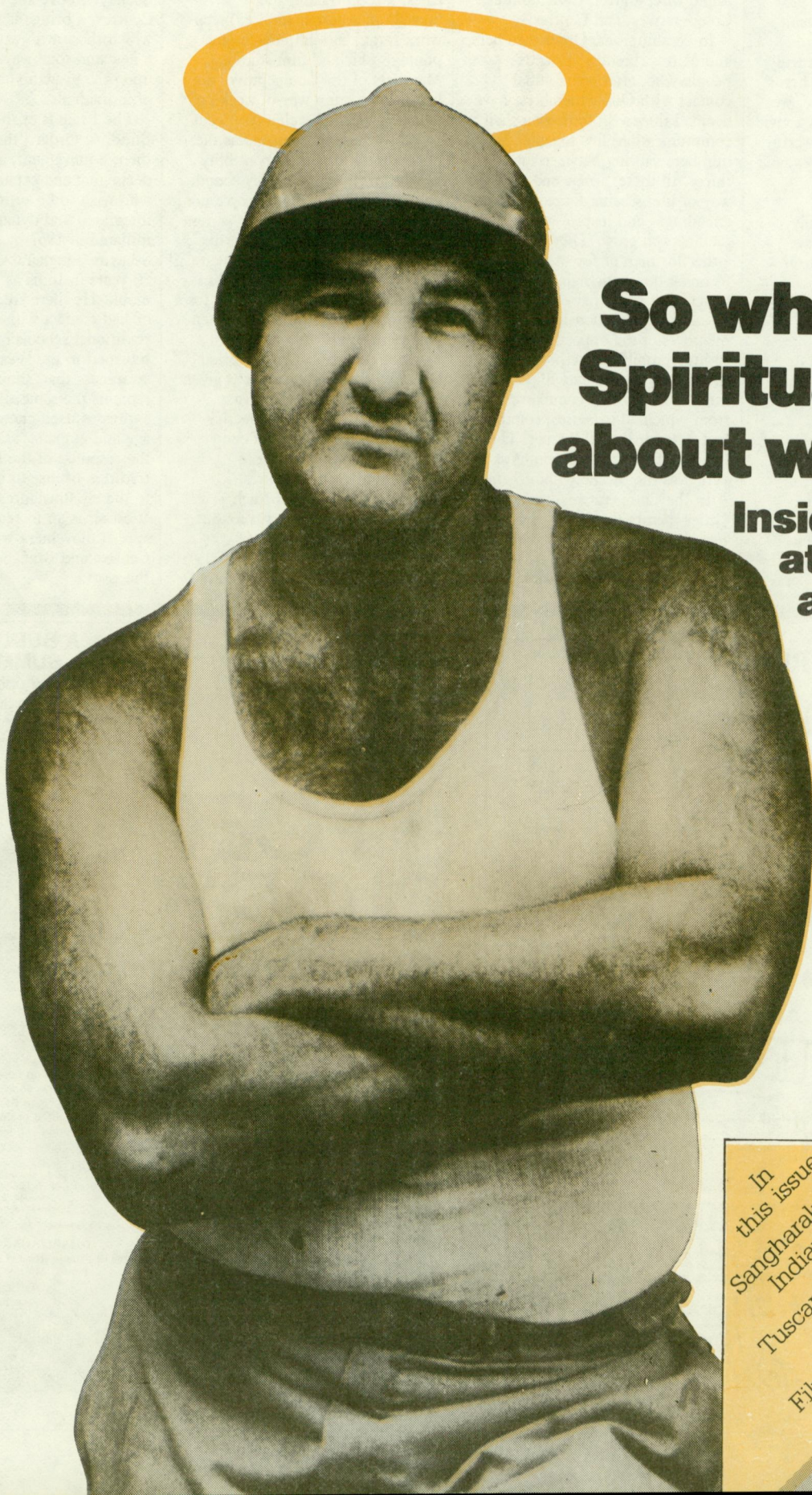
The

Friends of the Western Buddhist Order

# NEWSLETTER

Number 53

Price 65p



## So what's Spiritual about work?

**Inside we look  
at how work  
affects us.**

In  
this issue  
Sangharakshita's  
Indian Tour  
Tuscany Ordinations  
+ Photos  
Film and Book Reviews





# 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 para-

mount. 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, metal-work 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.

## YOGA PRACTICE TAPE

Available now  
from Dharmacakra Tapes  
Price: £3 incl. P & P.



## RAINBOWS

## MEDITATION MATS + CUSHIONS

Orders + c/o 12 Lower Clarence Road  
Norwich Norfolk  
Enquiries: Tel (0603) 618226.

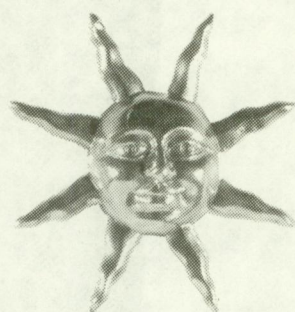
# THE WBO POET OLOGY 82

Want to see more?  
The first unmissable issue of the  
Friends Poetry Anthology will be  
on sale from January 16th, at all  
Centres and from 119 Roman Road  
Bethnal Green, price £1.50



## A BUDDHIST SUMMER

The 10 day open retreat at  
Seaford from July 17 to 27  
For details phone the  
London Buddhist Centre 981 1225



For the past 15 years, the Ven. Sangharakshita's public lectures have been recorded on tape. This means that there are now some 150 lectures, on various aspects of Buddhist thought and practice, stored in this way — a wealth of information and inspiration available to anyone with a cassette-recorder.

High quality cassette copies cost £2.50 per lecture, including post and packing. (In Europe, add 30p for the first, and 20p for each subsequent cassette).

For a detailed catalogue (40p), and to place orders, contact:

DHARMACAKRA TAPES  
119 Roman Road, London E2 0QN.  
(PLEASE NOTE NEW ADDRESS)





## The Friends of the Western Buddhist Order NEWSLETTER

Newsletter 53

### Editors

Marichi  
Nicolas Soames  
Siddhiratna

### Distribution

Virananda/Ashvajit

### Internal Advertising

Ashvajit

### Published Quarterly by the

Friends of the  
Western Buddhist Order  
119 Roman Road, London  
E2 0QN. Tel: 01 980 2507

### President

The Ven. Maha Sthavira  
Sangharakshita

### Layout & Design

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

### Typesetting

Windhorse Photosetters  
247 Globe Road, London,  
E2 0HU. Tel: 01 981 1407

### Printers

Aldgate Press  
84b Whitechapel High St.  
London E.1.  
01-247 3015

® Windhorse Publications  
1982

### Subscription

£3.25 pa (Surface mail to  
all parts of the world)  
Please make cheques and  
P.O.s payable to:  
Windhorse Publications

## Editorial

At a recent workshop held at the LBC on the 'Buddhist Ideal of Right Livelihood,' the notion was put forward that whereas in the Buddha's day the distinction between Right Livelihood and Wrong Livelihood was probably an easy one to make, in our own day the drawing of that line is a much more problematic affair.

For instance, can all the services needed to maintain a nation or country really be obtained from wind, water or waste power? Or are populations, given their size and dependence on energy, now irreversibly committed to nuclear power with all its inherent dangers?

What's more, many forms of employment now available to us, both in the Western industrial nations and the Third World countries merely supply an already bloated consumer market with trivialities meant to preoccupy and stop reality from creeping in. So, where does one draw the line between Right and Wrong Livelihood?

Over the last three years, Right Livelihood in the FWBO has been seen basically in terms of co-operatives. It was felt at the time when Co-ops were first introduced within the FWBO (five years ago) that the Co-operative structure for a business offered the best organisational conditions for the exercising of individual initiative and responsibility.

Certainly, the Co-ops have been a good starting point for many of us, but not everybody who comes into contact with the FWBO will be able or willing to work within their limitations of finance and skills. However, people interested in the ideals of Buddhism should not be denied the encouragement and support to put those ideals into practice in their place of work simply because they do not work in a Co-op.

In fact, it may be far more useful to have good and sympathetic contacts outside the Right Livelihood Co-op situation if our sphere of influence is to permeate outwards to the world at large. It is interesting to note that successful moves in this direction have already been made with meditation classes and courses being held outside the confines of the centres.

Siddhiratna

This Newsletter has been edited by a team while Nagabodhi has been on tour in India.

In the rush to finish the last Newsletter and get off on retreat author credits were left off a number of articles. They should have read **Women Together, Anoma; The Vajraloka Experience, Kamalasila; Aid For India, Tim Lilley; Manjushri Institute Visit, Prakasha; Politics & Consciousness, Dhammarati; Art of Loving, Mahamati; Women's Order Mitra Event, Anoma.** Apologies to those concerned.

## Contents

### News

Sangharakshita on tour in India	3
Ordinations in Tuscany	5

### Features

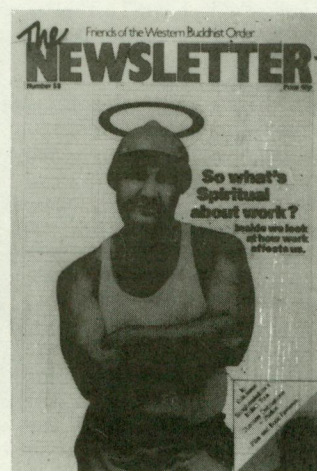
People or Profit?	7
WORK	9
Making a Creative Choice	13

### Facets

Reports from Centres, AFI news, Retreats round up	15
--	----

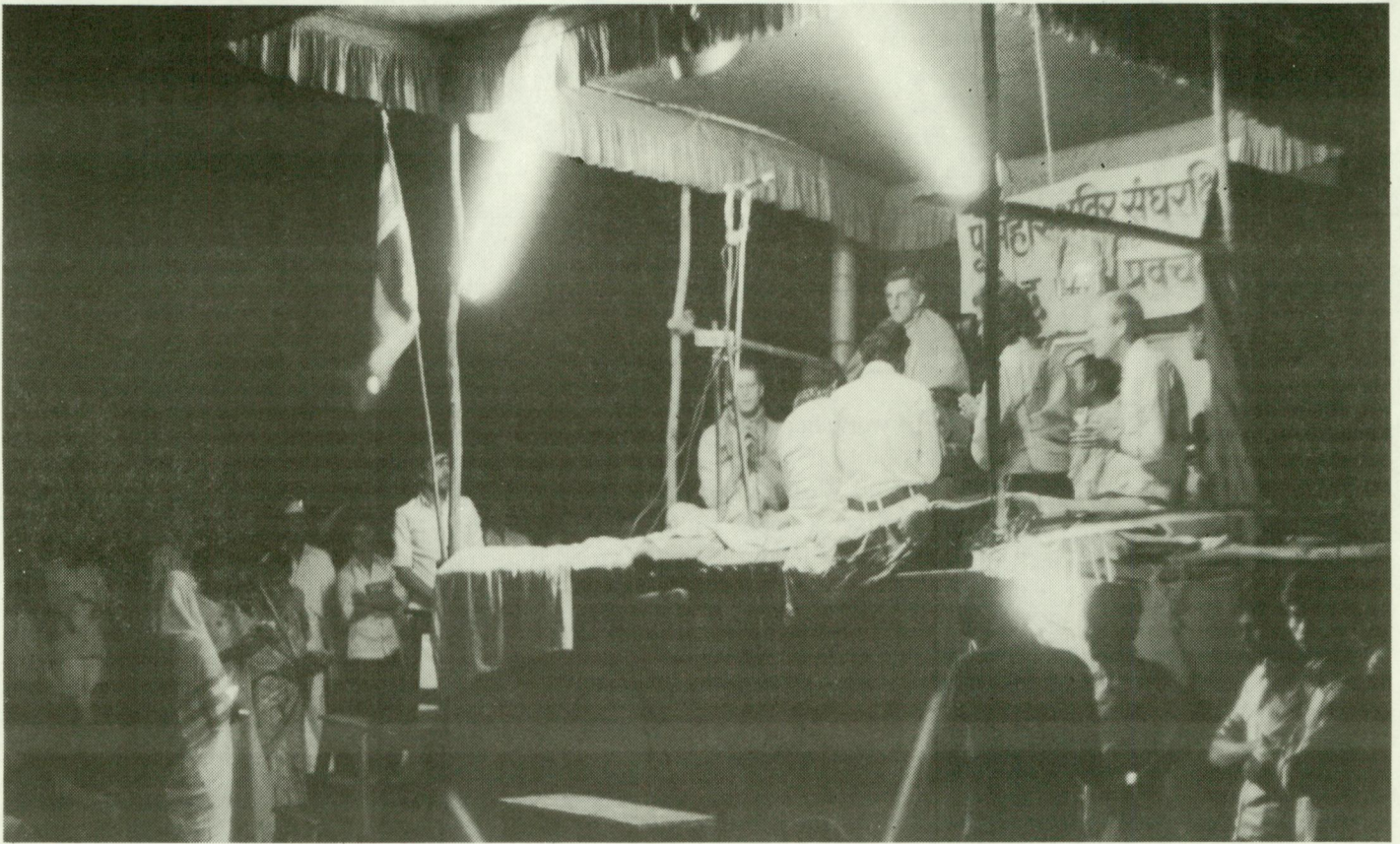
### Reviews

Embyronic Poets	21
Tibet: A Buddhist Trilogy	22



Cover Design by Dhammarati





Sangharakshita addresses the crowds from the *pandal*

Nagabodhi

# Sangharakshita on tour in India

by Nagabodhi

'Please, who is that man?'

The high-ranking officer of the Indian army who stood beside me pointed with his baton down the platform of Pune railway station. Towards us, out of the green neon gloom, came a surging mass of colour and light and noise, a splash of orange at its head. That splash of orange was the Ven. Sangharakshita — accompanied by Anagarika Lokamitra, and the mass of noise, light and colour that followed on and surged all around, was a procession of well-wishers who had come to meet him off the *Deccan Queen*, from Bombay. They were all shouting: 'Bhagwan Gautam Buddhata... JAI SO!... Dr Maha Babasaheb Ambedkaranta... JAI SO!... Maha Bhadanta Sangharakshitanta... JAI SO!' There were about two hundred and fifty of them on the platform, and about fifty ladies were waiting in the foyer with trays of flowers, lights, and incense. It was 8.30pm on Wednesday 16th December. Bhante Sangharakshitji was back in India again. Bhante's arrival in Pune brought

to an end weeks, if not months, of planning and preparation by Lokamitra and the Order members, mitras and Sahayaks here, and signalled the start of three months of intense Dhamma activity: a whirlwind of talks, visits, and travel, the sowing of which you will have read about in the last issue of the *Newsletter*.

Above all, so far at least, Bhante's visit seems to have been a matter of travel. A week in Pune was followed by a mini-tour to Panchgani and Mahad, and then by a week in Bombay. After Bombay it was back to Pune for just a few days before we went off on a four-day ordination retreat, held in a beautiful valley in the Ghats about two hours by train out of Pune. After the retreat we took to the road for a three-week tour of Maharashtra, taking in towns and villages on a circular route which embraced Aurangabad, to the north, Nanded, to the east, and Solapur, to the south. Right now, on the 4th February, we are in Pune again for just three days, before going to Ahmedabad via Bombay, and on from there to Delhi. Before Bhante returns to England, at the end of March, there will be a few final

programmes in the south of Maharashtra, a retreat in the Bombay area, and an Order event.

So far we have travelled on buses and trains, in jeeps, 'Ambassador' saloons, 'Matador' vans, in motorcycle rickshaws, bicycle rickshaws, and in pony traps, through golden, arid countryside dotted with flat-topped mountains and plateaux, and patchworked with fields full of sugar-cane, millet, cotton and bananas. At the end of each day's travel was a town where a host of official and unofficial organisers would meet and greet us with genuine delight, and anxious concern for our comfort (a concern that did not always find its consummation in events — the vicissitudes of Indian life rarely seem to allow for that). But all in all we generally got to where we were going, found a roof above our heads, food available, and a meeting organised.

And what meetings! Some have been held in huge corrugated iron sheds on railway sidings, one was held in a classroom high above an unbelievably noisy town, but most have taken place in the open-air at night: in fields, in town squares, at major road intersections (from which the traffic would somehow

get diverted), and, once, on a traffic island. The smallest gathering was in a theatre at Ahmednagar, where there were about 350 people. The largest was at Nanded, where there were probably 6-7000. On the whole we have been averaging out at around three thousand at each 'programme'.

At nearly every meeting Bhante would be met by an avenue of white sari'd ladies holding candles and throwing handfuls of flower petals over him as he walked through to the *pandal*, the temporary stage, illuminated by huge lamps, neon tubes and fairy lights, from which he would deliver his talks. And always the shouting of slogans as he arrived: 'Bhagwan Gautam Buddhata JAI SO!...'

A few days of illness aside, when Bhante was able only to make 'silent appearances' and leave the giving of the talks to some of the rest of us, he has been pouring forth the rain of the Dhamma in large, generous quantities, and in original ways every time. At the moment he has given about twenty-five talks of about one to one and a half hour's duration, a corpus which will, on tape, stand the Movement here in India in good



stead for a long time to come: at least until his next visit!

He is speaking to a tremendous variety of people, from college teachers to illiterate farm labourers, to the smart members of the Bombay Theosophical Society. No doubt we will see many more kinds of audience as the tour unfolds. Always the women sit to one side, a dazzling tapestry of silks and cottons, and the men to the other, a more straightforward, but often equally bright, chequerboard of white suits and turbans, or dark, rough, working clothes. Always, at the front usually, are the hundreds of wide-eyed, bright-eyed children, trying to catch your eye as you sit up on the pandal, and going into states of total excitement if they succeed.

Although there are crazy times when, half-way through a talk, fifty women will suddenly get up and carry sleeping children off to bed, setting up a rather off-putting commotion as they go about it, the audiences are largely intensely attentive. It is very moving to see all those eyes screwed up in concentration, the frowns and smiles of agreement, to hear the sudden bursts of laughter and applause.

The police are always standing close by, sometimes in the line of duty, and sometimes out of personal interest, khaki clad figures in big wide-bottomed shorts who, in the lower ranks at least, seem to lack the institutionalised invulnerability and aloofness of their western equivalents. One constable, at Koprangaon, suddenly appeared on the pandal, prostrating himself before Bhante and offering a garland. Anyway, there has certainly been no trouble so far, and it is hard to imagine that there will be in the future. Sometimes a car has passed a programme blaring its horn in a way that seems provocative, or a nearby factory siren has gone off at a suspiciously late hour, but nothing has happened to cause concern, much less alarm.

Such provocation, when it is suspected, is *thought* to come from the local caste Hindus, but one interesting and encouraging feature of the tour is the fact that we have had quite a large number of Hindus actually attending the programmes, and one programme in Aurangabad was actually organised by a liberal, socially conscious Hindu society.

Bhante speaks clearly, straightforwardly and directly, the words issuing in a double-sourced torrent from himself, in English, and then from Vimalakirti, in Marathi. He tells people about his contact with Dr Ambedkar, the founder, father and figure-head of the mass-conversion movement, the

statesman who felt, and carried through, the tremendous responsibility of elevating the social standing and the self-image of millions of oppressed people, the 'Untouchables'. At an early stage in his career, Dr Ambedkar saw conversion as the only way out of caste oppression, and finally decided that Buddhism, with its lack of theism, of caste-ism, its belief in the dignity and higher potentiality of every human life, and its roots in Indian culture, would be the ideal alternative. He was clearly a true leader of heroic dimensions, a visionary who saw that social change had to be matched by a change in vision if it was to be effective.

We have heard in previous *News-letter* articles how the opportunities created by his ideas and leadership were never really seized, and we have also heard of Bhante's involvement with that movement during the late 50's and 60's. Well, now Bhante is here again, reminding people what *diksha* (conversion) means: what it means to be a Buddhist. He reminds them that to be Buddhist only by birth or label means that they could still effec-

tively just be another 'caste' — with a different name, and, further, that they will also miss out on the opportunity of practising and benefitting from the Dhamma.

The Dhamma here (and Buddhists always refer to it as the *Dhamma*, since the Sanskrit word *Dharma* connotes caste duty), freed from the psychological filters through which it is, necessarily, approached in the west, is very simple and direct. Life will be improved by Buddhist practice. Life will be improved, for the individual and society, if people genuinely try to put the Refuges and precepts that they recite — and even hear 'pop' songs about — into practice. Life will be better if people meditate, if they develop an understanding and appreciation of others, if they try to develop the qualities of a Buddha. In talk after talk Bhante explains what the Dhamma is, how it can help, how there is no point in being a Buddhist unless you are a practising Buddhist. He also explains some of the things that we have done in the west: the communities and the co-operatives we have created. Dr Ambedkar started a revolution, a non-violent

Dhamma revolution, but there is no reason at all to doubt that this revolution need be any less effective and beneficial (in fact it could be more so) than the big social and political upheavals that we read of in history books. The eager, excited, looks on people's faces, the sometimes massive book sales that follow the programmes, and the comments that are made by people we meet, really do suggest that the revolution is on the move again. And now Trailokya Baudha Mahasangha, Sahayak Gana is here to nourish and further inspire it. There is a tremendous amount of work to be done here, but the exciting thing is — to my eyes at least, being used to things in the West — the work is all to do with following up and channelling enthusiasm, rather than having to inspire it.

For that reason, then, among others, it was very good to see three Indian mitras Go for Refuge and become two (*dasa sila*) Upasakas, and one Anagarika. During the four day retreat in January Bhante conducted the ordinations of Professor Kamblé, who became Bodhi-dharma, Mr Chandrakant Kamblé, who became Amritabodhi, and Śramanera Dhammavir, who became Anagarika Maha Dhammavir. Amritabodhi and Bodhidharma are from Pune, and Maha Dhammavir is from Ahmednagar. A retired police physical education instructor who heard Bhante lecture 20 years ago, Maha Dhammavir originally contacted our Movement simply intending to ask someone if they knew where he could go to be ordained as a bhikkhu. But he was so impressed by his contact that he stayed, and has now joined the Order.

A lot could be said about the role — and non-role — of the bhikkhus in Maharashtra Buddhism. Suffice it to say for now that Bhante has been reminding his listeners that Dr Ambedkar saw the need for an entirely new kind of Buddhist worker if Buddhism was going to really be effective in the modern world. What is needed, he felt, is a Dhamma worker who is really committed, and really free to work, rather than being tied down by a surfeit of formalistic observances — not to say bolt-holes.

In our Movement we have exactly that kind of worker, that kind of attitude. It really is possible that Trailokya Baudha Mahasangha, Sahayak Gana is exactly the kind of catalyst for the Dhamma revolution that Dr Ambedkar had in mind. It really is possible — and as an outside observer on tour with Bhante Sangharakshita, it seems very possible to me — that the Dhamma revolution is taking off.



"...conversion the only way out of the caste oppression..." Nagabodhi



by Vessantara  
photos by Sudhana

**F**OR THREE MONTHS last autumn the inhabitants of the small Tuscan village of Batignano had a new and intriguing subject to gossip and speculate about: what was going on in the old monastery known as 'Il Convento' up on the hill above the village? They knew that some 27 men were staying there, but except for a couple of people who came to buy stamps or calor gas in fractured Italian, none of the others ever ventured out. The villagers had become used to droves of people descending on them during the summer, for 'Il Convento' is the home of 'Musica Nel Chiostro', an opera company with a growing reputation, established by Adam Pollock, the English designer who owns the place. But 'Adamo' had gone away for 3 months and left his home to these invisible 'Inglesi'. Worse still (or better, from the gossip point of view), in the lazy

most important development for the FWBO since the opening of the London Buddhist Centre, and which for 20 mitras was a turning-point in their lives.

Bhante gave three main reasons for holding the course. Firstly, he feels that it is often difficult for people working in FWBO Centres and Co-ops to have the time and opportunity for deep study of the Dharma — which is essential if one is to be able to commit oneself to it. Secondly, all too often he does not have much chance to get to know people very well before he ordains them. Thirdly, as the FWBO isn't a monolithic organization, but a network of autonomous Centres whose only link is the common commitment of the Order members who run them, it is essential that Order members should be in good contact with one another — that they should be really good friends. So the course gave the mitras who attended it the best possible preparation for entering the Western Buddhist Order: ideal conditions in which to study

# Ordinations

mits these macho specimens spent most of their time shooting very small birds. Nonetheless the hunters were a very small price to pay for the opportunity to bathe one's senses in the golden Tuscan light, which at times was like walking through clear honey.

It was against this rich backdrop that 27 men (Bhante, Subhuti, Ratnaguna, Sthiramati, myself and 22 mitras) lived for three months, with only Ratnaguna and I going out to get supplies. Everyone else live in a self-contained world of meditation and study. Apart from certain unchanging features — such as morning and evening meditations — the programme changed as time went on. The first half of the course had a strong emphasis on study. Nearly every morning Subhuti and I would lead study groups on the 'Mitrata Omnibus', ensuring that everyone had a firm grasp of the basic essentials of the Dharma. Then, after a break for tea, Bhante would answer questions arising out of the study, clarifying and expanding on the text.

After lunch there was time for a walk in the hills, or to take advantage of the abundance of talent in teaching physical activities which we had brought with us: two Yoga teachers, a black-belt Karate teacher, and a teacher of Tai Chi Chuan. Also in the afternoons Bhante would meet people in small groups. These began with everyone recounting their life stories, then moved on to close examinations of sections of Bhante's 'Survey of Buddhism' and 'Three Jewels'.

There was a meditation before dinner, and then some evenings would be devoted to meditation and puja, whilst on others there would be Speakers' Classes. These pro-

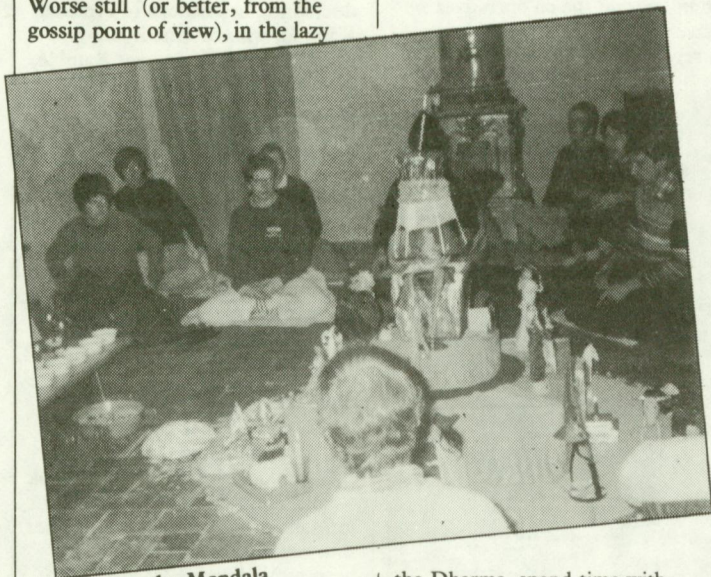


Tai Chi

vided some of the highlights of the course, as one by one the mitras — many of whom had little or no experience of public speaking — gave talks and then received what Bhante called 'positive, critical feedback' from the audience. The standard of talks was exceptionally high, and Bhante commented that some of them would have graced an Order Convention.

And so the weeks slipped by under the Tuscan sun, with only a slight chill in the air and the steady dwindling of my originally-thick wad of travellers' cheques to mark the passage of time. It was very noticeable how everyone thrived on the regular lifestyle — meditation, three square meals a day, time to walk, time to think, and no pressure. Some of us had speculated that some people at least would find three months in seclusion difficult — that after a while they would start to miss all their favourite distractions. But nothing of the sort occurred. As the weeks passed the atmosphere just became friendlier and more relaxed.

In the second half of the course



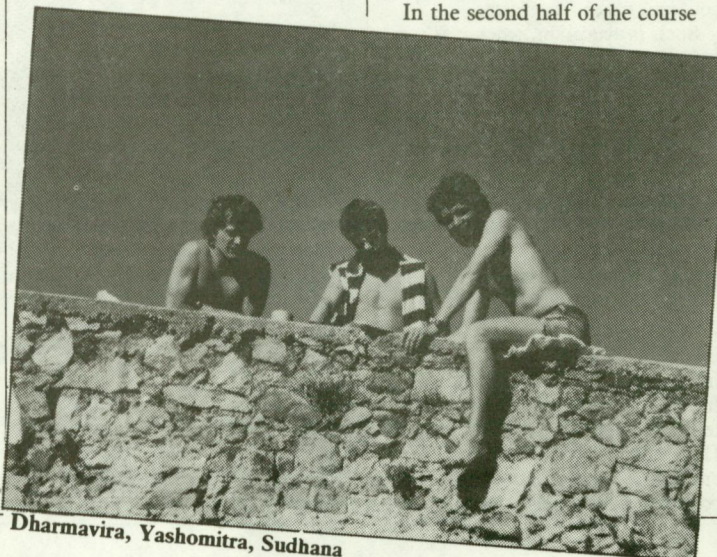
Offering the Mandala

still afternoons when any self-respecting Tuscan is curled up quietly with a glass of wine, instead of the strains of Mozart arias wafting down the hill, blood-curdling screams would resound from the monastery.

So what was happening? All the villagers had to go on was my pidgin-Italian explanation that 'Il Convento' had been taken over by some 'Buddhisti' for a 'corso intensivo spirituale'. My hastily-acquired grasp of the language wasn't adequate to describe the three-month Intensive Pre-Ordination Course being held there, couldn't convey the significance of an event which Bhante, the founder of the FWBO, described as the

the Dharma, spend time with Bhante, and make friendships which hopefully would last the rest of their lives.

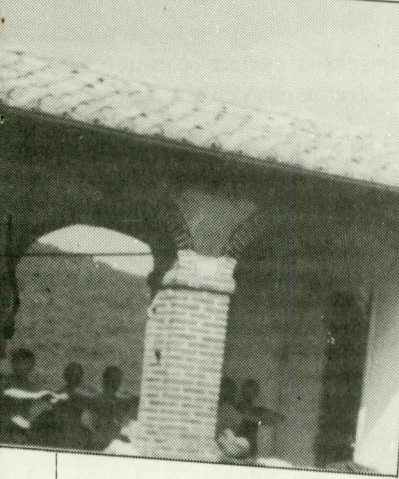
'Il Convento' was in many ways ideal for these purposes — a simply-furnished 17th century building, complete with central courtyard, an old well, cloisters, loggia, walled garden, and olive grove, and surrounded by wooded hills which provided many excellent walks. The only slight drawback was the Italian male's passion for hunting. Hardly a day passed without the sound of gunshots, and it was commonplace in the middle of a walk in the hills to see figures dressed in combat jackets and armed to the moustaches lurking in the bushes. The irony was that although dressed like Mexican ban-



Dharmavira, Yashomitra, Sudhana



## s in Tuscany



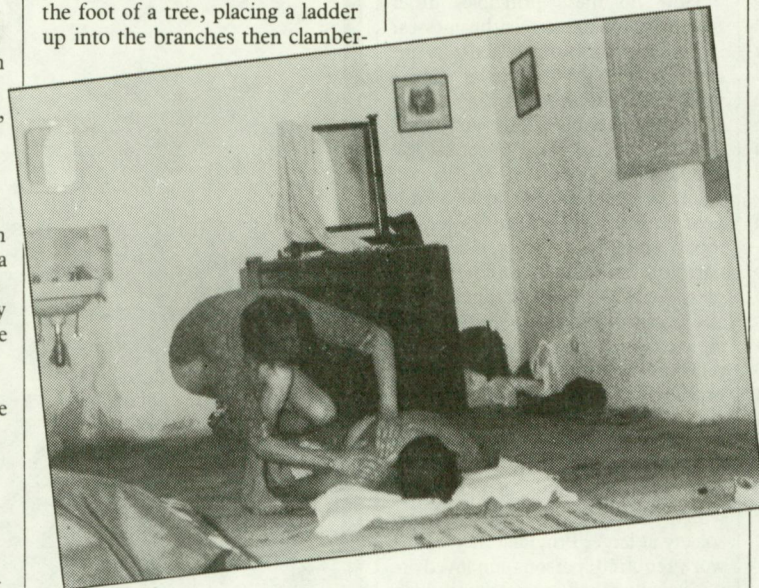
we started building up towards the ordinations. Study stopped, and in the evenings Bhante led us through several of the main visualization meditations done within the Order, simplifying where necessary to bring out the common underlying structure of the different practices.

Then at long last came the week of the ordinations themselves. Each night after starting a metta bhavana meditation Bhante would leave the shrineroom and go his mindful way up the stone staircase and along the long echoing corridors to another small shrine specially prepared for the private ordinations. One by one those to be ordained that night would follow. For those of us left behind, sending our best wishes, listening to the ordinees' echoing footsteps was our only way of following them as they set out on the Path to Enlightenment — footsteps receding into the distance: some steady and measured, some determined, some short and nervous, others quick and expectant, all dwindling away into deep silence. A long pause. Then, faintly at first, the returning steps of a new individual: some still steady and measured, some skimming lightly over the cold stones, some tapping out the syllables of a new name, a new life; at least one jumping and dancing down the old stone corridors in a stocking-footed whoop of joy.

The week following the ordinations was devoted to a thorough briefing of the new ordinees about everything they would need to know in order to function effectively as Order members. These matters ranged from such topics as the organizational structure of our Charities and Co-ops to considering questions like 'How do you know

when someone is ready for ordination?'

This period was also filled with quite a lot of work. We had already at different times during the course built an outdoor stage in the walled garden (a prodigious feat of rubble-barrowing), constructed a stone fireplace in the kitchen, decorated several rooms, repaired the roof, and several other things besides. But now, although perhaps those newly ordained would have preferred to spend their time quietly absorbing the impact of the profound step they had taken, there was more work to be done: 130 olive trees in the grounds needed harvesting. This involved teams of people spreading a large net around the foot of a tree, placing a ladder up into the branches then clamber-

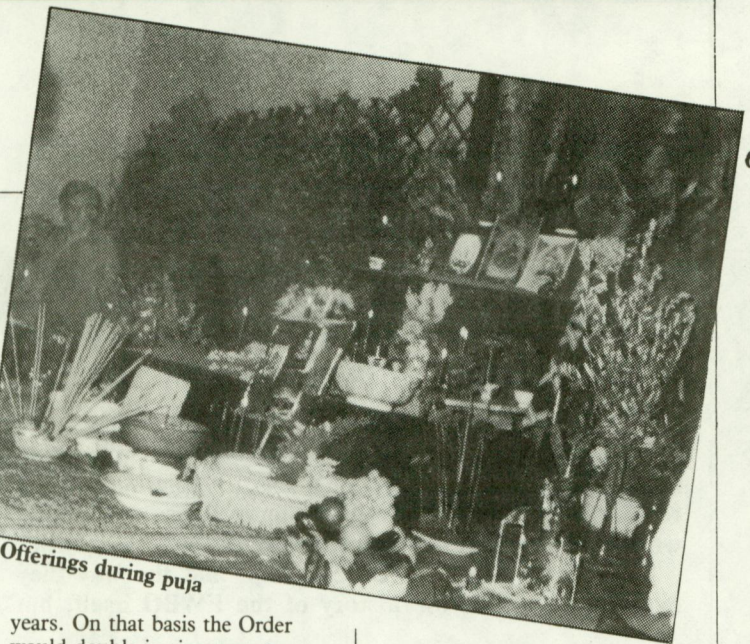


Massage

ing around precariously, milking the olives from the branches with metal combs. As it turned out we had a bumper harvest, and I had 30 very large sacks of olives to take down to the village for pressing.

Then somehow 13 weeks had dwindled down to one. Bhante made a few closing remarks, stressing three areas which he hoped would be re-emphasised within the FWBO as a result of the course. Firstly that we should concentrate on the traditional Dharma rather than attempts to reinterpret it in terms of modern Western psychology.

Secondly a greater stress on spiritual friendship — he pointed out that if every Order member could spend time in deep and regular communication with just one person they would more than likely be ready for ordination within two



Offerings during puja

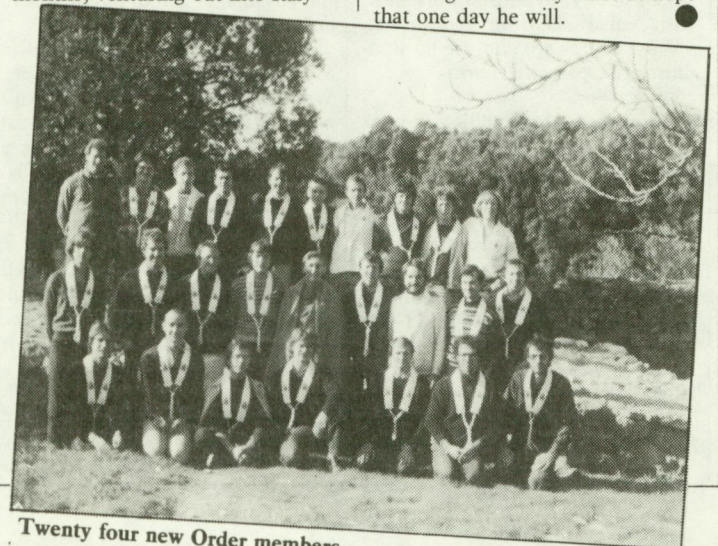
years. On that basis the Order would double in size every two years. Thirdly he emphasized the vital importance of the work being done by Aid For India, and urged everyone present to do anything they could to support it and make it successful.

Bhante's remarks heralded the end of the course proper. The last

to Siena, Florence or Rome, or just down to the village to buy postcards or sit in a cafe. So the villagers' fears were allayed. No-one had been murdered. The blood-curdling screams had only been the *kiais* of those practising Karate, shouting as they brought body and mind to one-pointed focus in a punch or block. And yet something mysterious *had* happened. Gerald, Rudiger, Dave Luce and 17 other mitras had disappeared without trace. In their place had appeared 20 new beings with new names, setting out from 'Il Convento' on the quest for Enlightenment. So successful was the course in preparing them for that quest there is no doubt they will become a regular feature in the FWBO. Hopefully more and more mitras will have the opportunity to prepare for their own quest in ideal conditions, if not in Italy then somewhere else with a warm climate — in his closing remarks Bhante drew murmurs of agreement from everyone present when he said that 'Buddhism and sunshine seem to go together'.

My last picture from the course is of Bhante sitting during the public ordinations placing kesas (the insignia of members of the Order) over 20 heads in turn, contentedly murmuring 'I could go on doing this all day'. Let us hope that one day he will.

few days were left unprogrammed, and were spent writing up notes from the mass of study material we had covered, going for walks and sealing friendships, and, after three months, venturing out into Italy —



Twenty four new Order members



# People or Profit?

Around most FWBO centres — in fact, inextricably involved with most centres — are FWBO co-ops. They may take the form of a gardening business, a wholefood shop, a restaurant, a printing or typesetting business or a candle workshop; and they may be run by men or women or both.

The reason for their development and the way they evolved is part of the history of the FWBO itself, but

suffice to say that they all possess a certain character which sets them aside from mainstream or even alternative forms of employment.

Liz Pankhurst, who has worked both in and out of the co-ops and is currently working in the Aid for India office, considers the FWBO co-op against a backdrop of other, more conventional work opportunities.

by Liz Pankhurst

**F**WBO CO-OPS GREW out of the need for two things. One was the need of individual people to work alongside others of like-minds, and thereby bringing work into their practice of Buddhism. The other was a financial need of the movement, to bring in money to finance the opening of the then unbuilt centre at Bethnal Green, the LBC.

Now the co-ops have turned a small corner. The LBC is nearly self-supportive and the Pureland Co-op around it has for some time been financing its own expansion. In Bethnal Green there are three co-operatives comprising of five, two and one businesses respectively. At other centres around the country there are other co-ops, not so large, but thriving. They form an important part in what the FWBO has to offer people looking for alternative ways of working and an alternative life-style.

So what is a co-op, and how do FWBO co-ops differ in their approach to work from that of ordinary commercial businesses?

A co-op provides equal opportunities for expression and the taking of responsibility, to all who work in it, with equal share in the profits. FWBO co-ops are also run on Buddhist principles which are:—

1. To promote the conditions at work and outside for the growth and well-being of those who work in and come into contact with the co-op.
2. Not to carry out or support anything which may be considered harmful to living beings.
3. Those working in the co-op should be committed to their own development and to that of others who work there.
4. Everyone should be prepared to, and be given the opportunity to, take on responsibility for the running of their section of the co-op.

The degree of commitment to these principles is an individual affair. However, in that the Buddhist co-op is set up with these principles in mind, the extent to which each person adheres to them, is also the extent to which they are committed to the co-op.

How do these principles differ from that of commercial businesses?

A successful business today is one that can not only survive the massive yearly inflation, but one that can expand beyond that. This survival is based on survival of the fittest, richest and most adaptable.

The major principle of any business is therefore to compete for the top. Competition is not necessarily harmful, but without guiding principles, it could be. With competition and profit-making as the major principles, business will employ or make redundant as many persons as it is profitable to do so.

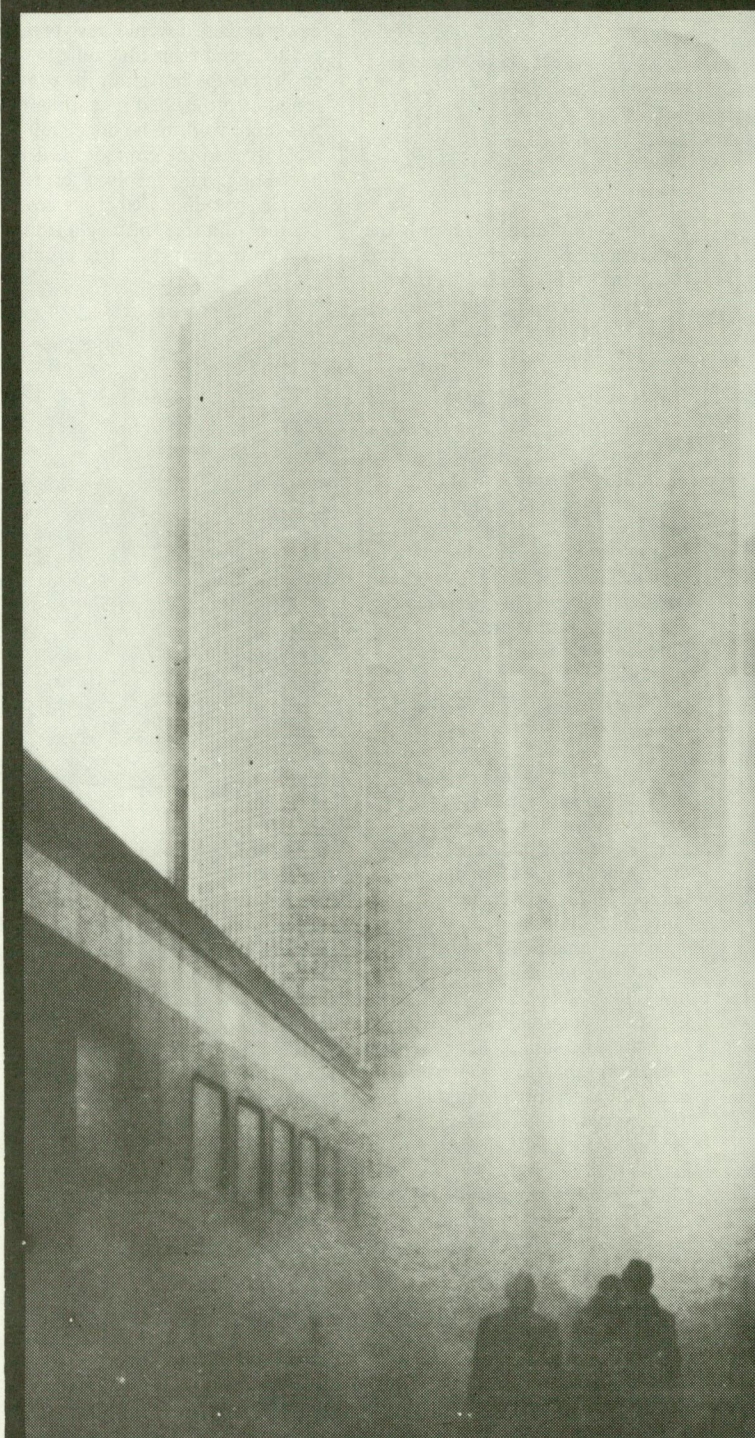
Besides the principles of competition, there may be, especially in organisations of a larger nature, principles of a political viewpoint, which may have a great effect on society at large. Provided they do the work required, persons employed are not usually asked to agree with those principles which though rarely underlined, *DO EXIST*.

So how does working in an FWBO co-op differ from working in the average commercial firm? What are the advantages and disadvantages of either of these situations?

The main advantages of working in a commercial business are clear. Working for a regular, realistic wage gives a person conventional social status with all its apparent benefits: a wider choice of dress, accommodation, activities — and more freedom of mobility than if they were on a subsistence wage.

By working for someone else you are often excluded from the overall running of the business and being free from overall business troubles it is easier to deal with daily problems of a practical nature as they arise.

Again, in a firm where people are paid purely to work, people as a rule do not bring their domestic problems





with them. Illness is accepted, but it would be unlikely that someone would complain they could not work due to 'feeling depressed' or because they had something else on their mind that day. This means that the work situation is relatively clearer and more simple for both employer and the employed. And, of course, the conditions for work are often of a high standard as firms are compelled to compete with a fast-moving business world; equipment is often up to date, all facilities available for quick and efficient production of work.

However, there are disadvantages.. Money is by no means everything,

and working for a wage means in some cases being subject to the ideals and ways of working of your employer. With large firms you are often employed to strict working hours (this seems to be the best method they have of checking people are doing the work) whether there is work to do or not. In some firms, even when you have no work to do, you are expected to pretend you have, as your lack of things to do would reflect back onto other's output.

And often your behaviour, style of dress etc. have very rigid guidelines set up by the firm. The larger the organisation, the less flexibility there can be because the guidelines of behaviour and the aims of the business have to be imposed over a larger and therefore widely differing group of people.

Without responsibility in the overall running of the business, there is a lack of personal involvement in the business as a whole. This could mean that the person working is out of contact with the total vision necessary to capture their whole attention. The more mechanical the task, without being in touch with a higher ideal, a common cause, the more likely it is that a very large part of one's person must necessarily be left out of the work situation. This necessitates and encourages, the existence of a 'private life' which in turn brings about the need for more rigid patterns of behaviour being imposed to ensure that this 'private life' does not interfere with the smooth running of the business.

And although work free from domestic problems is fresher and clearer from a work point of view, it also leaves less room for deeper communication of a caring nature. The potential is there in the individuals themselves, but the situation does not encourage it, and would rather function on a more superficial level.

The business with the most opportunities for people are often the larger ones, where the conditions for work are set up to suit hundreds and can rarely be altered for individual needs if these differ from the norm. And people with new talent and ideas to offer may find that although resources are much more readily available in a larger and more successful business, if their ideals and dreams differ from the majority of others, they could find it impossible to realise them. This would be more the case, the larger the firm.

FWBO co-ops on the other hand also have their advantages and disadvantages. Advantageous is the fact that they are not set up in isolation, since people are working together on the basis of a common commitment towards a particular 'way of life' so at least in this very important area, people have something in common. To add to this, those same people may be living together, but anyway will

almost certainly have attended a retreat together or meditated together from time to time.

Having responsibility jointly for the whole of the business can bring solidarity and a total involvement in the work. It is whatever anyone makes it. This way of working relies on individual talents and capabilities to shine forth within the structure of a team. This way the businesses are more likely to reflect the individuals than the individuals having to bend to the already rigid makeup of the business.

Ultimately it is the individual that matters in the co-op and not the business. The business in itself is important, but it will not grow and develop at the expense of individual development, but alongside of it, or because of it. So although people are encouraged to give all they can to the co-op situation, if by doing so they are seen by others to be going against their own development, then they will be told this, and expected to leave or change their way of working. This provides for a more caring attitude to work. People are concerned for the well-being of themselves and each other, paving the way for deeper friendships as people working together exchange ideas and experiences and give each other constructive feedback on their work and how they do it.

That is not to say that the FWBO attitude presents a perfect working situation. The businesses began with little or no capital. The ideals of the co-op require that people give what they can and take what they need. The wage is replaced by support, a small amount, which for people leading a simple life is supposed to meet their needs. At present the support is very low, the problem of tax and insurance being included if it should be raised, together with the lack of present funds. The question is, is this wage now sufficient for people's needs and ultimately for that of the co-op as a whole? If people are unable to afford new clothes, holidays, comfortable accommodation, is it likely they will commit themselves to the business on a long-term basis? And if people look strained and are shabbily dressed, is this going to help the co-op in the long run?

Ideally there should be enough money to enable people to take time off for practice, study, and retreats, and still leave the co-op enough left over to keep expanding into new areas. Realistically, both the co-ops and their members are obliged to identify with that lower income bracket of society only, and while working with so little capital, expansion of both individual means for expression and the business as a whole becomes slow and frustrating.

It must be said, also, that as yet there is not a great variety of businesses within FWBO co-operatives.

This is mainly due to the need for businesses which require few skills so that there are less restrictions on who can work in them.

For the person with skills, however, there are very few opportunities to put them into action. This will presumably change with time, however, as more and more people with skills come together to start co-ops.

Another very real difficulty concerns long-term commitment and the change of the individual — something which, presumably, those within the FWBO orbit are working towards.

If people who have recently come into contact with the FWBO and who are uncertain of their commitment to the Movement as a whole start working in the co-op, committing themselves to the 'simple life' before realising what this entails, conflicts could — and do — arise and long-term commitment to the co-op is unlikely. In other words, working for co-op businesses can mean long hours, little money, and often excludes the possibility of developing other interests.

So what are the future plans for the FWBO Co-ops?

Businesses run on common commitment are as stable as the commitment and the integration of the people involved, and without doubt this commitment is based on the degree a person has decided that the FWBO is the vehicle by which they can grow as individuals.

In that lies the strengths and the weaknesses of the FWBO co-op. It is necessary to state that so far, the turnover of people working in FWBO co-ops has been high, especially of people moving from one business to another.

This is due to many reasons, which include the nature of the work itself — much of it is relatively unskilled or unspecialised — and the changes that occur in people themselves. Perhaps it is in the nature of most FWBO co-ops that long-term commitment to a single business is unlikely for many. After all, there is no pension scheme or gold watch at the end of 40 years service.

But the figures speak for themselves. In 1977 there were four businesses employing 17 people with an annual turnover of £43,383. By 1981 there were 21 businesses employing 115 people with an annual turnover of £647,000.

This illustrates the point that the FWBO co-ops offer not just a viable alternative to standard commercial employment, they also offer a fundamentally different attitude towards work and the reason for work/working, and the enjoyment of work.

Some co-ops will be there to support centres directly; some will exist to make a profit for the workers — perhaps for a charity such as Aid for India, or even for the workers themselves for a particular purpose; some of the co-ops may combine these various aims. But almost certainly, the co-ops will play a vital part in FWBO future.



by Atula &  
Dhammarati

**W**ORK IS ONE of the most fundamental human activities. It is the activity which since the earliest times has produced the material essentials for human life — food, shelter, clothing. Every civilization is built on the foundation of the wealth produced by work in excess of the basic needs. But more than this, work itself is an activity which has shaped the human being. The interplay of man and nature brings into being the potential capacities and creativity of the individual; Work can be a process, as Marx wrote in *Grundrisse* of 'Self realization' or as E.F. Schumacher quotes the Indian economist J.C. Kumarappa: 'If the nature of the work is properly appreciated and applied, it will stand in the same relation to the higher faculties as food is to the physical body. It nourishes and enlivens the higher man and urges him to produce the best he is capable of. It directs his free will along the proper course and disciplines the animal in him into progressive channels. It furnishes an excellent background for man to display his scale of values and develop his personality.'

This view of work, as a valuable tool for maturing men and women, for shaping the world, is *not* a familiar one. Work is a four letter word — 'From the point of view of the employer, it is in any case simply an item of cost, to be reduced to a minimum if it cannot be eliminated altogether, say by automation. From the point of view of the workman, it is a disutility; to work is to make a sacrifice of one's leisure and comfort, and wages are a kind of compensation for the sacrifice. Hence the ideal from the point of view of the employer is to have output without employees, and the ideal from the point of view of the employees is to have income without employment.' (*Small is Beautiful* p.45)

The consequences of these attitudes both in theory and in practice are, of course, extremely far-reaching. If the ideal with regard to work is to get rid of it, every method 'that reduces the work load' is a good thing. The most potent method, short of automation, is the so-called 'division of labour' and the classical example is the pin factory eulogised in Adam Smith's *Wealth of Nations*.

Smith himself, however, understood that this system, which greatly increases production, and makes such sound economic sense, was not without its effects on the people who worked.

'The understandings of the greater part of men are necessarily formed by their ordinary employments. The man whose whole life is spent performing a few simple operations... has no occasion to exert his understanding... He naturally loses, therefore, the habit of such exertion and generally becomes as stupid and ignorant as it is possible for a human creature to become... But in every improved and civilized society this is the state into which the labouring poor, that is the great body of the people, must necessarily fall, unless government takes some pains to prevent it.'

These developments in 'modes of production' and attitudes to work are so familiar to us, we take them so much for granted, that we don't always realise that they themselves are part of a developing process. They have been shaped and formed as cultures and economies have grown and changed. They have their roots in history.

What effects have these 'modes of production' had on the worker in today's industries? We can trace the influences which shaped this experience of work back to medieval times. Rather than deal with these ideas in the abstract let's look first at a case history. Upasaka Atula was a tradesman; a carpenter and joiner for thirteen years.

'Leaving school with absolutely no distinction or talent whatsoever, choice of work or variety was not great in a small town. So, I chose the building industry and became an apprentice carpenter and joiner, working in a small building firm, who were well respected in the district for the quality of their houses. Being a small firm I knew everybody who worked on the sites, working as I did both on the site, and in the workshop. The Boss of the firm visited the sites everyday and although there was a good bit of mickey-taking of him behind his back he had, and enjoyed, a certain kind of relationship with everybody he employed. I learned all the different aspects of the trade, both working on site carpentry and in the

# WO



Brick factory workers 1908, insert





# ORK



joiners shop, as well as being sent to college one day a week. In the workshop we had very little machinery and everything was made by hand, making all the joinery required for the sites. During this time I learnt a trade, and because of interacting with other trades, learnt a great deal about things that would not be possible to learn in the larger building concerns because of specialization. After my apprenticeship I reached a point in my life where I was dissatisfied with myself — wanting something more from life. Not having a great deal of money (wages were very poor) I began to compare myself in terms of what I didn't have. So, being a healthy neurotic product of my age I identified what was wrong. The solution was to reach out, and find a better paid job. Which was what happened, leaving behind home and friends. From here on I was to work for a number of large building contractors, which comes as a shock — bringing you up against yourself, having worked as I had done, up to that time, on a small intimate firm. One of hundreds of workers, you are just a number on a clock, one of a floating pool of labour employed for one contract. The different trades themselves are broken up into specialized tasks; one is no longer a carpenter and joiner, but becomes either a first fixer, shuttering hand, second fixer, finisher or hard wood fixer. The structure itself leads to an atmosphere of authoritarianism, where the only basis of work is financial profit — either from the point of the management or the workers.

'This kind of system brought the worst out in the work force encouraging a harmful competitive attitude between the workers. If a worker was slow, or not able to do so much as others, he would become the prey of his fellow workers, a state of affairs that seemed to be encouraged by the management, for in this kind of atmosphere a union can have little or no effect. Work itself became meaningless, a chore to be endured and undergone in order to attain the means of livelihood. Self interest and isolation was the result, with little or no satisfaction to be gained from the work.'

In his book *The Stones of Venice* John Ruskin compares medieval patterns of work with work in the nineteenth century. Ruskin argued that, though the social system was a rigid hierarchy, 'though the feudal lords' lightest words were worth men's lives', yet there was a humanity, even a freedom, in the complete work of the artisan or the peasant which was sacrificed in the nineteenth century to profit.

'We have much studied and much preferred of late, the great civilised invention of the division of labour; only we give it a false name. It is not

truly speaking, the labour that is divided; but the men:— divided into mere segments of men — broken into small fragments and crumbs of life; so that all the piece of intelligence that is left in a man is not enough to make a pin, or a nail, but exhausts itself in making the point or the head of a nail.'

The economic changes which took place at the end of the feudal period were important ones, and had far reaching effects. A network of factors, including changing patterns of trade, the church's changing economic policy, changing political factors like the relationship between church and Empire, Pope and Emperor in Italy, led to the growth of an increasingly wealthy class of merchants and traders. As their wealth grew their power and influence grew, and the centuries old dominance of the church and the nobility began to be broken; the stable and defined economic relations of feudal society began to give way to the more fluid relationships of the embryonic market economy. In very concrete ways this changed the relationships of people to each other. Both the rights and the obligations of each class had been defined and protected in the feudal society. Now the relationship between employer and employee became essentially an economic one: a contract with employee selling his labour as high as possible, the employer buying it as cheaply as he could. The responsibilities of the feudal inferior, the obligations of the feudal superior, the social and ethical dimensions which to some extent characterized feudal economic relationships became secondary and increasingly incidental to the central, cash relationship of the new economy. Employers and employees saw themselves less as complementary parts of a unified, organic society sharing common aims, and more as two classes, whose interests were mutually antagonistic. Thomas Carlyle described this relationship in 'Past and Present': 'We call it a society; and go about professing openly our total separation, isolation. Our life is not a mutual helpfulness; but rather cloaked under due laws of war, named 'fair competition' and so forth, it is a mutual hostility. We have profoundly forgotten everywhere that cash-payment is not the sole relation of human beings.'

At the same time relationships within these new classes became increasingly one of competition: competition for profits, competition for jobs. Erich Fromm saw a number of important psychological changes resulting from these new patterns of economic activity... 'While competition was not completely lacking in Medieval society, the feudal economic system was based on the principle of co-operation, and was regulated —



## RETREAT CALENDAR 81 - 82

April	Order Convention, Seaford	4 - 15
	Chairmen's convention, Padmaloka	16 - 25
May	Women's Mitra Event, LBC	20 - 23
June	Women's Open Retreat, Vajraloka	4 June - 2 July
July	Scottish Summer retreat	(To be confirmed)
	Beginners' retreat in Scandinavia	9 - 18
	Summer retreat, Padmaloka	30 - 28 August
	Women's Summer Retreat	30 - 10 August
August	LBC Summer retreat	(To be confirmed)
September	Women's Mitra Event	18 - 19
	Men's event, Padmaloka	17 - 19
October	Women's Mitra Retreat, Vajraloka	8 Oct - 5 Nov
November	Men's event, Padmaloka	26 - 28
December	Winter retreat, Padmaloka	17 - 8 Jan 83

**Festivals** Buddha Day 8 May Dharma Day 6 July  
Sangha Day 1 November

VAJRALOKA is a men's retreat centre, set in the hills of North Wales. There is a continuous programme of meditation and silence led by community members.

Come for a few days or a few weeks and deepen your meditation practice in ideal conditions. The cost is £6.25 per night.

For further information please write to VAJRALOKA, The Buddhist Meditation Centre of North Wales, Tyn-y-Ddol, Corwen LL21 0EN, or telephone 049 081 406 (between 2-4pm).

Cheques payable to FWBO (Tyn-y-Ddol). \*For details of women's retreats, phone The London Buddhist Centre 01-981 1225.

## This summer: Vajraloka



Women Munitions workers 1910

or regimented — by rules which curbed competition. With the rise of capitalism these medieval principles gave way more and more to a principle of individualistic enterprise. Each individual must go ahead and try his luck. He had to swim or sink. Others were not allied with him in a common enterprise, they became competitors, and often he was confronted with the choice of destroying them or being destroyed... Capitalism freed the individual. It freed man from the corporate system. It allowed him to stand on his own feet, his was the risk, his the gain. Individual effort could lead him to success and economic independence. Money became the great equaliser of man, and proved to be more powerful than birth and caste. ...The individual is freed from the bondage of economic and political ties. He also gains in positive freedom by the active and independent role which he has to play in the new system. But simultaneously he is freed from those ties which used to give him security and a feeling of belonging. Life has ceased to be lived in a closed world at the centre of

which was man; the world has become limitless and at the same time threatening... Man is threatened by supra-personal forces, capital and the market. His relationship to his fellow men, with everyone a potential competitor, has become hostile and estranged; he is free — that is, he is alone, isolated, threatened from all sides. The new freedom is bound to create a deep feeling of insecurity, and powerlessness.' (Erich Fromm, *Fear of Freedom*).

These patterns of work, seen first in the Renaissance, expanded and developed after the Industrial Revolution, are the patterns which underpin much of our working lives today. These same patterns still affect us.

The significance of this for Buddhism in the West is clear. Buddhism sees each of us as having enormous potential; a potential for far greater awareness; for a richer, more sensitive emotional life; a potential to understand ourselves and the world around us. For most of us, it stays just that: potential, never realised.

Developing that potential, however, is not a hit or miss affair, not a matter



Marches against unemployment 1930/1981 Far right: Child labour 1912





Women Co-op workers Croydon 1981

Vajradipa

of chance. Some conditions inevitably limit us; other conditions make it possible for us to grow. Much of Buddhism is essentially a description of the conditions which let us grow, practical instructions on how to bring these conditions into being. Upasaka Subhuti, in the introduction to a pamphlet on Right Livelihood Co-ops points out that 'Human growth takes place when the individual refuses to accept that his environment has the final word in shaping him, when he begins to make himself.' We must alter our work, this massive influence, so that it helps rather than hinders our efforts to 'make ourselves'. This is the Buddha's teaching of 'Right Livelihood', an element of the 'Noble Eight-fold Path', one of the most fundamental formulations of the Dharma. It is the stage of that Path, concerned not only with changing the individual, but also emphasizes the possibility, and the necessity, of communal change. It is a vision of the Transformation of the individual, and the

transformation of the State.

E.F. Schumacher in his book, *Small is Beautiful*, suggests that 'the Buddhist point of view takes work to be at least threefold: to give a man a chance to utilize and develop his faculties; to enable him to overcome his ego-centredness by joining with other people in a common task; and to bring forth the goods and services needed for a becoming existence.'

The third of these is perhaps the simplest to understand. This is the most basic function of work, producing the essentials for life from the raw materials of nature. But not every product is needed for a 'becoming existence'. Work which actually produces what society needs, whether it's baking, building, sweeping the roads of the city or brain surgery, is in the end more satisfying than futile work, such as another executive toy, or toothpaste with more stripes in it. Some work is positively harmful; the Buddha specifically discouraged butchery, usury, dealing in or making arms or poisons. We can extend this to include any occupation based on violence to ourselves, to others or to the environment; or any work that exploits others, or encourages greed or stupidity.

An economy geared to producing goods needed for a 'becoming existence' would imply other widespread changes: in marketing; and in the organization, scale and character of the technology which produced them.

This brings us to work's second characteristic: it should give a person 'a chance to utilise and develop his or her faculties'. Work has been a crucial formative influence in the evolution of humanity, from an animal to a conscious being. Man works himself out of nature, forming his man-nature by his hands, his consciousness and his imagination in community with other men. Work has been, and still can be, given conducive conditions, a very important means of self creation. Through work both men and women learn the means by which they can become productive and creative; through work we make ourselves. In any task of work there is required a certain amount of interest; a certain amount of concentration, even in the most menial task. Through interest in the work at hand, there is encouraged an awareness of the materials of one's labour. The mind through interest is withdrawn from distraction and becomes absorbed in the task. Work at times through its intensity can be like a ritual, and like ritual sensitizes the emotions, which themselves are the basis for positive states of mind, reflective thought and a sense of greater freedom. The continual action of work creates and recreates the labourer, from a state of passivity, to one of true productivity. Through work there develops a strong relationship between worker and materials, during which process both are transformed. Work shades into art. It becomes as Ruskin wrote of the work of the Gothic stonemason, 'signs of the life and liberty of every workman who struck the stone; a freedom of thought, and rank in scale of being, such as no laws, no charters, no charities can secure....'

Finally, we overcome our 'ego-centredness by joining with other people in a common task.' Ego-centredness, plain, old fashioned selfishness, is seen as a central problem by Buddhism, therefore, 'genuine religious beliefs and practices are those by which the realization of egolessness can be achieved.' Egolessness is not extinction, but a shift away from ruthless self centredness, to a more aware, more expansive, more generous and receptive state of mind. We are habitually selfish, our habitual attitude in any situation is to arrange it as far as we can for our own benefit. The simplest way out of this is to stop considering ourselves first. Stop taking, start giving. At work, this means just doing the job we do, well. In any work situation we can stir our reluctant energies, and engage the jobs at hand. Files are filed neatly,

letters typed with care. The nurse goes back to the nuisance of a patient; the social security clerk remembers he's dealing with another human being. The labourer labours, hard. We turn up for work on time; tea breaks finish when they are supposed to; office pencils stop finding their way mysteriously into our pockets; there are a hundred applications on this simplest of levels. This need not lead to a docile, passive, easily manipulated work force. The boss has obligations too; we do him a service as a human being when we point these out, and insist upon them. In short we refuse to let our environment and the people we work with determine our approach to work — we co-operate willingly. We can do a great deal to make any work a tool for moving beyond narrow self-centred attitudes.

Few businesses are run on ideal lines however. Inevitably there will be conflicts between the interests of the growing individual, the organizational or financial interests of the firm we work for, and the interests of the community. The FWBO's 'Right Livelihood' co-ops are an attempt, perhaps only a first attempt, to set up businesses run on ideal lines.

Work is an activity which human kind is obliged to do, work keeps the human race alive, and every civilization is built on the foundation of work. As individuals, work has an enormous influence on us, and because of this it is an invaluable tool. Work can be one of the most effective supports for our attempts to make ourselves. It makes the Buddha's achievement seem all the more remarkable; the Buddha, as Sangharakshita points out, never did an honest day's work in his life! ●





# Making a Creative Choice

## Durangama

I started painting murals on public sites about six or seven years ago. I met a couple of guys in the street who were doing one, and they asked me to help out. I had never done anything like it before although a long time previously I studied design at art school and worked as a designer and then as an art teacher. I became quickly convinced that mural painting could be developed into a meaningful occupation.

As a means of earning a living it's precarious, to say the least, but it is one way of working towards a Right Livelihood situation and offers an opportunity of developing not only certain artistic skills but relationships and communication with all sorts of people that one meets in pursuing this kind of work in a community setting.

The activity of painting, requiring concentration and freedom from distraction, is hard outdoors in a busy and noisy place, but through it one can develop a strongly heightened awareness of that particular environment and can reflect the life going on around us in such a way that people can feel a keener awareness of and care for the environment through the medium of the painting. The work can achieve a lot in transforming otherwise very grey and barren environments. Wherever possible we have tried to consult local people and talk over ideas and this can produce a real sense of a community activity

**In the FWBO there is a lot of debate about the value of its co-ops and the notion of right livelihood. The essence of right livelihood is to make a creative choice about the way you spend your time earning the money necessary to support you and your dependants (whether they are your children or your local meditation centre). This activity can be evaluated in terms of what it gives to you, what you give to it, and what it gives and takes from other people, directly and indirectly. Ideally it will help you become more aware, to develop sensitivity, responsibility, and a caring attitude. Right livelihood as Buddhism describes it involves awareness of the effect of your livelihood on society — on others, on yourself; you must find ways of working that help you become a whole human being. Thus right livelihood becomes a moral and ethical choice for the individual.**

**The following are four different approaches to this view of work...**

overcoming the artist's usual role in society as an outsider.

Whilst I am not usually in favour of overtly propagandist political murals,

I feel it most important to paint about social issues where such an opportunity is appropriate. The last large mural I worked on in Tottenham

Court Road (in central London) has a large part of its theme devoted to the rampant property speculation going on in London, this theme being suggested by the local neighbourhood association. The mural provides a means to express a common opposition to the destruction of the environment for blatantly commercial reasons.

Travelling in Italy and other places, like Czechoslovakia, with a rich cultural heritage, I have developed an appreciation of the value of fine art work in public places and am looking for better opportunities to create things of more lasting value on more carefully chosen sites in Britain. There are such an enormous number of excellent sites and an Environmental Arts Project, perhaps via the Manpower Services Commission, could employ a team of people with adequate skills and give them the time to produce very fine work, perhaps also in sculpture and mosaic. Hopefully there would be people in the Movement who would be keen to participate and a working co-operative could develop out of it. In the meantime I'm working on a small mural for a Health Centre in Kentish Town whilst waiting for the ultimate commission.

## Anstice Fisher

I find the term 'Work', a confusing one. The dictionary tells me it's anything from 'gainful employment' to 'toil', from 'achievement and production' to 'drudgery', from 'forming something through labour and skill' to 'keeping busy as a servant or horse'. It is apparently the antithesis of 'ease, idleness and relaxation'.

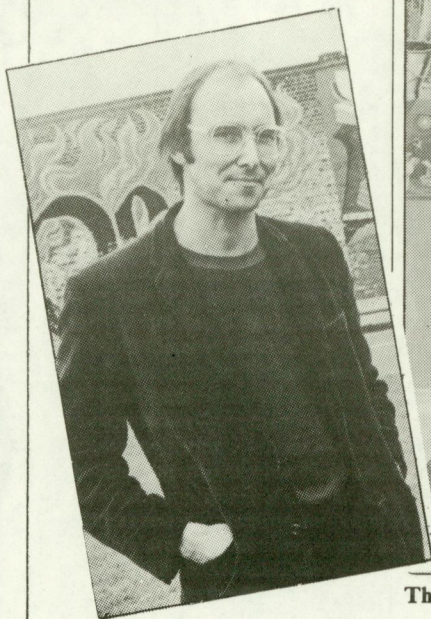
All of these definitions reflect attitudes in our culture towards work and to take oneself out of the work context completely is to confront all those attitudes in oneself and others and to see how ambivalent our motivation towards it may be — even within the most 'ideal' circumstances.

There are times when work is simply a gigantic displacement activity, a compulsive habit by which to avoid alone-ness and not belonging to some group, its chief function may be to give us a role and status and thus a secure identity which we are unwilling to relinquish. Perhaps this is one reason why more people don't



The Mural in Tottenham Court Road

Durangama





Un-work. And financially one may have to depend on social security for a time and thus face another whole set of attitudes about the relationship between work and money — an enormous subject in itself.

For the last 5 years I have balanced periods of structured work with periods of Un-work as a matter of preference, because this seems to be the way I work best. I now work part time running drama workshops in schools and community centres, but for 6 months prior to this I enjoyed — and I do mean enjoyed — a period of complete Un-work. It was entirely up to me to motivate myself and create my own structures:— mornings for meditation and writing, a regular drama group within the FWBO, the occasional one-off drama session in the borough and the rest of the time anything might happen.

One of the advantages of this period, for example, was that I was able to jettison a lot of clutter both inside and outside my head, and to slow down (well, relatively) so that the right conditions were there for meditation to become a much more natural dominant feature of my life. With this came the space to explore creative sides of myself which were not catered for during more conventional jobs.

us knowing how we would really like to spend our time? Who is self disciplined and mature enough to operate autonomously without the authority of an external structure? Bertrand Russell commented that an increase in leisure time would be more likely to produce more mental breakdowns than enhance the quality of life, since we are not educated for leisure or self motivated activity. It is a problem attested to by the retired and reflected in the 'classic' symptoms of some unemployed — apathy, depression and lack of self respect.

To allow oneself to Un-work is an exciting way to blast out these patterns, and Right Livelihood means nothing if it is just new work done in old ways. To me, Right Livelihood is not about imposing principles on myself but about finding a way of operating which organically embraces those ideals. I rather like the definition of work as 'conditioned exertion and activity directed to some purpose or end', which, after all, is what the Dharma is all about.

### Gerry Corr

I'm a freelance computer programmer, and at my level of expertise I am able to 'contract out' my services to companies who have computers but not enough staff to write their computer systems. Most contracts last between one and six months and are very well paid.

I also live at Ratnadvipa, a Buddhist community in West London, support classes both in West and East London, attend study groups and go on retreats, meeting other mitras and Order members frequently.

The main difference between my two 'lives' — the Dharmic one and the office — lies as I see it in their terms of reference. The Dharmic life revolves round the Three Jewels, my office life revolves around sex, alcohol, television and social scrambling. By sex I mean the constant assertion of the two polarised sexual stereotypes: the female as sex object, and macho-man. Alcohol is used both as a release mechanism and as an oil to keep the gritty cogs of office life turning. Talking about last night's television programmes forms a substitute for real conversation; and social scrambling goes on most of the time, people trying to increase their social stature by knocking others rather like monkeys fighting in a tree for the highest branch. I'm painting a pretty bleak picture of office life so I'll admit that there are occasional gleams of real humanity but they seem rare.

This double life has a jarring effect on me, principally because these two sets of referential terms are very bad

bedfellows. I still have an emotional attachment to the office terms of reference and after a while I have to go on a retreat for a week or two to re-assert the Dharmic element. But my work engenders qualities such as discipline and responsibility which can be of great use in the spiritual life. And there's the money.

But when all's said and done, I see only one possibility for me, and that's 'leaving home' as the Buddha said.

### Teresa Fisher

The FWBO and WBO work together to create the conditions for the understanding in western culture of the Buddha's Enlightenment experience. We do not know what it means to be Enlightened. So we must create conditions whereby we can find out. Meditation is the basic practice for self-transformation but FWBO Co-ops and Right Livelihood businesses are another means towards the same goal.

We all need money to live, pay the rent, go to the cinema, class at the Centre... How we go about getting this money can have a directly beneficial influence on us. The challenge is to transform ourselves and the way we live.

This is my second year in the Pure Land Co-op and the following comments arise out of my experience during this period. In order to meet the challenge of transformation I feel we need to share a vision of the possibilities open to us. In order for this to happen there has to be good communication between us. The PLC is becoming, in my experience, much more of a 'sharing' Co-op in this sense. In The Cherry Orchard, where I work, I know that any decision will not be successful unless everyone is happy with it and in tune with the overall direction of the Cafe. Similarly, everyone in the PLC needs to feel in touch with the overall decision-making process of the Co-op as a whole. So awareness of each other is essential as well as encouragement and receptivity.

The Ideal is to be able to put ourselves fully and wholeheartedly into whatever we are doing. How we actually feel is often far from this

Ideal. Conflicting interests come up and we lose our sense of direction; we want more money; more time to pursue other interests, other ambitions come in the way.

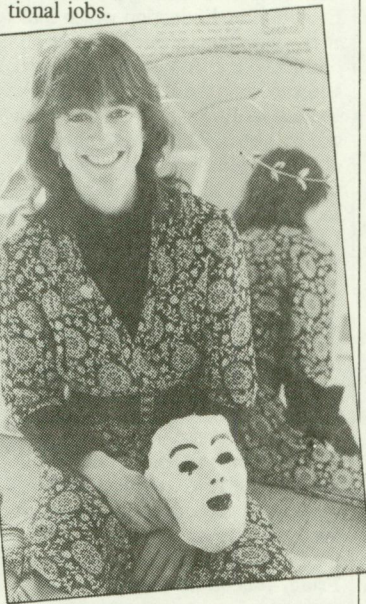
At a recent workshop for the Co-op workers in the PLC the importance of *wanting* to be in business became apparent. We really have to *want* to trade whatever goods and services we have and *make a profit* as efficiently and ethically as possible.

Having recently taken on a lot more responsibility in The Cherry Orchard I feel I have gained considerably in real self-confidence. By making something my own I have learned to really care and to stand out and say what I feel. This has been especially important in matters where other people have felt differently. I really feel that the practice of mindfulness and metta have entered my work situation in a new way. Much of this change has come from positive criticism from the other people I work with and my ability to accept this criticism and to learn from other's experience of me. By developing care and receptivity towards others my feelings of 'superior/inferior' are gradually changing as I learn to respond to others on the basis of individuality. Having taken on responsibility I am aware, also, of the need to encourage others to take it too. When I hang on to it as power for my own ends, it turns against me.

People do have ambitions and I think it is important that they try and fulfill them. Energy squashed is energy lost. Just finding out what my ambitions are has helped me gain a clarity of mind.

The Cherry Orchard is one of several businesses in the PLC, which contribute towards the support of the LBC. Therefore, in this instance, each one of us has the opportunity to go beyond just our own needs as ends in themselves. I feel that any of us working in such a business and able to put ourselves wholeheartedly into it, can find out what we *really* want to do and gain the basis to be *effective*.

Siddharama



I no longer worked out of a sense of guilt or duty, nor did I have to justify my existence through it. Schiller said that 'Man is completely himself only when he is at play', but we may equate enjoyment with laziness and end up too guilty and inhibited to let ourselves play or begin to see work as play. In addition, the message of our upbringing and education may have been 'Achieve', so we have spent our working life proving ourselves to parents, peer group or ourselves, or alternatively reacting against that pressure. And who is really free from the passivity and timidity which stops



'The Cherry Orchard' (Manager)



## Europe

## MANCHESTER

Over the last six months, there has only been one Order member at a time in Manchester — Ratnaguna has been in Tuscany on the Ordination Retreat and on his return Suvajra went off on an intensive solitary two month retreat on a Scottish island.

## Midlands Buddhists

In spite of this, the Manchester Centre has not only run two Co-ops and four evening classes a week with people coming in regularly from Keele, Rochdale, Lancaster, Accrington, Sheffield, Leeds and even Liverpool, apart from Manchester itself, but they have also been going out to other Buddhist groups.

Last year, the Shrewsbury Buddhist Group asked Manchester to set up a retreat for them and Ratnaguna and five mitras joined nine people in Shrewsbury who learnt the Mindfulness of Breathing and the Metta Bhavana practices and took part in Pujas and communication exercises.

This was a great success and since then there have been two other retreats, the last one at a place in North Wales where several other Manchester retreats have also been successfully held.

## 'Rain Cloud' Talks

Now Ratnaguna or Suvajra intends to go to Shrewsbury every month — in mid-February Ratnaguna gave a talk there on The Tathagata as a Rain Cloud and Suvajra led a retreat for the Leeds and Harrogate Buddhist Group as well as helping to dedicate the new shrine of the Accrington and Blackburn Buddhist Group.

On February 27, the Manchester Buddhist Centre celebrated its second anniversary. Sagaramati was there, as he was at the very first class, to lead the festivities.

And following the success of Suvajra's three talks last year at the Wrexham Adult Education Institute, he has been asked to take an intensive meditation course that will run every evening for a week, from May 9-16.

## CROYDON

Our last Newsletter report saw FWBO Surrey at the beginning of a new more outward going phase. We are now in a position to review some of our efforts in this area, as well as mention further



Communications at Aryatara

Siddhiratna

## plans for expansion.

Under the intriguing title of The Mirror of the Mind we presented at Hockneys, our vegetarian restaurant in Croydon, a series of five talks. The series was given by Devamitra (who had just returned from giving it at Harvard University in Boston) and the subtitle of the series was, An Exploration of the Tibetan Wheel of Life. It was quite clear from Devamitra's first lecture that he wasn't concerned with the Tibetan Wheel of Life as a piece of oriental exoticia. Every aspect of this rich and colourful symbol was related back in a highly relevant way to the spiritual needs of people living in a modern Western environment. It really did seem at times throughout the series that Devamitra was holding up to us a crystal mirror in which we could see reflected in all its glory, menace and transcendental potentiality, our very own minds. The lectures were very well attended — audiences ranging between 50 and 60, many of whom were complete beginners. What's more the lectures prompted many of them to become interested in our other activities, especially our meditation classes.

## 6 Easy Lessons

Numbers at our beginners meditation classes have improved greatly over the last few months. At Aryatara the classes have at times been filled to capacity. We have also started classes in other places as well. At Kalpadruma, our community in Streatham and at the College of Liberal Arts in nearby Sutton. These classes have been well attended and a lot of interest in our work kindled. The class in Sutton is the first we have undertaken in a place outside of our own Centres. It sparked off quite a bit of local interest, one of the local papers going so far as to feature it on their front page under the headline, Learn to meditate — and love

the world in 6 easy lessons.

Through this article a lot of people came and gave meditation a try. With more people coming along to classes and with many of them becoming more deeply interested we are now starting two Basic Buddhism courses, one at Aryatara, the other at Kalpadruma.

## Circles

At the beginning of this article I mentioned that we had even further plans for expansion. A clear plan of action to take meditation and Buddhism to more people has crystallised for us. For a long time within the FWBO, with one of two possible exceptions, we have waited for people to come to us at our centres. Our plan is take the Dharma out. We intend over the next few years to start meditation classes and courses in evening institutes, community centres etc in a number of local towns. Towns on our list so far include Reigate, Redhill, Battersea, Kingston, Leatherhead, Bromley and Guildford. The operational base for these classes will be at our new meditation centre and arts complex in Croydon, which we hope to have finished by the summer. Eventually out of these classes we want to form 'circles' of Friends who would come together regularly for meditation, tape evenings and discussion groups. These 'circles' would be 'serviced' from time to time by Order members from Croydon. Eventually we want to create a whole network of these circles extending throughout the whole of this area and with the centre in Croydon at its heart. If we can follow this plan through we feel that the FWBO can be much more effective in getting its message across to more people.

We are also expanding on the business front. Hockneys has increased its staff and is now open on Friday and Saturday evenings.

Friends Foods reports a steady increase in takings and our building team has just completed its first major contract. The building team is now doing some much needed renovation work on Aryatara and will then start work on our new project in Croydon.

Padmavajra

## LBC

When Kulamitra became chairman of the LBC he announced a priority commitment to using the Centre more intensively and to increasing the numbers of people coming to classes. It was clear by the first months of this year that a major start had been made.

There has been the variety of Basic Buddhism courses and Introductory classes that are the feature of most FWBO Centres. In addition, however, Dhammarati ran the second of his The Politics of Consciousness class which was expanded from a day course to a weekend.

## 20th Century Lessons

This was a much more satisfying event than the first, which managed mainly to open the topic without drawing any major conclusions. The Politics of Consciousness II took a more practical line, using two of the Ven. Sangharakshita's tapes as starting points: Evolution or Extinction which looks at the individual's role in world problems; and A Vision of History, a lecture he gave at an Order Convention in 1978 which has not been widely heard. This covered his view of certain medieval communities who tried to set up an 'alternative' society, and why they failed. The LBC workshop concentrated on the lessons that could be learned for 20th century life.

There was also a weekend devoted to Shakespeare's Tempest, a day of discussion and talks on Right Livelihood, and an Open Day.

Other innovations which are to be maintained as continuing features of the LBC are lunchtime meditation classes on Mondays and Wednesdays, with a creche, both for the Wednesday class and a Friday lunchtime Yoga session.

## Covent Garden Courses

An important development was the return to outside classes in the centre of London. Following active leafletting, over 20 beginners signed on for a six-week meditation course led by Parami in a dance academy in Covent Garden on Friday evenings, and it proved sufficiently successful for the LBC to pursue the idea of a Dharma Course.

The Spring Session of the LBC was given a formidable boost at the beginning of the Winter Retreat at Seaford. Led by Dhammarati, it began with a pre-Retreat retreat for



the team in Hampstead for three days before setting up in the prep school.

## Hitting the Headlines

The emphasis was more on meditation and Buddhism rather than using the retreat as an introduction to the FWBO. The Ven. Sangharakshita's lecture series on the Noble Eightfold Path was played, and a strong atmosphere of practice was built up, and not really dissipated by a New Year's Eve celebration with ginger wine and sultana cake.

The only minor interruption was from visits by members of the popular Sunday press searching for Dhammarati to complete a story about Billy Connolly, the well-known Scottish comedian who said he got over a drink problem after being taught meditation by Dhammarati.



Atula and Dhammarati ran a day retreat programme in Nottingham last month. The retreat was organised by Tim Reeves, a friend who got in touch with the FWBO at the Seaford retreat last summer, and was attended by a mixture of people; people with a background in Tibetan or Japanese Buddhism; people with an interest in Buddhism but no previous contact; and a couple of people who'd just seen the posters. These day programmes will become a regular event in Nottingham, led by a team of LBC Order members.

## WEST LONDON

**The overheads are high and there's a lot of competition but the businesses in West London are thriving. The newish whole-food shop in Notting Hill is doing well, with continuing back up from its extension, the market stall in Hammersmith.**

Friends Gardening has now moved into general gardening contracting taking on larger work such as maintenance contracts for a local hospital group and landscaping. They have just ordered a Land Rover for the increasing heavy duty work. Sometimes they are out at nurseries buying plants, other times taking the opportunity to get out of the rain by painting trellis indoors in the basement at Ratnadvipa, then off again to build brick walls...

## New Premises

There will probably be another men's community soon in Harlesden, about three miles from Ratnadvipa. They are also going ahead on premises for a new permanent centre, this time in a top floor office in Baker Street. Classes should be starting there in May which will be appreciated by the people having to convert a school room into a shrine room every time at the temporary premises off Oxford Street. The difference between a temporary and permanent shrine can be enormous.

One much loved, rather infamous member of the Ratnadvipa community has finally expired. Manju, the ginger tomcat who had been with them since the Archway days, had fought furiously and lived hard. He will be greatly missed.

## BRIGHTON

Windhorse Emporium has finally closed its doors but the stock continues to be sold on weekly market stalls. The house next door, 18 George Street, has been sold and the small but flourishing women's community which was living there has moved into the old shop premises.

These will be greatly improved with the money from the sale of no. 18. Remaining money will be ploughed into FWBO Brighton's restaurant. A move to upgrade the style of the restaurant has resulted in improved food, new customers and a 33% increase in takings. Plans for further physical improvements include an upstairs extension over the kitchen, improved toilet facilities and a new name. They want to encourage people to see it as a meeting place where ideas are exchanged like the original London coffee shops or artists cafes in Paris at the turn of the century.

## Universities & Restaurants

As the Centre extends its influence, there will be a Dharma course held at the local university next term under the auspices of a student society, Sussex University Buddhist Studies Organisation.

Meanwhile back at 'home' not only are there two new and enthusiastic Order members fresh from Tuscany (Yashopala who returns to art school and Yashodeva who is now managing the restaurant) but the community at Amitayus has two more members, Richard Clayton, and Bernie Tisch from New Zealand.

## NORWICH

**Oranges, the vegetarian restaurant run by FWBO Norwich for five years has closed, but Oranges at Premises has opened. Thus a new chapter in FWBO Norwich is well under way.**

Right Livelihood emphasis in Norwich has moved away from the standard team-based effort towards

a more individual style.

## Healthy Expansion

Lalitavajra has taken over management of a cafe in an arts centre called Premises, in Norwich, and is donating a percentage of the profits towards the Centre. Similarly, Ian Wray, a mitra, has opened a psychology practice in the same building as the Yoga Studio, and is pledging a percentage of the profits to the Centre also.

The Yoga Studio is expanding with the passing of each month and with Saddhaloka running massage courses there on a fairly regular basis, and Ian intending to run relaxation courses as well, it appears as if the Queen's Road building will become something of a health centre, with the Norwich Meditation Centre benefiting directly.

## PADMALOKA

Padmaloka has been used as a men's retreat centre for the past five years. However, with the addition of three new Order members from the retreat in Tuscany and of Devamitra recently returned from Boston, USA, there are eight Order members living here and we are planning to run Padmaloka as a full-time retreat Centre.

In addition to the usual Summer and Winter retreats and the quarterly men's events we will be having a number of special retreats both for mitras and regular Friends and for complete newcomers. We will also be welcoming men to stay in the community as paying guests to join in the community programme and to use the excellent library of Buddhist books.

## Dharmachakra Tapes

Any money we make will be used to improve and expand the facilities. Eventually we plan to convert a range of barns adjacent to the house into retreat accommodation. We aim eventually to have everyone in the community supported either to help run retreats and to look after guests or to help run the Order Office and Ven. Sangharakshita's Secretariat. We hope that it

will also be possible for community members to have plenty of time to carry on with their own study and meditation practice. For the time being everyone has to find their own means of support and, in addition to the candle workshop, some community members are in the process of establishing a building business. Someone will also be looking after 'Dharmachakra Tapes', (which publishes Bhante's lectures on tape), which is based once more at Padmaloka.

## Newsletter Friends

Dott. Luigi Martinelli, of 'Associazione Buddhista Italiana' in Florence, saw from the Newsletter that Ven. Sangharakshita would be in Tuscany at the end of 1981 and arranged to meet him. He treated Ven. Sangharakshita to some true Italian hospitality and then took us to see the Pagoda which he has built in the countryside a few miles from Arezzo. Singlehanded and with great ingenuity, he has converted an out-house into a very pleasant little stupa the dome of which is covered on the inside with mosaics representing basic Buddhist teachings.

We have also received correspondence from two Vietnamese Buddhists in Ho Chi Minh City, Nguyen Khoan Hong and Pham van Thanh. Both have been very impressed by the FWBO. Mr Thanh is an artist and has submitted designs for the FWBO logo.

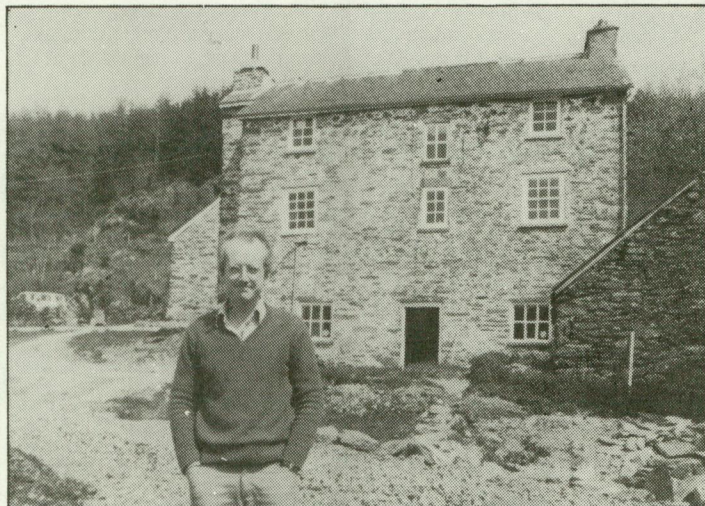
We hope that we will be able to further our contacts with these and other friends who receive the Newsletter.

Subhuti

## VAJRALOKA

**Wider investment in advertising and posters is beginning to have its effect at Vajraloka. The retreat centre in North Wales, with its resident community of four, is being used by an increasing number of visitors coming for stays of varied lengths.**

This means that Vajraloka's financial position is improving so that by the end of the financial year



Upasaka Kamalasila

Vajradipa



it will have nearly broken even. And the prospects for the coming year are good.

## On Tour

17 Once again the year is to be punctuated by women's retreats during which, of course, the men leave for other centres. The men took advantage of a March women's retreat to do a tour with a slide show of other Buddhist organisations including the Manjushri Institute, the Rigpa Fellowship in London and the Madyhamika Centre in York, in order to encourage the use of Vajraloka by others.

Future plans include a month-long open retreat for women, with a temporary resident community of women, in June, and a special Padmasambhava retreat for men in July. More details from Vajraloka.

## SCOTLAND

A new leaflet/magazine has been launched by the FWBO in Scotland. Called *The Scottish Buddhist*, it is a four-page leaflet designed mainly to promote the classes run at Heruka and elsewhere in Glasgow — there is now a full programme with meditation, yoga, or study classes each evening of the week.

But in addition, *The Scottish Buddhist* has a lengthy interview with Dharmavira, following his return from Tuscany where he was ordained. The interview covers his views both on the Tuscany event, and his attitude towards Karate — he is an experienced Shotokan instructor.

## Scottish Buddhist

The leaflet will probably be issued at the start of each session, rather than on a more frequent basis — so it is not designed to act as a newsletter. However, it is interesting to note that *The Scottish Buddhist* is devoting its back page to letters — the first issue has

a long letter from David Williamson concerning the merits and demerits of single sex communities and family life.

It takes, purposely, a fairly critical look at the situation setting the tone for the page. "We have been wanting to do it for some time," said Aryamitra, "because it allows people to say openly what they feel about certain topics. I hope we will get some strong feedback."

Otherwise, life in Glasgow remains active. The women's team in the charity shop managed to raise £1,000 over the short Christmas period. Windhorse Trading goods are now being sold on the markets until another charity shop can be found.

## FINLAND

Even though FWBO has been functioning in Finland for eight years (there are 11 Finnish Order members) FWBO in Finland is at present in the process of acquiring the features that have long been considered self-evident in the movement in Great Britain: e.g. right livelihood projects and activities in more than one city.

The last year has been a period of transition. The dreams of the past have begun to be realized — also, an ever fuller commitment is possible. Our field of work is expanding as more and more of us are beginning to devote all of our time to co-op or community or centre. Padam, the men's community, had its first anniversary, and it seems that the community has brought a considerable amount of strength into things. At the moment there are five members and already altogether nine people have had some experience in living in this particular community. The ups and downs have brought experience, which has led to stabilization, and living in a community has become a way of life for a few people.

## Right Livelihood

In addition to the Karuna shop, two more right livelihood projects are being established: a typesetting business and a wholesale business selling alfalfa sprouts and muesli. These businesses employ six people, whole or part time, all of them men.

The situation with regard to women looks very promising, too, since they started regular women's



A men's Dharma Holiday, Finland

FWBO Helsinki

evenings led by Bodhishri. Who knows — a women's community or a co-op led by women may be reality very very soon.

An old schoolhouse Maitreya acquired last year is being used as a meditation and retreat centre. It is situated a hundred miles from Helsinki and has excellent opportunities for the future. Next summer, a men's stupa retreat is due, and the intention is to build the first 'official' stupa in Finland.

## Growth & Contacts

Through our own magazine, *Mandala*, published once every two months, and through our Aid for India campaign linked with a nationwide percent-movement, contact is made with hundreds of outsiders. In addition to this Upasaka Mahendra is giving outside talks at societies, schools and institutes, and in some of Finland's biggest cities lecturing on Buddhism and teaching meditation.

With regard to publishing and translation work it is excellent that we have been able to start the typesetter's called "Atomi latomo" — the short-distance aim is to bring out "Ideal of Human Enlightenment" in Finnish, and other booklets, including a Finnish Puja book.

Visits by Upasaka Sona and his Swedish mitras have brought welcome exchange.

All in all, the possibilities of Buddhism to have a deep influence in Finland are really fantastic in relation to a nation like England, which is maybe somewhat stuck with its traditions.

Once the Karmapa lama Kalu Rimpoche compared Finland with Tibet, and maybe some day the Dharma will flourish here as it once did in Tibet.

Mahendra & Sarvmitra

## NEW ZEALAND

The combination of the exodus of quite a few Order members leaving only Buddhadasa and Aniketu to run the Centre in Auckland for the next six to nine months, and the effects of the open summer retreat in January has had a catalysing effect on all the people connected with the Centre and communities there. There is a new men's community in a new house, a new women's community, and a family community. These have all re-

formed because not only did they need new houses but Megha, Udaya and Dhammadinna left for long stays in England and Priyananda will be in Malaysia for six months.

Talks seem to attract many newcomers to the centre and after the current eight week series on the Eightfold Path, Buddhadasa with mitra Dr. Judith Dubignon who lectures in psychology, and Priyananda will be running a weekend seminar on the subject of Buddhism in the World Today under the auspices of the Continuing Education Scheme at the University of Auckland. This kind of event can attract up to a hundred people who perhaps would not normally attend the Auckland Buddhist Centre. But it is interesting that a third of those at the latest meditation course at the Centre were there through knowing and working with Udaya for the Auckland Regional Authority.

The Wellington Centre has sprung into life again with Achala's return from England and America, and there's now a couple of classes a week, a small group of regulars and a community of four men.

In Christchurch too Indradjala and mitra Greg Knight are holding two small classes a week in Indradjala's home.

## AUSTRALIA

We have been in Sydney for twelve months now and the community has settled down and is proceeding harmoniously. Bell and Candle, the bookbinding business is flourishing — there is an abundance of business — and there are plans for a local newsletter, a wholefoods concern, and even a restaurant.

## Bushwalking

Sydney is not the easiest of places in which to develop the Dharma — it is an extremely materialistic city, reflected in the manmade features which boast achievement: towering giants rival each other for prominence of the sky. Nevertheless we have run some camping retreats in the Australian bush which have proved successful, and we even tried a bushwalking picnic with kids which was most enjoyable.

But the great question at the moment is how to get the most out of our limited resources and build up the number of interested people.





We have weekend morning sessions to which the Community invites interested people, and we have regular six-weekly retreat programmes.

So far we are few and exist in isolation from the rest of the Movement and against the odds of a non-spiritually based society, but we remain inspired through our close communication with each other and mutual encouragement. Dipankara

## AMERICA

After the summer with retreats and visits to London over and with Devamitra on a four month visit we began preparing for our Fall programme of activities. Having reached the conclusion that using our community house as a center was not working, mainly because of its location, being a little off the beaten track, we held three meditation courses in two more central locations.

Two of these were held in Cambridge just over the Charles River from Boston, space being generously provided by the Quakers' meeting house and the other in Boston itself at a yoga center.

### Conclusions confirmed

The response to these courses, especially the second Cambridge course, confirmed our conclusions as to the unsuitability of our house as a center. We now realised that we needed our own space for a center in a good location and after one near miss Manjuvakra found premises in the center of Brookline Village. These premises consist of one room which is now our shrine room and two large closets and a hallway which has now been transformed into our reception room. With the final arranging and cleaning of the new center the first class was held on January 4th and while not as yet pulling in the crowds it enables us more efficiently to get on with the work of establishing the FWBO.

### Exceptional Talks

For five weeks over the Fall period Devamitra gave a successful series of talks at Harvard University which was the culmination of his work and visit here. The talks were an exploration of the Wheel of Life and the consistency of attendance exceeded all our expectations.

At present we are all looking forward to the Spring and warmer weather as Winters here take some getting used to, especially when one is more used to the English variety.

Punya

### Important Notice

Please send all FACETS copy, photos and illustrations for Newsletter 54 by May 31st to Nicolas Soames, 119 Roman Rd., Bethnal Green, London E2 0HU, England.

# Aid for India

*To grow or cut back; which way to greater efficiency?*

At the time of writing Aid for India is in a considerable state of flux. At first sight, and indeed from many points of view, the last eighteen months have been extremely successful. We have raised over £450,000 worth of covenants, bankers' orders and cash. Twelve people have committed themselves, to the next appeals, the quality of help the support team can provide and the quality of the appeals themselves have altered radically for the better. People doing the work are able as never before to follow through their commitment with a minimum of distractions and an increasing contact with Dharmic study and practice.

We seem nevertheless to have fallen between two stools financially. Our accounts show that we should be spending a lot less per covenant raised and we must get this right or lose the donors we have worked so hard to get. This is not to say that the charity is on its beam ends, just that the right action must be taken now to prevent bad trouble later on.

This being the case those of us who organise the appeal are trying to find out if it would be best to cut back on existing costs by slowing things down or whether it is possible to obtain enough appeal workers to enable the charity to carry on in an expansive way. Whichever way things are resolved it is hoped that some firm decision will have been reached by the time this Newsletter comes out and that things will be on a more business-like footing whichever solution proves successful.

The reason for 'Aid for India's' existence is the great potential that

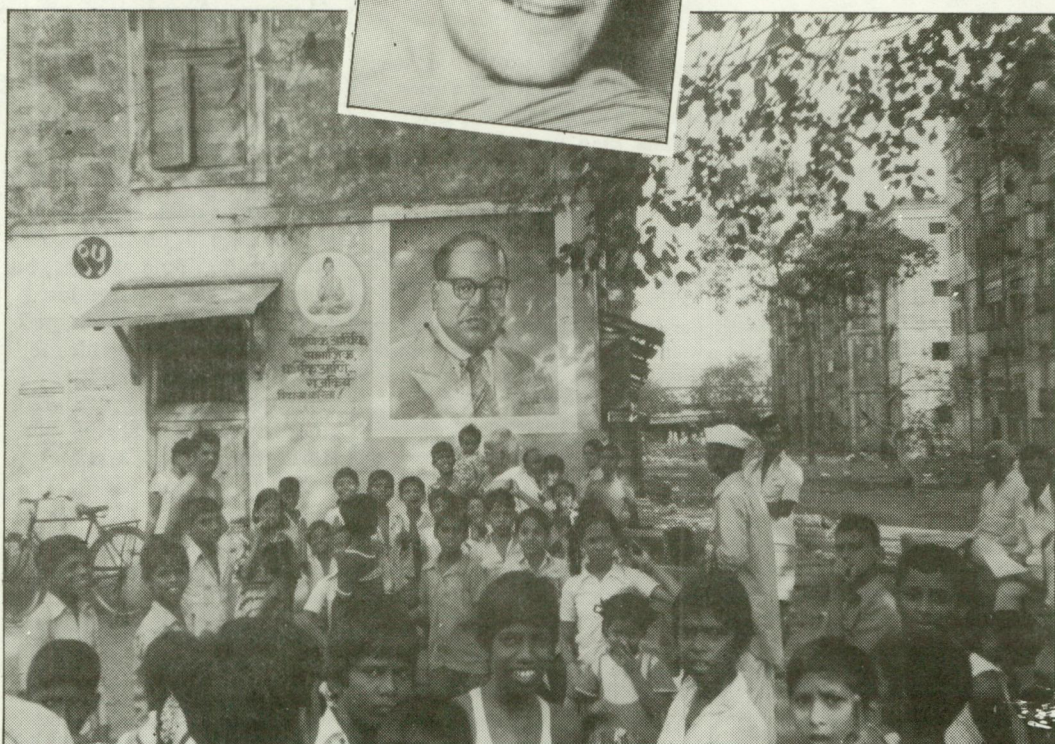
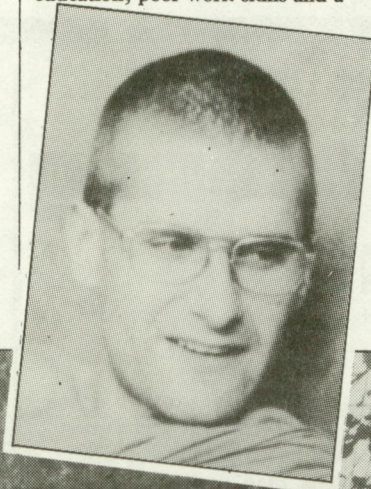
is to be found amongst the Buddhists from the Scheduled Castes in Pune and the work Lokamitra, Purna and others have been doing amongst them. Together the local people and our workers have devised a scheme which will include buildings and personnel to raise the whole quality of life for everyone in a largely Buddhist area of Pune. The Scheduled Castes are the poorest people on the Indian subcontinent and they require our help to battle with the problems of poverty, unemployment, malnutrition, disease, overpopulation, lack of education, poor work skills and a

lack of confidence in their own abilities which such conditions engender. These people are by no means a lost cause. They are very resilient and have considerable natural talent if only they can be shown effective ways of using it.

The Pune Project is designed to help them to combat their own problems by providing a medical centre as a base for community health work, job training, a job creation programme, a school and a Dharma Centre. The reason this Project is going to succeed is that Aid for India workers in this country as well as the westerners in Pune share the same ideals and aspirations as the people they are helping. This is not a matter of a western academic solution being foisted onto an unwitting, underprivileged population, nor of a missionary organisation trying to convert 'natives'. Over fifty percent of the Scheduled Castes are Buddhists and they desperately want to escape from their physical and social conditions so as to be able to learn and practice more of the Dharma.

Our response to this in the west must be even more effective action from all of us. Whichever way the charity's current internal reorganisation goes the demand upon western Buddhists to give their time and effort to this work will still remain and must be met.

Tim Lilley



Even in the street respect is paid to Dr. Ambedka Above Anagarika Lokamitra

Nagabodhi



The boarding school used by the London Buddhist Centre for its summer and winter retreats at Seaford could seem at first an unlikely choice of environment. The dark corridors, dining hall decorated with honours boards, portraits of foreboding headmasters, rules written upon the walls. The dormitories are named after various models of perfection from a dubious British history. All reminders of authorities that influence behaviour and narrow a conception of human life.

The initial changes made at the school at Seaford for a retreat point to the real shift that Buddhism brings about to our concept of human potential, from our cultural ideals and influences to that of liberation. We take down paintings of the Queen, remove the 'top' table and in its place goes the rupa, we erect the shrine to the ultimate potential of humanity.

The Puja can bring us into direct contact with the influence of the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas. From the study groups on retreat I noticed that it was the Puja that most people reacted to very strongly.

## Seaford Retreat



Puja offerings at Seaford

Kulamitra

### Change Things

A substantial introduction to meditation on a 10 day retreat over Xmas and New Year. Make the first move phone the London Buddhist Centre on 981 1225

Either with positive emotions or with negative feelings about worship. It seemed that peoples' responses in the Puja were often clouded with the feeling of an authority being addressed, squashing individuality.

Similarly when on retreat it is easy to see the event as something that happens to you, a 'them and us' situation can arise. Obviously the team do the organising but I felt on this retreat there was room for everyone to take part. On the last day when we had all the clearing up to be done people stayed behind to help. And for the team there were open team meetings during the retreat and particularly valuable a 'pre-retreat retreat' giving Order members and mitras opportunities to share responsibilities. I felt that a balance was maintained between exerting an influence on people to keep up an effort in their meditation and letting them find their own expression for their involvement in the retreat. This was the first time I have been part of a retreat team. The energy I had to put into cooking and the pleasure of making an enjoyable retreat had a wonderful effect on my meditation — the improvements spreading back into 60 or 80 dinners!

Judy Child

## Re-discovering Traditions

The winter retreat at Padmaloka took place in the snowy wastes of Norfolk in the most severe winter for decades. It was a great success, and in comparison with previous retreats it was a new departure. There was more emphasis than usual on study, physical exercise and puja, and in addition there were live talks most evenings. Overall it was an opportunity to live a whole-hearted spiritual life for three weeks.

Each of the weeks centred on one of the Three Jewels, with the study, talks and puja emphasising successively the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha. These themes were reflected in the beautiful shrine which changed and evolved throughout the time.

For me the retreat underlined the value of Sangha, the association of people aspiring to Enlightenment. The fact that 35 men could live together at close quarters in harmony was due to the good level of communication generated by sharing a balanced and enjoyable way of life. A good balance was struck between meditation, Puja and karate, for instance. At one point in the day we would be busy making imaginative personal offerings for a festive puja using

cardboard, wire and glue. Later the walls would shake with the fierce shouts of the karate class; later still the deep stillness of meditation would prevail. The day would then conclude with the puja, devotional chanting which evokes the spirit of Buddhism.

As well as karate there was a yoga class each day. The leaders gave talks on their respective disciplines, and it emerged that both karate and yoga were once integral parts of spiritual traditions. As introduced and usually practiced in the West, however, they lack this spiritual dimension. Yet in the context of the FWBO they are regaining their place as spiritual practices, in that they conduce to self-transformation.

Subhadra

## Family Weekend

Three families gathered at an Elizabethan moated farmhouse in Suffolk in February to spend a weekend together.

The three families totalled twelve people, with six children ranging from five to fourteen, so we decided on a simple plan — meditation in the morning, puja at night, but the rest of the day free for having fun with the children. We made three firm rules for them — no television (the house unfortunately had one), no noise near the shrine during meditation, and no falling in the pond or the moat.

It seems that whenever people who are practising meditation get together they cannot help but create a light and happy atmosphere. The younger ones were particularly responsive to this — not a whine or a fight was heard all weekend — and it was good to see these nuclear family children making friends not only with each other, but with

other adults than their parents. In order to help this opening up of the family group we slept single sex — girls and women at one end of the house, boys and men at the other. Without a mutual territory to fall back on we were less able to act in couples or groups — in fact there was a marked lack of that tendency amongst us.

Obviously family weekends cannot match the concentrated atmosphere of retreats, but it was good to discover how much positivity we could create by taking some of the features of a retreat and building around them.

On Sunday afternoon the children joined us for a basic puja. They gave readings, made offerings, sometimes spilled over into giggles, but the concluding mantras worked their magic and the puja ended in a vibrant quietness.

We'll be back.

Glynis Brown



"Buddhism — an introductory course."

## "Phone for details"

This advertisement appeared in a free local paper in Kingston upon Thames in early February. It was placed by Tim Lilley, a mitra attached to the London Buddhist Centre and as a result five people appeared on his doorstep a week later for their first try at meditation and discussion about Buddhism.

'When they phoned up I told them that I would be giving the course for just five weeks, that I would introduce two meditation practices and some basic Buddhist ideas; and that we would visit a Buddhist

centre towards the end of the course,' said Tim. 'I told them that they could then continue where the course left off by going along to the centre.'

Several things prompted Tim's initiative. 'The Movement seemed to me to be long on ideas of what it wanted in terms of businesses, Buddhist centres and Third World development but very short on people to bring these dreams into being,' remarked Tim.

Tim's first move was to discuss what he had in mind with Subhuti, a senior and experienced Order member. He received quite a lot of encouragement from this, but it was made clear to him that without

Order members present, these evenings could not be said to be under FWBO auspices.

'What I did was to introduce myself to the people who came along and explained that I am not a Buddhist teacher, nor has my commitment to Buddhism been recognised in a traditional way. I said that I had been meditating and in contact with Buddhists for five years, but there were still lots of things I had to learn.

'If they found what I had to show them useful I would introduce them to a Centre where they could meet people who were more committed and experienced than myself and where they could take

their own interest much further.'

Tim spends several hours at the weekend thinking about and planning each evening. His wife, Monica, who is also a Friend, has provided support, criticism and a useful balance of personalities for the evenings.

'This is something we can do together for the FWBO and the area in which we live,' added Tim. 'We are also finding that it helps to deepen our own understanding and commitment to the Dharma in the situation we find ourselves.'

## Womens' Retreat



Upasika Sanghadevi

Gay Voller

The worst winter for decades and we pick the hardest hit area in England — the Peak District... Well who was to know booking a National Park hostel six months before? The elements seemed to be testing our perseverance to get there from London but we finally made it, and from then on it was light and magic. Ice and deep snow, 4-foot icicles from the caves and sparkling white in all directions of space. That was outside. Inside there were duvets and central heating and if you came for Dharma as well, a programme of meditation, communication exercises and a selection of taped lectures by Bhante, including a plunge into the 'Vimalakirti Nirdesa' series. The purity, freshness and clarity of Vimalakirti was reflected in the sparkling landscape outside. The thrill and danger of careering down the snowy toboggan slopes was echoed by the dive into this Mahayana sutra. The retreat was led by Sanghadevi and altogether 37

women attended, including several newcomers to women's retreats; the female warden learnt to meditate too.

At the end of the first week we had a more elaborate puja involving walking and chanting out to the courtyard to make offerings to a stupa made of snow and ice. Then on New Year's Eve, in the context of the puja, we offered our confessions of faults, written on slips of paper, to the shrine before tossing them into a bowl of lit candles to burn up. The atmosphere was quite charged when suddenly the fire alarm system went off, the smoke having built up to a sufficient level to trigger the very sensitive smoke detection system. However, after the interruption, the puja continued into the New Year. The following evening, to complement the emphasis on confession of faults, we made personal offerings symbolizing our merits and potential — aspects to be strengthened in the New Year.

Anjali

## Theory & Practice



Sixteen religious knowledge teachers, mainly from London schools, came to the first weekend introductory course on Buddhism run specifically for teachers by FWBO Education, in November at the LBC.

The purpose was to give teachers some idea from practising Buddhists what Buddhism is all about rather than rely on the traditional academic approach.

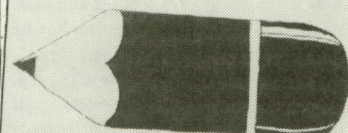
Led by Abhaya, the two days were divided into theory and practice. There were talks on Is Buddhism Pessimistic (by Abhaya) and Is Buddhism for the West (by Nagabodhi), both of which attempted to dispel some commonly held beliefs about Buddhism.

And the second day was devoted to meditation and communication exercises.

While most of the teachers found the weekend stimulating, it was clear that many still wanted information on basic Buddhist doctrine such as explanations of Nirvana, Dharma, Prajna and other key topics.

However, the weekend indicated that there existed a real need for similar courses, and the next one — a day course — is to take place at the LBC on May 15, titled Sila, Samadhi and Prajna. As well as dealing with these topics, the course will look briefly at exam syllabuses and other areas directly related to teaching.

## Meditation at the Central School.



Dhammarati, a student in the Graphics Department of the Central School of Art and Jayamati who is teaching theatre design there have combined to give a four-week meditation course in the School for the students. 25 beginners turned up on the first class.



# Embyronic Poets

21

**Embyronic Poets  
by Jayamati**

*A Review of the FWBO  
Poetry Anthology 1982*  
(Windhorse Publications/  
Ola Leaves p.p. 60 @ £1.00)

**I** was hoping to discern a theme common to all the poems in this anthology but there isn't one. Each contributor writes with a distinctive and individual flavour. Some write with ability, others with passion, a few with both and some with neither. To illustrate this diversity I have taken sample poems and look at them in some detail.

The writers are arranged in alphabetical order which might be democratic but doesn't help to give the collection a cohesion. Reading from start to finish is a shock to the system. This arbitrary arrangement of the poems leads to some unfortunate clashes in ability and style.

The work begins with two poems by Abhaya. The first "October Dawn" is a well phrased piece of descriptive verse. His subject is the dawning of an October morning at what is recognised as the Padmaloka community in Norfolk. By addressing his poem to another member of the community Abhaya is able to talk directly to his reader,

'You bell aborted from the snug of bed.....

Come! Look at this mild October dawn.'

The language is emphatic and precise and the picture he recounts is therefore clear and interesting. We observe the morning but aren't moved. He fails to engage the reader because he absents himself from his poem. The morning has no effect on him and therefore has no effect on the reader. It is an observation in which the imagery gives nothing of the writer's response.

Bob Harris writes with a maturity that gives his poetry a solid and convincing strength. He knows what he is doing with his three poems and is not afraid of doing it. He is in control of his material and is able to fashion it to his own ends. The less experienced writers in this anthology, over-reach themselves in trying to write big and important poems which really are beyond their grasp. His poems illustrate that excellent effect can be achieved by writing about what is known and understood. The poem does not seek to be impressive and of course, is impressive because of this.

Kovida's three poems are devoted to boys. The first, 'Andretti', is a spoof translation of an imagined poem. The bogus poem invents a historical background to Michelangelo's sculpture 'David'. Kovida attributes the achievement of the 'David' not to Michelangelo who fashioned it but to the boy Andretti whose beauty, he suggests, was the inspiration behind it. The poem depicts a 'disastrous' love affair between Andretti and Michelangelo which culminates in the boys defection to Leonardo Da Vinci. Michelangelo is forlorn:

'What could he do?

But hack away that marble just for you.'

Michelangelo and others who were effected by that

'...wry smile, those strong erotic legs,

Those eyes that flashed with mischief and with Love.'

are deemed to be indebted to Andretti. The poem argues that Andretti's looks were the cause of the greatness in these men:

'And they, although they feel neglected — cast aside —

Can not but fail to thank you for your deed.

For, without you,

Would they be half the men they are?'

The credit for the sculpture is given to the 'cruel' boy;

'The supple body that came between

The Artist and his stone.'

The poem doesn't convince me that frustrated love is necessary for the fulfillment of great men. The theory might be true but the poem fails to establish it.

'To James' is a love poem. The subject James is ethereal; and ungraspable:

'Light as a feather

Free as a bird'.

Again the feeling of unrequited love influences the imagery.

In the final stanza the lover bids farewell to James with a haunting resignation:

'May life treat you kindly

May life treat you kind.'

The feeling is one of sadness and loss.

Finally in 'Solitary Schoolboy' a boy is glimpsed at some distance — one imagines across a school playground — where he is 'outcast to the day'. The poet sympathises for the miscreant but again is unable to get close to him. The distance between the two is maintained. The poet can only watch and sympathise from the other side of the fence. In each of these three poems a boy is admired and yet is unobtainable. All three poems share this attitude of frustrated fascination and with it a talented writer allows himself to become predictable.

Gotami's 'Terry' is a terse and dramatic poem. A powerful emotional experience is recorded simply and directly. The language is spare and uncomplicated and the poem gains in power because of it. The writer has the good sense not to interpret the event for the reader. She writes with concern and compassion and it is this integrity that engages the reader.

Sangharakshita has contributed three poems. The first is a tightly written ballad in the medieval style using allegory to good effect. 'The Ballad of Journeyman Death' traces a man building his house who is joined by a wandering journeyman. The enigmatic visitor helps to build the house and maintains his mystery.

'I would not frighten your wife and child

For my visage lacketh grace.'

The identity of the journeyman is tantalisingly vague until:

'Oh what is your name you

wandering man

That can build a house in a day?'

and the answer comes in the last line

'My name is Death, men say.'

There is no surprise in this revelation because the title of the poem has already revealed the identity of the journeyman. This reduces the impact of the poem.

'A Crumb from the Symposium' is a good example of the poem as an illustration for an idea. Here the writer has started with an idea:

'Desire's not always love

True love is never desire'

and a poem is created from it. The poem is limited to the exposition of this idea.

The most successful of Sangharakshita's three poems is 'Masks' which is neat and efficient. Rhyming couplets are used simply and effectively

'For seven years a mask I wore

Secure behind and firm before'

When this mask of conformity is removed

'They shrieked aloud with rage and pain

Until I put it on again.'

It is not clear who 'they' are. The writer assumes the reader will know. This implies a 'them' and 'us' without defining either: 'us' the mask removers, 'them' the mask replacers. To assume the readers are 'mask removers' weakens the universality of the poem and minimizes its effect.

Ananda contributes seven poems to the anthology and it is right that he

should have the lions share of space. His 'In the Tate Gallery' is a refutation of the Sanitised Art of the Art Gallery:

'Where mild sightseers busy themselves  
With catalogues and alligator handbags

Here, art is properly contained.'

He asks where the magical madness has gone from our lives and our art. It is a powerful and heartfelt poem.

In 'The Forbidden Angel' he accounts for the disappearance of the magic that would

'have made love amid titanic memories

or danced among fairies with sapphire wings.'

It is fear that prevents us from consorting with the angel. This lack of courage is acknowledged and then the angel is defiantly summoned:

'Angel come down once more.

Come down: touch me.'

It is a thrilling and dangerous ending to the poem. A heroic step.

The theme extended in 'To Vajradaka' where courage and heroism are loudly praised.

'.....you dare

discuss eternity, with road-sweepers, clowns and tramps, and bare your soul's rubied labyrinth

to the glance of dull incomprehension.'

It is a hymn of praise to one 'who speaks with demons, summons angels with visions in their hair.'

The joy of appreciation leaps off the page.

Lack of space prevents me from dealing with the other poems in this anthology. I would have particularly liked to share my appreciation of Vangisa's magnificent grasp of the absurd and Desmond Fitzgerald's fireside, Irish, ballad poetry. The poems that work are born of genuine emotional feeling that has been savoured and reflected upon, and it is more poems like this that I look forward to reading in the 1983 anthology.





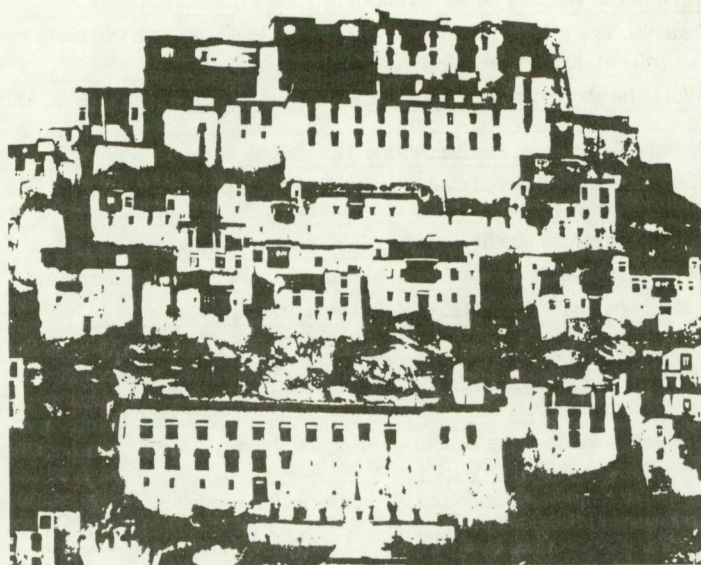
**I**t took me some time to get to see these films: although they are shown increasingly frequently at the independent cinemas, they are often fully booked in advance. I really recommend people to see them on separate evenings if possible, unless their powers of concentration are highly developed. They are all, particularly Part 2 'Radiating the Fruit of Truth', very intense. Their style is graceful and unhurried, reminiscent of many of the films made in Eastern Europe and they make the often punchy style of films made for the American and Western European market, which tend to carry their audiences along with them, seem restless and urgent.

I saw Part 2 'Radiating the Fruit of Truth' first. Both I and the friend with whom I went found it difficult to relax into the tempo of the film. It is long — just over two hours — and portrays a ritual which lasted all night. By the time it was over I too felt it had been an all-nighter — not helped by the stuffiness of the ICA's unventilated studio. But it is beautifully made and astonishingly intimate. It is not hard to believe that it took Graham Coleman, who wrote and directed the films, and David Lascelles who did photography and production, four years to make the trilogy. They must have developed a very special relationship with what has hitherto been recognised as a rather private and inward looking culture. Their filming of the ritual — a Tara puja — was very detailed and it was allowed to speak for itself without interpretation. Their portrayal of 'The Beautiful Ornament' ritual gave a very strong feeling of the idea of contemplating the nature of the mind and the obstacle of the ego. I don't mean my comments in general to be a criticism; rather I fully admit my own limitations of appreciation. I did however feel that the continual subtitles were unnecessary. I am very drawn to the printed word, and if I had not felt compelled to read the translations of repetitive mantras I think I would have been able to absorb the chanting on another level, and feel a more spiritual effect from the film. The 'music' is mostly cacophonous to the western ear but that too has its power. I must add that on leaving the cinema I spoke to a friend who had just watched the film for the second time and was looking forward to seeing it again. She found it very spiritual and inspiring.

I went to see parts 1 and 3, 'A Prophecy' and 'The Field of the Senses' on the following night. 'A Prophecy' is set mainly in Dharamsala in northern India and the film follows the lives of both Tibetan monks and laypeople living in exile on land donated by the Indian government. Again there is a deliberate refusal to interpret the visual images. After spending the previous evening feeling cooped up inside a remote, crumbling and claustrophobic

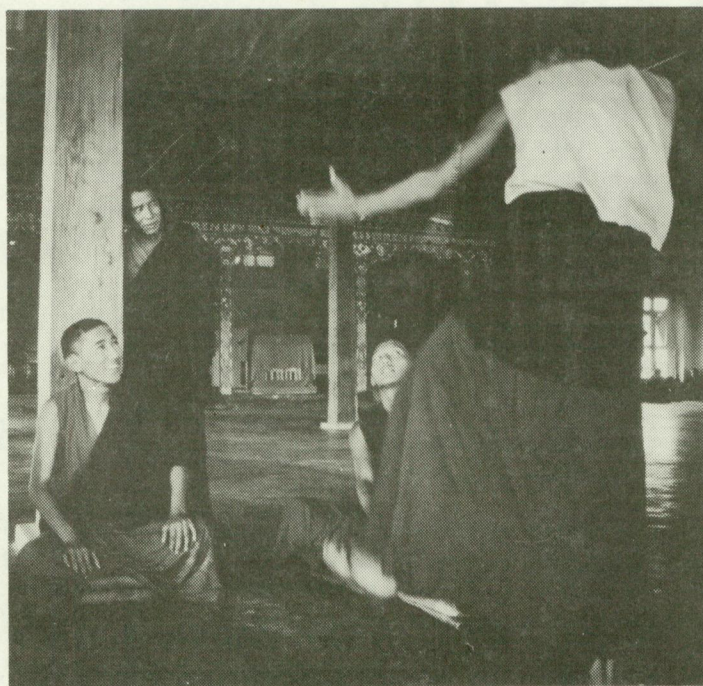
# TIBET:

## A Buddhist Trilogy



monastery, feeling closed in and suffocated by the dimly lit reds and yellows of the monks' robes, lost in the confusion of Tibetan culture and Buddhist ideology which seemed inextricably intertwined, 'A Prophecy' had for me, a strong feeling of release. I felt as though I had been let out into the sunshine and fresh air and that Buddhist ideas had been turned loose from the confines of their traditional home and exposed to the bright light of day. I

felt excited by the verbally stimulating and physically vigorous debates in the new monastery, and fascinated by the Dalai Lama's address to the monks. Exile seems to have brought him closer to his people, and there is a new spiritual and political vision. It is as though the flight from the Chinese invasion in 1959, tragic as it then seemed has brought new insights and purpose. The Dalai Lama has a strong interest in political ideologies



which has resulted in changes in the structure of the old theocracy. He has said 'The future will lead to the rule of the masses, to a *social democracy*. When we look at it from this point of view, the invasion of Tibet has been something good for the Tibetans — providing we can follow the right path in the future'.

Again the filming is so calmly beautiful, I couldn't help being carried away by its sheer aesthetic excellence. Several images linger in my mind. One is of the monks in the same red and yellow robes which now seem so bright and rich in the sunshine, perched precariously high painting murals on the walls of the new monastery. Another is of the huge crowds of Tibetan people, listening in rapt attention to the Dalai Lama's address and the long file of people waiting to see their spiritual leader who pats them on the head or the cheek. But it's in no way a patronising gesture. I felt it from the back of the crowded Central Hall on his recent visit to Britain and it shone out again in the film, that this Dalai Lama is a truly loving and compassionate human being, passionately concerned with finding and exploring that 'right path'.

The third film 'The Field of the Senses' returned to the mountainous landscape of Ladakh with scenes of the traditional working and devotional lives of the monks and the lay people in the monastery and the fields. The film is concerned mainly with the ritual response to death. The scenes go back and forth between the fields where completely unmechanised work is taking place, and the monastery where the body is being prepared for burning. The chanting of the ritual prepares not only the recently dead person, but also the living for death and all its implications for the Buddhist. The film is so powerful. I think that is why the film kept returning to the workers in the fields. At dusk the body is finally committed to the flames and the film observes quietly all the while the body burns. Juices ooze from the eye sockets of the skull and the monks chant of release and freedom. The filming offers no shock tactics, no morbidity, no sentimentality. Perhaps this is the greatest tribute to the sensitivity and extraordinary achievement of these film makers.

by Gabrielle Milward

### TIBET — A Buddhist Trilogy

Screenings April 1982

Newcastle Fri/Sat April 9/10

Chapter Arts Centre

London Wed. April 14 Electric Cinema.



## Centres and Branches

### Friends of the Western Buddhist Order

- 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
- Manchester Buddhist Centre*, 18 Burlington Road, Withington, Manchester M20 9PY. Tel: 061-445 3805
- Heruka*, 13 Kelvinside Terrace South, Glasgow G20. Tel: 041-946 2035
- West London Buddhist Centre*, enquiries to *Ratnadvipa*, 34 Daventry Street, London NW1. Tel: 01-258 3706
- FWBO Bristol*: Enquiries to *Aryatara*, 3 Plough Lane, Purley, Surrey. Tel: 272) 28220
- Norwich Meditation Centre*, 41a All Saints Green, Norwich. Tel: (0603) 27034
- Lansimaisen Buddhalaisen Veljeskunnan Ystävät, FWBO*  
PL 288 00120 Helsinki 12, Finland. Tel: Helsinki 642 462
- FWBO Karuna*, Pengerkatu 18 A, 00500 Helsinki 50, Finland.
- Suvmadhathu*, PO Box 68-453, Newton, Auckland, New Zealand.
- Boston Buddhist Centre*, 27 Grampian Way, Savin Hill, Boston, Massachusetts 02125, USA. Tel: 0101-617 (Boston) 8259666
- Trailokya Bauddha Maha Sangha, Sahayak Gana*,  
2A-Parnakuti Housing Society, Yerawada, Pune 411006, India.
- Vajraloka*, Tyn-y-ddol, Treddol, Nr. Corwen, N. Wales (visitors by arrangement only)  
Tel: 049 081 406 (between 2-4pm)
- FWBO Stockholm*, Hillbersvagen 5, S-126 54 Hagersten, Sweden Tel: Stockholm 97 59 92

## Representatives

- Upasaka Aryavamsa*, Elleholmsvagen 11, S-352 43 Vaxjo, Sweden.
- Upasaka Bakula*, Bakul Bhavan, Behind Gujarat Vaishya Sabha,  
Jamalpur Road, Ahmedabad, 380001, Gujarat, India.
- Upasaka Dharmadhara*, PO Box 12311, Wellington North, New Zealand.
- FWBO Netherlands*, Wichard Van Pontlaan 109, Arnhem, Netherlands 010 31 85 61 0275
- Upasaka Indrajala*, PO Box 22-657, Christchurch, New Zealand.

## 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.
- The Padmaloka Co-operative Ltd.*, Lessingham 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
- 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
- Karuna Co-operative*, Pengerkatu 18 A, 00500 Helsinki 50, Finland.
- Phoenix Community Housing Co-operative Ltd.*, 51 Roman Road, London E2. Tel: 01-980 1960.
- Rainbow Co-operative Ltd.*, 96-98 High Street, Croydon, Surrey. Tel: 01-688 2899
- Windhorse Trading*, 29-31 Old Ford Rd, London E2 9PJ. Tel: 01-980 7826

## 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: 01-980 7826
- 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
- Kalpadruma*, 43 Gleneldon Rd, Streatham, London S.W.16. Tel: 01-677 7381
- Khadiravani*, 42 Hillhouse Rd, London S.W.16.
- 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
- Sarvasiddhi*, 71 Kilburn Park Road, London NW6. Tel: 01-328 1578
- Sukhavati*, 51 Roman Road, Bethnal Green, London E2 0HU. Tel: 01-980 5972
- Suvmabhassa*, 3 Ickborough Rd, London N.16.
- Vajracchedika*, 95 Bishop's Way, Bethnal Green, London E2 9HL. Tel: 01-980 4151
- Vajrakula*, 41b All Saints Green, Norwich. Tel: (0603) 27034
- Vidyadhara*, 30 Cambridge Park, Wanstead, London E11 2PR. Tel: 989 5083
- 329 Sauchiehall Street (top right), Glasgow. Tel: 041-333 0524
- 24 Birchfield House, Birchfield Street, Limehouse, London E14 8EY. Tel: 01-515 2226
- Adhistana*, 74 Cassland Road, Hackney, London E.9.
- Sydney Meditation Community, 13 Rocklands Road, Wollstonecraft, Australia 2065. Tel: (02) 436 3263.

### 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) 8112