

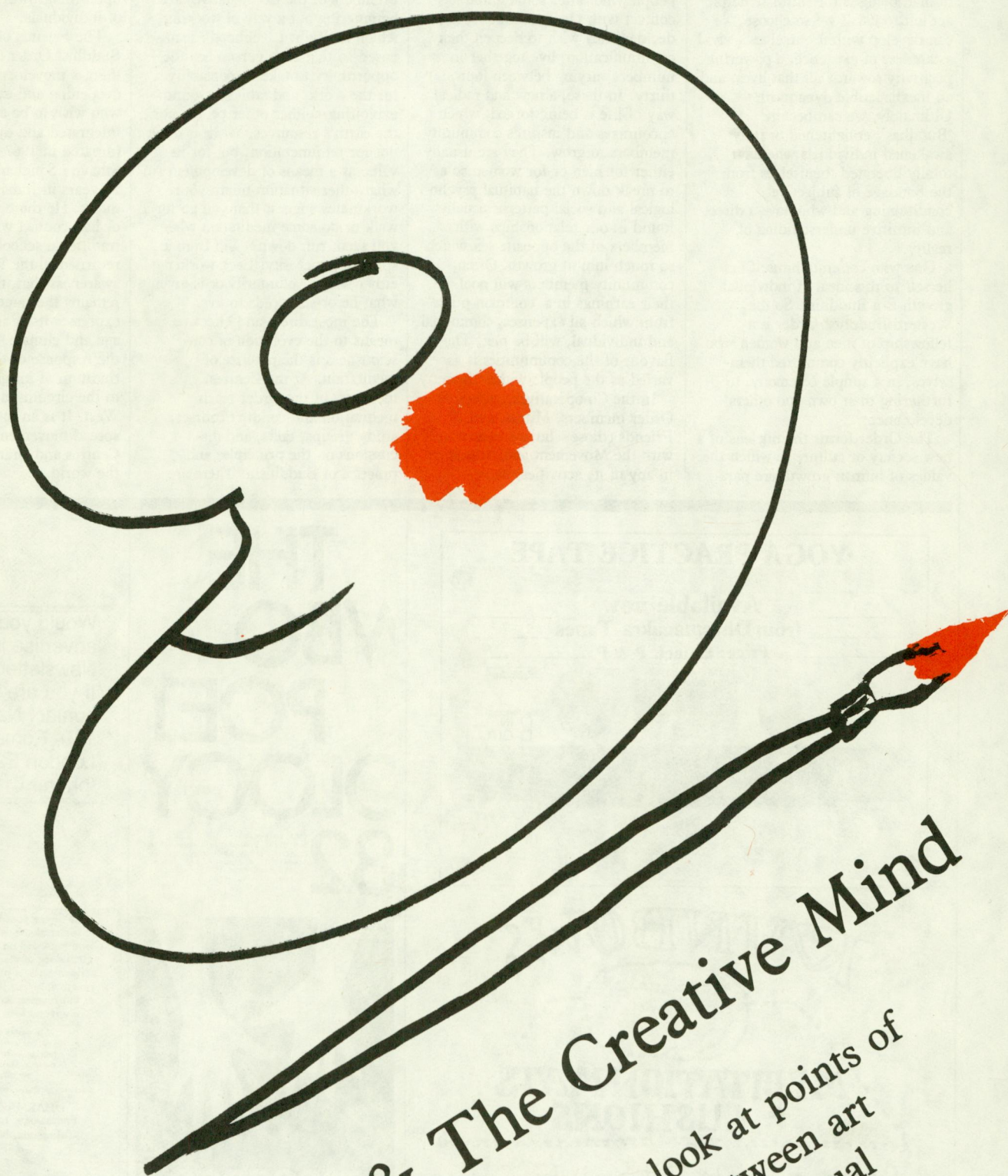
The

Friends of the Western Buddhist Order

NEWSLETTER

Number 56

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Art & The Creative Mind

Inside we look at points of
contact between art
and the spiritual
life.

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 openness 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.

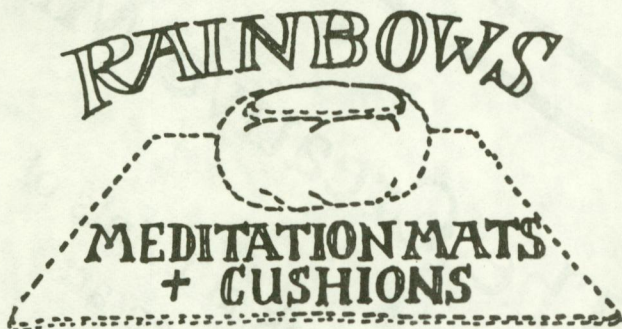
In the Co-operatives, groups of Order members, Mitras, and Friends (those who are in contact with the Movement and participate in any of its activities) work

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.



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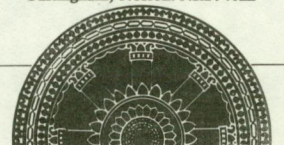
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The NEWSLETTER

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Editorial

This issue of the *Newsletter* approaches the theme of art and the creative mind from a number of different angles, reflecting the fact that there are several points of contact between creativity and the spiritual life.

Firstly, spiritual practice opens the doors of creativity. By means of spiritual practice: meditation, reflection, mindfulness, ritual and open communication, we progress from the narrow routines of the 'reactive mind' to the expansiveness, freedom, and richness of the 'creative mind'. We learn to see things afresh, to accept the challenges and rewards of purified vision and insight, to make a place for them in our lives. The first two articles explore this point of contact.

Secondly, the arts, the 'products' of the creative mind, are a form of communication. They could be an important means of making the Dharma more widely known, of planting seeds of vision and Imagination in the world. One who would undertake to transform the world may be faced with many tasks, but none could be more crucial than the task of transforming people's dreams and aspirations. In his article, Jayamati explains how he has embarked on this task with his efforts to establish a Buddhist theatre.

Thirdly, spiritual practice, spiritual life is, in itself, a creative activity. Out of the raw material of one's being one attempts to fashion the likeness of a Buddha. One works with one's body, speech and mind, one works with the Imagination. Here, the canvas may be the individual consciousness, but one's stage is the universe itself. In his article, Devaraja explains the part that visualisation practice, perhaps the most aesthetic of meditation techniques, plays in the process of self-transformation.

In no way does this issue exhaust the points of connection between art and the spiritual life. Interested readers are especially referred to *The Religion of Art*, by the Ven. Sangharakshita, and *Mitrata* No. 40 *Imagination: The Faculty Divine*, by Dharmachari Sthiramati. No doubt future issues of the *Newsletter* will return to this theme, since interest in the arts seems to be growing all the time among those involved with the FWBO. That interest can only be a healthy sign. The creative mind is on the rise.

Nagabodhi

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CREATIVITY: The

by Padmaraja & Nick Rhodes



Dionysius

There are some words which, when you start to think of a definition for them, force you to immediately resort to their opposite. For instance, if you look up 'closed' in a dictionary, it says 'not open'. 'Off' is defined as 'not on'. We could say that 'closed' and 'off' are strikingly two-sided concepts — it is not possible to imagine the concept 'off' without at the same time thinking of the idea 'on'.

The concept of 'freedom' has this same quality. It is not possible to reflect on freedom without considering the fact that it is a negation of restriction, and that any particular kind of freedom can be defined in terms of the particular bonds it negates. The dictionary confirms this, defining 'free', as 'unrestricted', implying again that the two opposites are inseparable, like the two sides of a single coin.

The 'Restriction/Freedom' pair, in the sense we are going to use it, could be renamed 'Conditioned/Non-conditioned', or, in the less traditional but very apt terms of Sangharakshita, 'Reactive/Creative'.

Reactive and Creative are words applied to the mind — but reactive mind and creative mind are not two distinct minds, but two ways in which any one mind can function. By describing the mind at work in each of these modes in turn, we will begin to see the nature of reactivity and creativity.

The tendencies of the reactive mind, to choose a specific illustration, are exploited by the advertising trade. We might make a particular choice in a supermarket, not because we know which brand is objectively the best, but because we have seen a certain name in an advertisement. Perhaps even unknown to us, our action was determined by external stimuli. We have not acted, but *reacted*, or even *been activated*. We can see that the reactive mind has no independence, no freedom.

In some of its characteristics it resembles a machine — a computer, say. According to the way it is programmed, a computer will automatically respond in a particular, predictable way to any given operation. And of course, it will respond repetitively, giving the same answer whenever the operation is made.

This is just like the reactive mind.

Whenever the appropriate stimulus occurs, the reactive mind produces the same conditioned — almost programmed — reaction. Thus, for example, our opinions are rarely the result of our own conscious reflection, but more often unthinking regurgitations of ideas fed into us from newspapers or television, or by our parents and friends. In other words, not knowing what we really think or feel, we express 'opinions' which come from a very shallow level. Thus we could say that another characteristic of reactivity is superficiality.

Finally, the reactive mind is unaware, and has no control over its actions. Being out of control is very evident, for instance, when a frustration triggers off a blind rage in somebody. But the same may apply when we 'decide' upon 'Sugar Puffs' instead of 'Cornflakes' — our conditioning may have determined our action.

So, we have seen that the reactive mind is unaware, predictable, and superficial. Turning to the creative mind, we shall see that it is aware, original, and acts from its depths.

It does not simply *re-act*, but genuinely acts from its own nature. This is beautifully summed up in a quotation from Sangharakshita: 'It loves when there is no reason to love, is happy when there is no reason for happiness, creates where there is no possibility of creativity'. It is obviously not determined by its circumstances, and in this sense it is free.

It is also profoundly happy, and one important way in which it creates is by contributing to the world's happiness. Through our own happiness, others may become happier.

The creative mind is original. When we act creatively, we act with an awareness of our depths, spontaneously and with originality, independently of external stimuli. 'Original' in this sense does not just mean 'different'. It applies to that which has reached consciousness from our own depths, and not from outside ourself. What is different may not be original, and what is original may not be different. Things different may be so because someone is trying to be different, so that they are determined by (or a reaction to) whatever they are intended to be different from. Things created from one's own

e Contrary Experience

inner resources may be the same as existing forms, but they are still original. If, after genuine thought, you arrive at a conclusion that has already been stated by a previous thinker, this simply means that your true originality has coincided with theirs.

As indicated earlier, in this context we are using 'freedom' and 'creativity' as synonymous. But of course, this kind of freedom has nothing to do with the popular modern interpretation of the term. To quote Sangharakshita again, 'Nowadays there is quite a lot of talk about freedom, and most people, it seems, think that freedom means simply doing what one likes. But the Buddhist conception of freedom is rather different... In the first place it's... complete freedom from all subjective emotional and psychological bias, complete freedom from prejudice, from all psychological conditioning. Secondly (it is) freedom from all wrong views, all ignorance, all false philosophy and mere opinion. It is this sort of freedom, this total spiritual freedom — freedom of heart and mind, at the highest possible level, at the summit of one's existence — which is the aim and object of Buddhism'.

We can apply this distinction, between freedom as simply doing what one likes and freedom in the higher, spiritual sense, to the idea of a free society. According to Buddhism, there can be no free society based on the former, hedonistic definition of freedom; but the latter, creative variety is the basis of the Spiritual Community. This is a term used by Sangharakshita in opposition to the idea of the Group. We could say that as creativity is to the spiritual community, so reactivity is to the group. However, they are intimately connected, and each has a considerable influence on the other. The spiritual community has a refining effect on the group, trying to turn it into a positive group — one which is at least open to the values of the spiritual community. The group in turn attempts to change the spiritual community into another group, and unfortunately the attempt is often successful; but the spiritual community cannot guard against this danger by isolating itself from the group. A hereditary spiritual community is a contradiction in terms, and so if the spiritual community is to survive, it must recruit its new members from the group.

This example illustrates the dialectical

relationship between conditioned and non-conditioned, reactivity and creativity. We could say that it is a vertical relationship, the creative mind being on a higher plane than the reactive mind. It is on the lower plane that the popular idea of freedom lies, where it exists itself in a horizontal dialectical relationship between doing what one likes and being restricted by external circumstances, or between anarchy and order. Individuals and societies tend to react back and forth between these poles — whenever they are nearer the one they experience a pull towards the other. For instance, within the individual there is often a conflict between what Freud termed the Reality Principle and the Pleasure Principle. External circumstances — reality — may make particular demands on us, and we may try to discipline ourselves to meet them. But to do this we may have to deny our true feelings and inclinations — our efforts may be very wilful. The result may be that the feelings which have been held back assert themselves strongly, and we react to the opposite extreme, the pursuit of pleasure. We may even become imprisoned in a perpetual reactive cycle between these two tendencies.

This is a particular example of a process which has infinitely many parallels. Coleridge writes, in his *Biographia Literaria*, 'Descartes, speaking as a naturalist and in imitation of Archimedes, said, "Give me matter and motion and I will construct you the universe"... In the same sense the transcendental philosopher says: "Grant me a nature having two contrary forces, the one of which tends to expand infinitely, while the other strives to apprehend or find itself in this infinity, and I will cause the world of intelligences with the whole system of their representations to rise up before you."'

In Coleridge's thought the creative act is a repetition of the Creation of life itself, and both are dependent upon the spiritual tension between the forces of freedom and restriction, between centrifugal and centripetal tendencies. This process is seen very clearly in the field of the arts; it is out of the confrontation between an artist's creative passion and the limitations of the form he is working with that the work of art arises. These two poles could be called the Dionysian and the Apollonian.

In his book, *'The Courage to Create'*, Rollo May identifies the Dionysian aspect of creativity with a



surging vitality that is released by a particular kind of 'intense encounter' between the artist and his object, characterized by heightened consciousness. The encounter is in fact a temporary transcendence of the dichotomy between the subjective and objective poles of the perception — a momentary experience of egolessness. Henri Matisse wrote on this theme, 'Nothing, I think, is more difficult for a true painter than to paint a rose, because before he can do so, he has first to forget all the roses that were ever painted. The first step towards creation is to see everything as it really is, and that demands a constant effort. To create is to express what we have within ourselves. Every creative effort comes from within. We have also to nourish our feeling, and we can do so only with materials derived from the world about us. This is the process whereby the artist incorporates and gradually assimilates the external world within himself, until the object of his drawing has become like a part of his being, until he has it within him and can project it onto the canvas as his own creation.'

What Matisse calls assimilating the world within himself is exactly what May refers to as encounter, an experience which seems to arise out of 'the fight against the cliché' — the effort to see something beyond our conditioned preconceptions of its appearance.

May goes on to describe the outward expression of an artist's vision as a Symbol. The Symbol — a painting or a poem, for instance — thus emerges from a moment of heightened awareness, and consequently has the power to induce the same experience in the beholder. If we allow the Symbol to speak to us, we will experience it in two aspects. For instance, a painting of a tree by Cezanne will first of all trigger in us an awareness of our unconscious tree archetype — our whole experience of trees up to now. But it will also extend and enrich our relationship with trees, altering the way in which we will see them in the future. These two experiences are the results of what May calls respectively the 'regressive' and 'progressive' aspects of the Symbol.

The Apollonian pole of creativity is the principle of form and rational order. According to Coleridge, form may be of two kinds — either mechanic, or organic. Coleridge writes, 'The form is mechanic when on any given material we impress a pre-determined form, not necessarily arising out of the properties of the material, as when to a mass of wet clay we give whatever shape we wish it to retain when hardened. The organic form, on the other hand, is innate; it shapes as it develops itself from within, and the fullness of its dev-



Les Acanthes

Matisse

elopment is one and the same with the perfection of its outward form. Such is the life, such the form'. Edmund Spenser described the same notion of form in his 'Hymne in Honour of Beautie': 'For soule is forme, and doth the bodie make'.

It is out of the struggle, out of the creative tension between these contraries — the Apollonian and the Dionysian, reason and emotion we could say — that the creative act is born.

It seems that some artists consider the task impossible, yet feel at the same time that they have no choice but to fight ceaselessly to accomplish it. Rollo May emphasises the necessity of limitations, citing Shakespeare as an example: 'When you write a poem, you discover that the very necessity of fitting your meaning into such and such a form requires you to search in your imagination for new meanings. You reject certain ways of saying it, you select others, always trying to form the poem again. In your forming, you arrive at new and more profound meanings than you had even dreamed of. Form is not a mere lopping off of meaning that you don't have room to put into your poem; it is an aid to finding new meaning, a stimulus to condensing your meaning, to simplifying and purifying it, and to discovering on a more universal dimension the essence you wish to express. How much meaning Shakespeare could put into his plays *because* they were written in blank verse

rather than prose, or his sonnets *because* they were fourteen lines!'

The argument may be put forward that poets and other artists have not always looked upon limitation in this light — for instance, the Romantic movement, sometimes known as the Romantic rebellion. However, we might reply that this rebellion was against an over-emphasis on tradition for its own sake, convention no longer infused with creative passion. It could be said that Romanticism represents an evolutionary advancement of tradition by artists who have deeply understood the tradition, but whose spontaneity cannot be contained within it. As Herbert Read says, 'The artist makes a leap forward into a new and original state of sensibility. He revolts against the existing conventions in order to create a new convention more in accordance with a contemporary consciousness.'

Note the term 'new convention' — it is not possible to abandon form completely. Nor is it desirable, since, as Rollo May points out, if form were to vanish, spontaneity would vanish with it. Form, in fact, is a necessary condition for creativity, since, as we saw earlier, creativity is dependent upon the opposition of the Dionysian and the Apollonian, passion and form. Indeed, creativity could be seen as a middle way, a resolution on a higher plane of these contrary poles — a harmonious union of opposites. We might even define creativity as the discovery of freedom *within* form; the tension is absorbed and the whole

conditioned dichotomy is transcended.

However, we must guard against seeing this achievement as final — seeing the creative pole as a static point where one settles down after breaking free of the reactive prison. The creative pole actually represents a direction along a path which will not end; if we become more and more creative, we finally reach a state in which we are transcending the conditioned uninterruptedly and indefinitely.

Thus the Buddhist goal of Enlightenment is not a static thing, but this process of transcendence established irreversibly. It might be objected that in a state of infinite creativity there would be no further conditions to transcend — indeed, the Enlightened being is said to have attained 'the Unconditioned'. But the unconditioned mind still exists in the midst of the world's conditionedness, and, moreover, does not experience itself as separate from it.

Enlightenment, we could say, to emphasise its dynamic nature, consists in responding creatively to all the different circumstances in the midst of which you may find yourself. This again illustrates that the processes of reactivity and creativity are the two inseparable components of a dialectical relationship; a Buddha's creative response to the world — that is to say, his ceaseless compassionate activity — could be seen as the highest expression of the interplay between these poles.

ONLY CONNECT

by Abhaya

In the early spring of 1980, I told the Ven. Sangharakshita that I was considering giving a talk at the Convention of the Western Buddhist Order on the subject of *Buddhism and Keats*. I remember I did not announce this with a great deal of confidence. He responded with an 'Oh, good', reached up to his bookshelves and handed me a copy of Middleton Murry's *Keats and Shakespeare*, fuel for my thesis! My lack of confidence was partly due to the fact that I still hadn't realised the essential connection between the Dharma and art, not, that is, with enough emotional conviction, even though I was reasonably familiar with the argument of Sangharakshita's *The Religion of Art*. I had come across a photocopy of this in someone's room five years before, and read it, quite greedily, on the spot. The digestive process was, and is, still in progress.

Just in case readers are not aware of the fact, the essay, originally written in the 1950s, was subsequently published by Windhorse Publications as an 'Ola Leaves' production. The booklet is still in print at the time of writing.

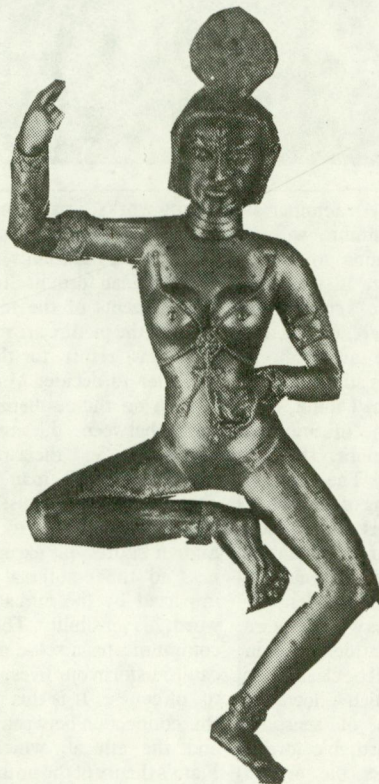
In his concluding remarks as Chairman, after I had given my talk on Buddhism and Keats, Sangharakshita quoted the epigraph to E.M. Forster's *Howard's End*, 'Only connect...', and spoke of his own uncertainty about the religion-art connection in his early days in Kalimpong, when faced with pressing requests by young men there to help them with their studies of English poetry. He commented that not long after he had given in to the temptation to assist, he discovered that, if you go into a truly great poem in sufficient depth, you eventually contact the Dharma; that, at its highest reaches, the path of art coalesces with the spiritual Path itself and need not be thought of in terms of indulgent diversion. The connection was made. Perhaps it was soon after this that he got down to exploring it in some detail in the writing of his essay, *The Religion of Art*.

The connection, with all its implications, is one which I keep turning over in my mind. I have now led two study seminars on the text, one recently at Padmaloka. What struck

me on both these events was a degree of emotional response by the participants in the study sessions which is not always so evident when the traditional Dharma is being studied. I attribute this partly to the fact that the text, though there is a good deal in it that relates directly to Buddhism, to the Dharma, encourages constant reference to material of our own culture, material with which the people who choose to come to the seminars have been in some kind of emotional rapport for quite a long time. The realisation that this sort of emotional engagement is connected with one's spiritual practice, with the

contact the creative springs in us.

Unfortunately, a lot of us, though seriously involved and even committed to our own development and spiritual growth as Buddhists, intimately concerned as we are, not only with the development of higher states of consciousness, but also with the development of Insight, are not so interested in the Dharma as formulated, the traditional Teaching, the Word of the Buddha. We may look forward to meditation sessions much more than we do to study groups, and the thought of private study only arises because it's said to be important. We are much more interested,



Dakini

following of the Path, gives rise to a certain excitement. As we well know, in order to practise the Dharma with any degree of real commitment, there has to be a response from the heart; we have to thrill to it from a deep level. Somehow, our practice has to

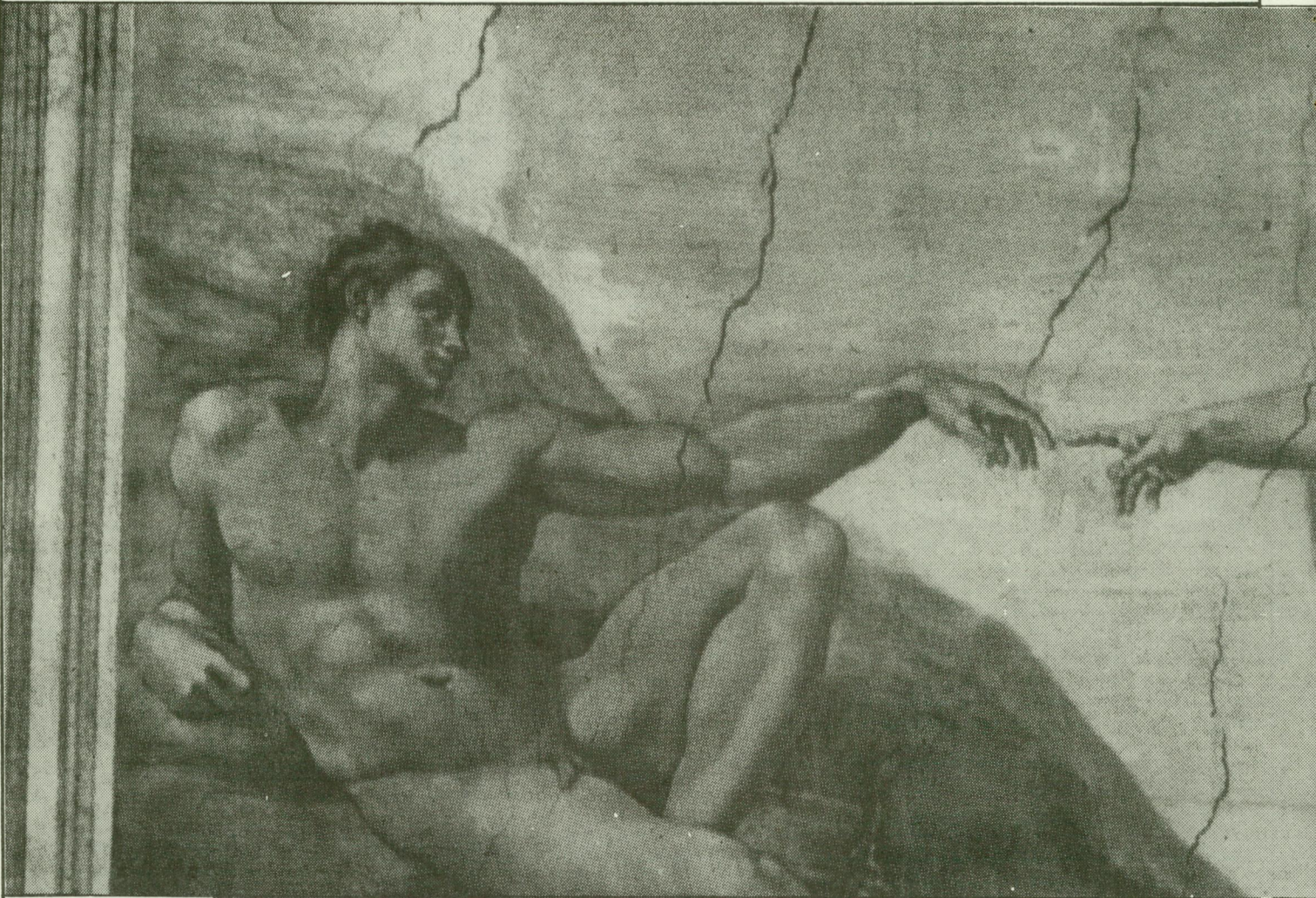
say, in looking at pictures and reading a book of poems or a novel, than in taking up a study of the *Majjhima Nikaya*. No doubt some of this can be attributed to sheer laziness, to a reluctance to take up the discipline that Dharma study necessarily involves.

But lack of interest also implies lack of emotional connection, the contact which generates the spark, the spark which kindles and sets blazing the fires of inspiration. The connection has to be made. Without it, our practice lacks any real meaning.

The quotation from which the epigraph 'Only connect...' is taken, continues, so far as I remember, with the words 'the passion and the prose'. 'Only connect the passion and the prose'. We've had enough of prose. What about the passion? In its original sense, 'passion' connotes a genuine, deeply felt, even fierce emotion, that degree of emotional arousal symbolised by the Red Dakini. Eventually we may be hotly in love with that fearsome fiery Beauty, but at the moment she leaves us either cold or terrified. We feel no passion. Why? Failure to connect! Perhaps because she is a figure of spiritual idealisation far beyond not only our grasp but our stretch; ('A man's stretch should outreach his grasp, or what's heaven for?': Browning). In the meantime, we'd like our taste of Beauty to be a little less terrifying. For real Beauty is hard to take. Rilke has expressed this finely in the opening lines of his first 'Duino Elegy':

'Who, if I cried, would hear me
among the angelic
orders? And even if one of them
suddenly
pressed me against his heart, I should
fade in the strength of his
stronger existence. For Beauty:
nothing
but beginning of Terror we're still
just able to bear,
and why we adore it so is because it
serenely
disdains to destroy us. Every angel is
terrible.....'
(translated by J.B. Leishman)

The Dakini is too much for us because she doesn't 'serenely disdain to destroy us'; she leaps out at us from her circle of flame, wielding a fearsome vajra chopper! And this brings us to the very heart of Bhante's thesis in *The Religion of Art*, which is that 'religious art is that kind of poetry, music, painting, or any other species of art which conduces to the experience of egolessness' (p.22 *My italics*). In



The Creation of Adam

other words, if we take such art seriously, it may lead, as practising the Dharma seriously leads, to change, to the death of the old and the birth of the new. This essential point is developed over several pages in a crucial passage (pp.22-28).

One of art's essential elements is its ability not only to 'communicate a sense of values' to its audience, but also to 'transform their lives'. Openness to the Dharma and to great art can lead to the smashing through of our persistence in prolonging modes of being we're in fact sick of. We resist change because we are selfish. Attached as we are to these habitual ways of being, we keep at a safe distance anything that might threaten their continuance. Though we approach art, we do not wish to get too close. We make such ridiculous attempts to domesticate these great forces in our lives. Pressing the point home, Sangharakshita, on page 28, drops the word 'egolessness' in favour of its more down-to-earth Anglo-Saxon equivalent 'selfishness', which he defines as 'simply unwillingness to face new experiences. Unselfishness', on the other hand, is 'openness to new experiences'.

On the *Religion of Art* seminar at Padmaloka in the autumn, we set aside time each evening to 'taste' selected works of art, in order to explore further the connection between religion and art, in practice as well as theory. The savour of one particular work lingers still for me, a work that can be seen, I think, as a very good artistic objectification of the 'only connect' motif, that is, Michelangelo's fresco, 'The Creation of Man' from the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel in Rome. It is also a good illustration of Sangharakshita's own definition of art, because it contains, in my opinion, all the ingredients of that definition. Perhaps without more ado I should quote that definition in full, so that readers will be clear about the references to it which follow. Art is 'the organisation of sensuous impressions into pleasurable formal relations that express the artist's sensibility and communicate to his audience a sense of values that can transform their lives'. (*The Religion of Art*, p.40)

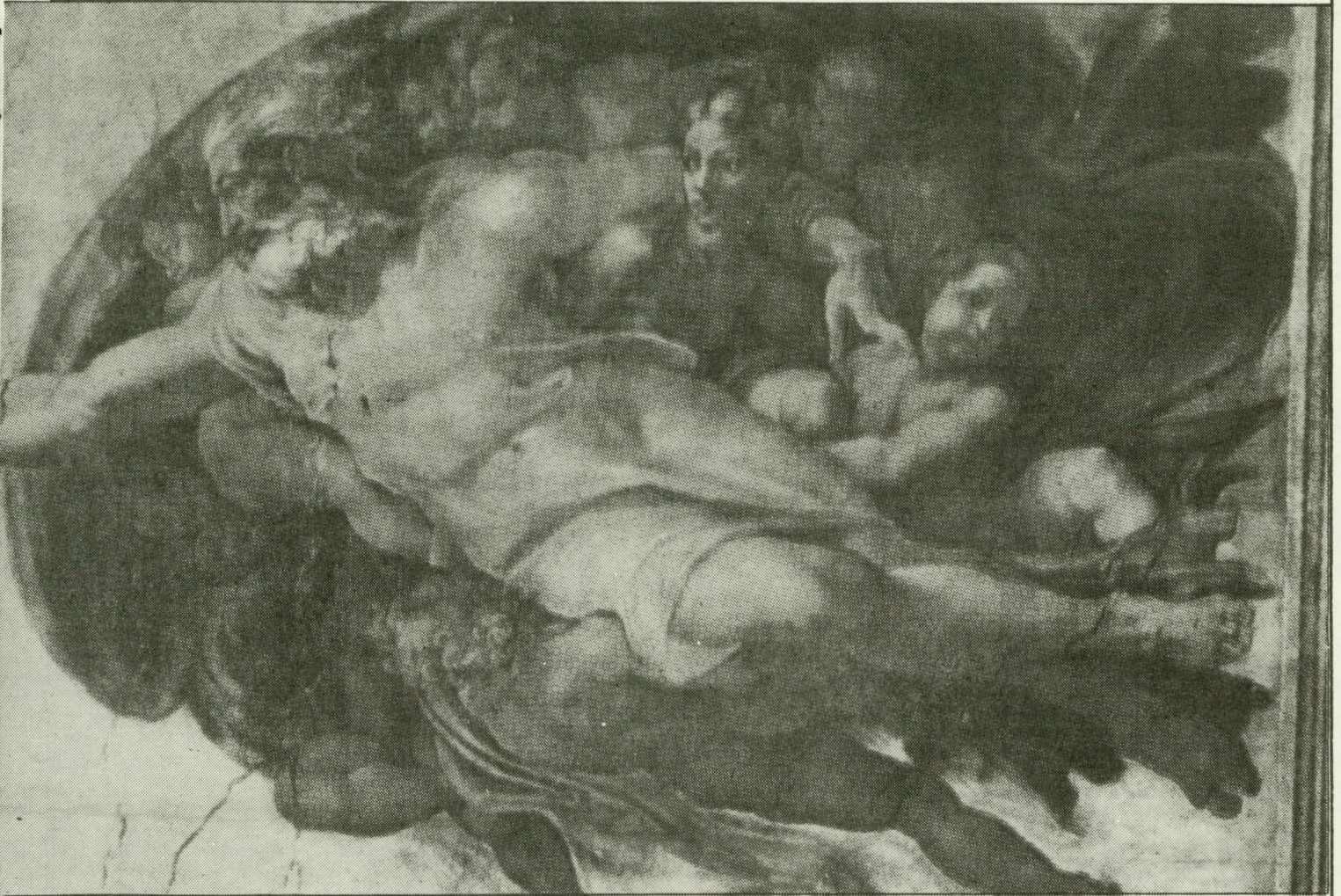
The raw material, so to speak, for the composition of *The Creation of Man* fresco is, as is the case with the majority, if not all of Michelangelo's

extant works, apart from his architectural achievements, an expression of the artist's sensuous apprehension of the human form itself; whether the arrangements of the forms to each other in the picture are pleasurable is, in the last resort, for the eye of the beholder to decide. Much has been written on the aesthetic dialogue of form between the two principal figures, of God the Creator and of Adam, the first man. The fresco communicates the artist's fineness of emotional response to the play of human figures, his exceptional openness to the emotional impressions imparted by the human form, in a word, his sensibility. The picture also communicates a sense of values that can transform our lives, if we allow it to, of course. It is this moral thrust, this connection between the aesthetic and the ethical, which bears out Plato's theory of the intimate relationship between the Good and the Beautiful, and makes all the difference between art that merely excites and indulges our need for sensuous stimulation and art that communicates values. The spiritual path is about values too. So it is here that the path of religion and the path of art

join up.

What values does Michelangelo's *The Creation of Man* communicate? For me it communicates the force and value of man's own creativity. It is a celebration of, an exultation in Man as Creator. On the face of it, the painting is, I suppose, an example of art that is, in Sangharakshita's terms, both religious in subject and religious in sentiment (for an exposition of the distinction, cf *The Religion of Art*, pp. 22 ff.). Michelangelo's carrying out of the Pope's commission to paint the vault of the chapel was to illustrate, in the grand manner, stories from the Bible, in the well-established tradition of medieval Gothic artists. This is Michelangelo's version of God creating Adam. But in essence it is a dynamic expression of the creation of man by himself, man the creator, man the artist; it is man moving into the centre of the universe, usurping the centrality long held by the God of the Middle Ages. It represents a return to Classical values.

The God of the title is pagan man triumphant, the human form as idealised by the art of Greece but also infused with a new spirit, the vitality of the Renaissance, man breaking free



Michelangelo

from the shackles of theism and exulting in his glorious humanity. Thus, the figure of God in the fresco is not the projected super-ego of an impotent slave; it is Man Himself, glorying in his own power, profuse in his own creativity, and in the act of imparting that creative vitality to his fellow man. Looking at the picture, one cannot bring to mind such words as 'God made man to know Him, love Him and serve Him, etc.', but such sentiments as those expressed by Keats when he exclaimed: 'That which is creative must create itself'. Whether Michelangelo himself would have seen it at all in such terms is highly unlikely, to say the least. But some of the poems Michelangelo wrote show that he was apparently troubled by doubts as to whether his art had been sinful! Another example of the unfortunate conflict between the *life* and the *work*, which is not uncommon among artistically creative people, for whom religion is not well integrated with their work.

From another point of view, and still in line with our theme of connection, the painting can be seen as an evocation of a powerful encounter, consummated in the dramatic gesture

towards contact, as God reaches out to touch the finger of Adam. Unfortunately this gesture of vital communication has been trivialised by the advertising media these last few years. In his book, *The Courage To Create*, Rollo May sees creativity as essentially encounter, 'the encounter of the intensely conscious human being with his or her world'. Michelangelo's *Creation of Man* depicts the imminent fusion of the two aspects of the creative process, the encounter between God, the powerful creative force, and Adam, the utterly receptive state. Adam reclines on the rock, languid, yes, but strong; there is potency in his beautiful form, potency on the brink of realisation, suggested by the awed response to the creative current. The picture expresses more for me about the verticality of true *Kalyana Mitrata* (spiritual friendship), the inspiration passing, so to speak, from the higher being to the lower, than any other Western painting that I know. The mighty angel of Experience, borne by his attendant spirits on the heavenly winds of inspiration, freely bestows, in a flowing gesture of great beauty, the creative spark on the figure of the aspiring angel which is Adam, slowly

and beautifully emerging from the bonds of earth. The work is moving enough looked at out of context. Considered in the whole context of the Sistine Chapel vault, surrounded by the virile, startled figures of the *ignudi*, the nude youths, and the massive, seemingly sculpted figures of the sybils and prophets, it is even more so; inspiration is dawning in all of them; they are all visibly moved, their attention drawn by some powerful force.

'It is hard', said the Buddha, (in *The Sutra of 42 Sections*), 'to see the end (of the Way) without being moved'. The implication here, as I understand it, is not that it is bad to be moved. To be moved is wholesome, even vital. The danger is in allowing oneself to be carried away (but, yes, better to be carried away than to stay stuck in the prosaic mud-flats!). The Dharma is the Middle Way. Truly religious art is a middle way in that it strikes the right balance between that essential vitality which is the spirit of Dionysius, and the essential limitation by form, which is the spirit of Apollo. The connection, therefore, is a precious, if precarious, balance. The spontaneous vitality of the creat-

ive urge has to be invested with form. Should Dionysius strive to usurp the whole picture, the result is a meaningless chaos of emotional energy. Should the Apollonian, the will to *form*, dominate, the result is empty formalism. The two functions have to be integrated, fused, intimately connected in a single faculty, what Blake has called the sovereign faculty, the Imagination. It is the great connecting faculty, constantly clearing its way to the source of feeling and ever smelting and refining the crude ore of free emotional response to life into beautiful shapes and harmonies. The imagination is the great synthesiser, the faculty whereby we develop the ability to see more and more vital connections between the disparate experiences of life, both outer and inner. At its most highly developed, it is the means by which we can see, perhaps, the true force of the image of Indra's net and the truth of the vision declaimed by the *Avatamsaka Sutra* in which we are told the whole universe can be seen as a vast system of correspondences.

A Buddhist Theatre

by Jayamati

For many years I was a prolific and successful theatre director. In 1975 I reached the pinnacle of my ambition when I was appointed as Artistic Director of the Everyman theatre in Liverpool. I was free to do the plays I wanted with whatever actors I chose. I had long thought of it as an ideal job, but after only six months I decided to resign.

I had worked hard for many years to reach this position, but didn't know what to do now that I had it. My personal love and vision for the theatre had run dry. The idea of being a successful theatre director was not enough to sustain my interest. There was nowhere else in the theatre where I wanted to work so I decided, in a sense, to commit 'career suicide' and leave it altogether.

A period of confusion followed. I knew that there was no going back to theatre until I had re-connected with the creative spark that had made my work interesting in the idealistic early days. Over the years my vision of changing the world through my work had evaporated, and I was not prepared — or even able — to work without it. Something new had to happen.

I dedicated myself to living a simple life, 'far from the madding crowd'. I put theatre behind me and started a furniture removal business. This kept my family and myself alive, and gave me time to get more deeply involved with Buddhism, for at about this time I had discovered the FWBO.

We moved from London to Norwich and worked closely with the Norwich Centre. For six years I hardly saw a play. I ran the 'Oranges' restaurant there and managed an outdoor catering team. My life had regained a sense of sanity and purpose, and with this new found clarity I asked to be ordained into the Western Buddhist Order. I envisaged a future of teaching in Centres, living in communities and working in co-ops. But one day...

I happened to hear a radio production of Shakespeare's *Henry V*. Resisting a puritanical urge to switch it off, I sat down to listen to it instead. It was superb. And my ear was so sharp I was amazed. My capacity to listen to and understand a text had increased. I was astonished by my ability to tune into Shakespeare's imagery. I felt privy to his most private imaginings. A vivid and challenging production of the play materialised in my mind. I saw it very clearly and was shocked.

There was no room for this kind of thing in the life I had assumed would

follow my ordination! Six years of regular meditation practice, Dharma study, spiritual friendship, living in a spiritually oriented community, had made me a sharper, more gifted theatre director. This was not the direction I had thought I was going in at all!

Shortly after the *Henry V* experience I attended a convention at Vinehall, where Sangharakshita dropped another golden bombshell into my lap.

Summing up after Abhaya's talk on Keats and Buddhism, he talked about 'broadening the synthesis'. He declared that when one is confident in the strength of one's spiritual direction, when one has established a strong link with the ideal of Enlightenment, then one is able to broaden out the way in which one responds to that ideal. Interests that were once considered irrelevant do not necessarily remain so. Great writers and artists could be help-mates to the spiritually ambitious. Men of genius have reached higher states of consciousness, and expressed this through their work. Those higher states could be reached by others, through contact with their work.

My imaginative response to *Henry V* had clearly been part of this broadening out process. My imagination had contacted Shakespeare's genius, and that contact was thrilling. Suddenly the spiritual path that lay before me was even richer than I had imagined. My spiritual practice had enabled me to make that kind of imaginative contact, and that contact would, in turn, benefit my own spiritual ambitions.

There was now the chance of a wider field in which I might express myself and my commitment to the Buddhist ideal. It was now a question of courage. I knew I had considerable talent as a director and teacher, and I knew that the use of that talent could be of benefit to me and to those with whom I came into contact. But I did not yet know how to put all this into practice.

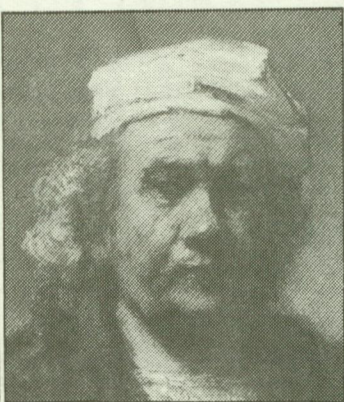
After a lengthy period of solitary retreat, followed by a year spent handing over my responsibilities in Norwich, I took my first step towards what I felt to be the building up of a Buddhist theatre.

I moved back to London and took up residence in my old flat. This was quite a shock. Living alone and making forays to see plays and to meet actors was a completely different way of life. As usual I was being extreme,

taking the drastic step of moving to the periphery of the FWBO orbit after spending so long close to the heart of it. My spiritual life-line at this time was my daily meditation practice. This became increasingly important as a means of maintaining the vision of a drama that celebrated the Dharma.

Something vital and exciting had opened up for me. My response to texts was more profound than it had ever been. Through my spiritual practices I had learned to look and to register. A prelude to Insight is the ability to see, and it was this faculty that I had developed considerably since leaving the theatre. I had learned to concentrate and that concentration had led to penetration. I was able to penetrate plays, literature, art to a greater depth than I had known.

Learning how to communicate honestly with others in the spiritual community had also taught me how to look truthfully at my material and not avoid the realities staring me in the face. Great art has the courage to look at and register that which is seen. Rembrandt's self-portraits provide a fine example of courage and unswerving honesty. In all his sixty-three



Rembrandt

attempts we see a man looking into himself with the most moving honesty. Rembrandt is concerned with the reality which is himself, and by revealing this he is able to touch the reality that is at the core of each of us. No true artist needs to make anything up. It is all there to be seen and comprehended if we can only bring ourselves to look. To absorb the reality that surrounds us we have to be able to accept our own reality. This is why we need our spiritual practices.

Art is the articulation of a perception of something real, and the spiritual life represents the constant expan-

sion of one's ability to perceive what is real. Thus the artist and the spiritual aspirant have the same goal, namely to increase their capacity to comprehend reality.

During my first months in London I gingerly began to explore ways of working. I was cautious of making an ill-considered move, since my earlier experience had taught me to be wary of the pit-falls that beset the theatre world. I saw few people and spent much of my time thinking.

While spending some time at Vajraloka I saw that my work would have to be an expression of my meditation practice. I do the visualisation practice devoted to the Bodhisattva Tara, in which rays of rainbow coloured light are emitted to all beings. Tara is an embodiment of active compassion, and these rays of light symbolise an active, compassionate reaching out to others. My teaching and directing was to be a practical manifestation of the principle. Through my work I would contact many people and it was now clear that in meeting them I was to put the principles of my meditation into practice. This would give me the means to unite my spiritual aspirations with my work. This simple but important realisation gave birth to a commitment — that I would spend perhaps the next fifteen years of my life in spreading Tara's Compassion through the vehicle of a Buddhist theatre.

I decided to spend a year directing in the major drama schools. This would afford me the facilities to direct plays — exercise my ear and eye, dormant 'theatrical muscle' — without exposing me too soon to the rigours of the professional theatre.

I also needed to re-establish my professional standing. Whatever I set up in the future would need money and facilities that are only available to someone with a proven record of producing good work.

I started with a workshop on *Hamlet* at the Dartington College of Arts. It was a tentative beginning — more to do with making positive contact with the students than preparing them for Shakespeare. Rather than producing a complete version of the play, I concentrated on introducing the students to the imagery in the language, working with them individually. It took courage to sacrifice the more theatrical side of the project for the more important needs of the people involved. One nice bonus from this engagement was that one of the lecturers and

a student went on a retreat with the London Buddhist Centre.

My next engagement was to adapt and direct Hans Anderson's *The Snow Queen* at the East 15 Acting School. I had quite a rough ride here, becoming caught up in political storms with some of the administrators. However, I tried to stick to my own brief, which was to remain positive, and to be as helpful and constructive with my students as possible. I survived the pressures and managed to turn out some good work in rather unfavourable conditions. My contact with the students was productive and enjoyable. Out of a company of thirteen, three have since attended the LBC, and seem to have found something in the Dharma that is going to have an important influence on them.

There is no need to go into these situations with an evangelical outlook. I do use my Buddhist name, which intrigues people, and usually they ask questions. By simply working from a skilful basis, the positive influences of the Dharma begin to work.

I am currently engaged in my third project, again at Dartington. This time I am working on a new play which is being written by the lecturer who attended our retreat after my last visit. He was a promising young playwright some years ago, but had stopped writing and then found it impossible to start again. By offering some positive encouragement I have helped him to unblock his writing. It's wonderful to be able to offer people that kind of help, and to know that one has the commitment to sustain it.

My commitment to Buddhism has taught me to appreciate the importance of seeing through whatever is undertaken. One has to be responsible for one's commitments to other people and to oneself. In the Western Buddhist Order it is considered important that we mean what we say, that we say what we mean, and that we do what we say we will do. Our words and our actions are a reflection of ourselves. I thus have a basis of honest communication which I take with me when teaching and directing outside the Movement. People can respect and trust me when I communicate with that kind of integrity.

I shall continue to teach and direct in drama schools until the end of the academic year, and then I shall reassess the situation. I should like to have more contact with the Movement, and with Order members particularly. In fact, the sooner I am able to start activities within the Movement the better. I have argued here that the spiritual aspirant is uniquely qualified to respond to the demands of great drama. My experience of running weekend study-groups in the Movement, on Shakespeare, and an

'extended study of Sophocles' *Oedipus Rex*, has taught me that whatever people in the FWBO lack in experience and technical expertise, they compensate for by their dedication and commitment to the work in hand. Their basis of truthful communication makes a meaningful dialogue possible between those involved in a corporate artistic pursuit, which theatre by its very nature has to be.

People in the Movement are certainly less confused than those I am working with outside. I have noticed that those who are practising the spiritual life are more receptive to new influences than those who are not.

restaurant, with views across a canal, that would provide a meeting place for those interested in the arts, where ideas could be exchanged and developed.

The building would house a 'Theatre-in-Education' team that would specialise in taking tailor-made programmes or plays to schools. There would also be classes in drama for the local youths. The unemployed youngsters are a particular area where a great deal of good work could be done. Drama is an excellent medium for stimulating young imaginations. The school and youth work would give an introduction to the workings

company, and writing specifically for it. It is worth noting that many of the greatest playwrights — Moliere, Shakespeare, Chekhov, for instance — have written for a specific theatre company. The training of actors is an area I have much experience in and will prove the least of our difficulties.

Productions would be performed at the Arts Centre first and then toured to other places. As the Company's standard and confidence rose, their work would be exposed to a wider audience. I foresee visits to international festivals, where our work could have an enormous impact.

In short, I dream of the most exciting theatre company in the world, and I do not think I am being unrealistic. It could take many years for the FWBO's potential to be released in this way, but the ingredients are all sown into the fabric of the Movement.

The company that I dream of will be the fore-runner of others that will establish themselves in other places, just as FWBO centres have proliferated. I see the Arts Centres spreading as directors, writers, and actors are trained to go off and set up their own companies.

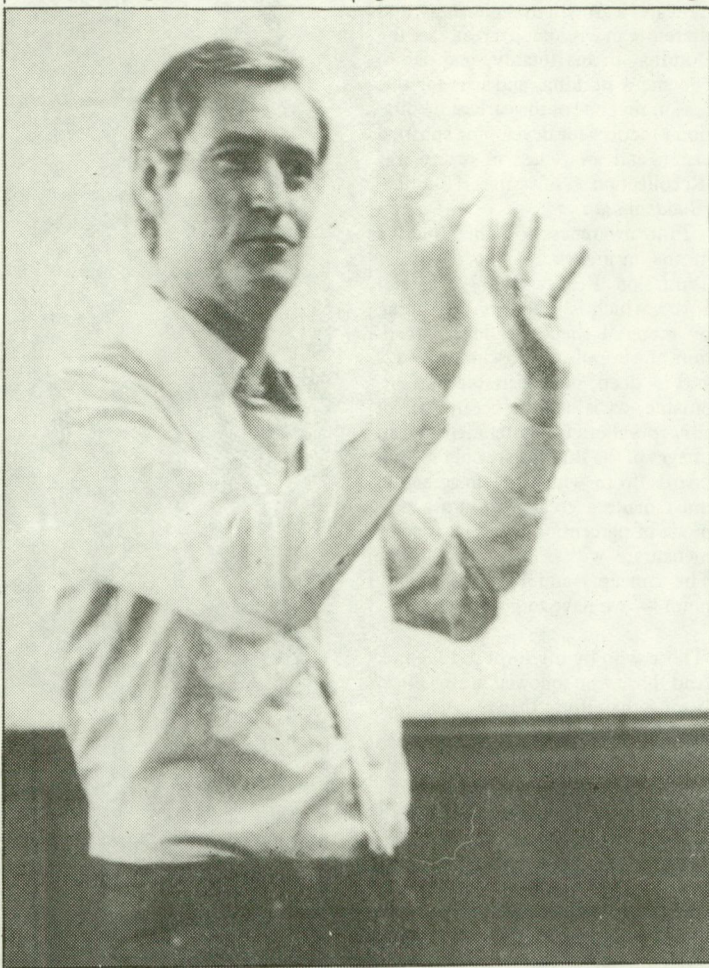
The work of these centres need not be limited to Drama. Other forms, such as Dance, and Music would be developed as people with interest and knowledge of these fields came forward. Once a creative urgency is established it can breed the most interesting forms of expression. A cultural nucleus where the interaction between artistic disciplines and spiritual ideals could beget some extraordinary cultural changes.

The Dharma always influences its 'host' cultures. Throughout its history Buddhism has adapted itself to the culture of its host nation, and then gradually transforms that culture, so that the ideal of Enlightenment permeates the everyday lives of the people within it. It is a process which cannot be rushed.

The Dharma has now reached the West, and the Dharma will have an impact on Western culture. No doubt members of the Western Buddhist Order, and those connected with the Order will be pioneering cultural changes that will eventually transform our Western culture. We must not underestimate the potency of the task that we are engaged in. Revolutions do not start tomorrow, they are born today.

We can afford to take our embryonic artistic pursuits very seriously, for they are the forerunners of a cultural revolution in the West.

Although I find myself dreaming about a great future, I know I am not fantasising a nonsense. With dedication and commitment, dreams are made to come true.



Jayamati

They are prepared to abandon their pre-conceptions sooner, and are more adept at getting to the heart of a piece of writing. They are excellent material around which an extraordinary theatre company can evolve.

I dream, of course. In my most frequent dream I see a Performance Arts Centre, situated near a flourishing FWBO centre. It seats 200 people and affords a flexible working space. It will serve as a permanent base for a theatre company comprised of committed Buddhists, where rehearsals and workshops are carried out, and where studio-scale performances could be performed. I see a vegetarian

of the local community, and a knowledge of how to relate to that community.

My main concern would be the training of a performing company. A group of committed Buddhists could achieve a great deal if they were to use this art form as an expression of their commitment. I believe that such a company would unleash the genius of great writers. A courageous Buddhist theatre company could provide the spark that would detonate the power, insight, and beauty of great writers, and make their work comprehensible to the world at large.

I also see writers attached to this

'Then the Licchavi Vimalakirti entered into a concentration, and performed a miraculous feat such that he reduced the universe Abhirati to a minute size, and took it with his right hand and brought it into this Saha universe.'

The Holy Teaching of Vimalakirti.

For those who are seriously interested in Buddhist meditation there will come a time when they will encounter the term 'visualization'. No other area of Buddhist meditation seems quite so mysterious as this one, with its many forms to be visualized. Some of these forms, such as that of the human, historical Buddha, are easier to comprehend, but others we encounter range from the divinely beautiful and androgynous to the downright terrifying, bloody and demonic. Visualization practice, probably more than any other type of Buddhist meditation, is directly concerned with arousing and unleashing the creative forces of our higher imaginative faculty.

Before explaining in more detail the specifics of visualization practice it is worth making some general points:

The Dharma (i.e. the teaching of the Buddha) comes to us through two different languages — through the language of concepts, which speaks to our thinking faculty, and through that of images, which speaks to our emotions. When the Buddha taught, not only did he say that Enlightenment consists in insight into the three characteristics of phenomena: that they are impermanent, involved in suffering, and unsubstantial (i.e. without a 'self'), but he also said that it is 'the island amidst the floods', 'the harbour of refuge' and 'the holy city', to use just three of the images contained within the Pali scriptures.

For our efforts at the spiritual life to be crowned with success not only do we need to be intellectually convinced by Buddhism, but we also need to find it emotionally attractive. We need both Truth and Beauty. Images, especially beautiful images, involve our emotions in the spiritual life and thereby make it possible for us actually to live it.

However even more than what he spoke of, whether in concepts or in images, the Buddha's message was manifest in what he *was* and what he looked like. He was after all the 'end result' of his own teaching. Throughout the scriptures we can read of the impact upon people of the sheer beauty of the Buddha's appearance. In the *Surangama Sutra*, for example, Ananda, when asked by the Buddha what it was that first impressed him so much in the Buddhist way of life and influenced him to give up worldly pursuits, replies that it was the very appearance of the Buddha himself which was 'so fine, tender and brilliant, transparent as a crystal and with an aureole of translucently pure

and golden brightness'.

So too it is with us, albeit on a much lower level, we develop as a result of 'fellowship with the lovely', (1), with the spiritually beautiful. Through beauty we too can perceive truth.

True beauty, the beauty of a Buddha, is synonymous with egolessness. An increased capacity to perceive and appreciate such beauty indicates a growth in egolessness, and therefore in wisdom. To really see the Buddha, in his totality, one has to become a Buddha, and it is for this reason that one of the earliest meditation practices for developing spiritual vision and awareness of reality was 'Recollection of the Buddha' (*Buddhamusati*).

Full awareness of the Buddha means awareness of his 'Body of Truth' or 'Reality Body' (*Dharmakaya*), which is 'free from reckoning by material shape, feeling, perception, the impulses, consciousness', (2) and is 'deep, immeasurable, unfathomable, as is a great ocean'. (3) All concepts about Enlightenment and all images of the Buddha are only springboards from which the imagination must make a great leap into a new mode of perception, one that is commensurate with Buddhahood itself. The concepts and the images only point — we have to go beyond.

'Those who by my form did see me,
And those who followed me by voice,
Wrong the efforts they engaged in,
Me those people will not see.

From the Dharma one should see the
Buddhas,
From the Dharma bodies comes their
guidance,
Yet Dharma's true nature cannot be
discerned,
And no one can be conscious of it as
an object.' (4)

To see the Buddhas in this sense is the ultimate purpose of visualization practice. In visualization we rise above the historical plane and see the archetypal forms of the Buddhas; we also see their spiritual sons — the Bodhisattvas — who appear as youthful, shining princes and who are adorned with glittering, celestial jewels and tiaras, and delicate rainbow silks. They are enthroned on fully open lotus flowers and surrounded by aureoles of light, and by rainbows. From them shine forth intersecting rays of glorious brightness which fill the universe with love and compassion, and with wisdom and peace.

But, our language is quantitative and

VISUAL

by D



Avalokiteshvara

from it we cannot derive quality. What these lovely forms point to, their true archetypes, defy description.

'There is a degree of beauty that flies so high that no net of words or no snare of colour can hope to capture it.' (5)

Nevertheless in Tantric Buddhism there is considered to be an hermetic

correspondence ('as above, so below') between the qualitative and the quantitative, so that all the different Buddha and Bodhisattva forms align with different aspects of Enlightenment. In visualization, through the faculty of the imagination, we are able to apprehend reality through the medium of the Buddha and Bodhisattva forms.

IZATION

avaraja



Chintamani

Visualization practice aims at nothing less than Buddhahood, therefore it should not be approached in a casual or desultory way. Firstly one should have 'Gone for Refuge', that is, wholeheartedly become a Buddhist. Secondly one should have been initiated into the practice concerned by one's teacher, and the form, usually chosen for one, should

correspond to an unintegrated spiritual aspect of oneself. One could in principle take any figure to visualize that one finds inspiring, but given human shortcomings a traditional figure such as a Buddha or a Bodhisattva is best. This is because it is way beyond one already and in it one contemplates the projected spiritual aspect — the wisdom or

compassion or whatever — at its highest.

Bearing all this in mind, what does one actually do in a visualization practice? Though they vary in detail, in general there is a standard pattern that most practices follow.

Firstly one chants the 'Going for Refuge' formula, one's moral precepts, and one's vow to help all beings to gain Enlightenment. One can also perform other devotional exercises such as prostrations. In the resulting positive emotional state one starts to generate loving-kindness, compassion, sympathetic joy and equanimity towards all living beings. After this one meditates to break down the hard, opaque ego-sense and to experience a more open dimension to one's being.

In this very positive and open state one starts the visualization proper. Out of one's imagination one conjures up an infinite blue sky. This represents a great spiritual purity, not a moral purity but a metaphysical one, that asserts a non-difference between subject and object, and it further represents a loosening up of all one's rigid categories. It should be experienced as a very deep opening up, and as a transcendence of the empirical ego. This blue sky is *Śūnyata* (Emptiness) or the Unconditioned, as distinct from the Conditioned. It points towards the Absolute or One Mind and it represents purified thinking. This is Truth.

Then the form is invoked. Perhaps it is Avalokiteśvara (the Lord who looks down), the Bodhisattva of Compassion — brilliant white, like 'sunlight on fresh snow', bearing lotus flowers, a jewel and a crystal rosary. Or Manjughosa (Gentle Voice), the Bodhisattva of Wisdom — golden yellow and with golden eyes, sixteen years old, wielding a flaming sword and holding to his heart a wisdom text. Or Tara (Star), who is soft, delicate and feminine, who is green — the Bodhisattva who embodies love and tenderness. The form is seen as a coalescing of intersecting rays of light, and is encircled by haloes and rainbows. Stage by stage the visualized form is magically created out of the depths of the blue sky, each stage accompanied by the appropriate invocations, eulogies and mantras. This is *Rupa* (Form), the Conditioned, at its most rarefied and sublime, and it represents purified emotion. This is Beauty.

One then sees *Śūnyata* and *Rupa* as non-different. One does this by seeing the figure as more and more brilliant and luminous, as more and more diaphanous and integrated with the blue sky. In the visualization one is seeing the Conditioned from the perspective of the Unconditioned, and seeing it transfigured. When this actually happens the quantitative vision

is transformed into a qualitative one and insight arises. The visualization has then brought about the highest possible integration and development of thought and emotion, of Truth and Beauty. It has given birth to the Imagination, in its highest possible sense, which is *Prajna* (Transcendental Wisdom).

Slowly one allows the form to dissolve back into the blue sky and one quietly sits, absorbing the experience: then one allows the sky to fade away. One then dedicates any merit gained to the benefit of all beings and resolves to take whatever insight one may have acquired into one's everyday life, and into the world.

One then starts to move through the world and function in it, viewing it and oneself in a less rigid and utilitarian way. One no longer lives solely on the stage of history but begins to dwell also in the realm of the Divine Imagination, amongst the archetypes of Wisdom and Compassion. This does not in any way inhibit one's capacity to function effectively in the utilitarian mundane but in fact infinitely enhances it, because one sees through the Conditioned and sees it as it is — relative and not absolute.

The whole world and everything in it — each living being, each flower, each wave on each lake, each jewel, tree, mountain and so on — is seen as reflecting some aspect of the Imagination. The whole mundane universe is seen to coexist with and to be co-extensive with the Pure Land or Dharma Realm, which is the Imagination. Everything one sees one delights in because it speaks the Dharma in its essential mode, that of quality, and when each thing communicates its message...

'It is deep, commanding, distinct, clear, pleasant to the ear, touching the heart, delightful, sweet, pleasant and one never tires of hearing it, it always agrees with one and one likes to hear it, like the words

'Impermanent, peaceful, calm and not-self'.'(6)

Many of these thoughts will have had a familiar ring to them, this is because they are not mine, but are the Venerable Sangharakshita's, therefore I would like to express my deepest gratitude for having been given access to them.

1. Some Sayings of the Buddha — F.L. Woodward. -
2. Majjhima-Nikaya I. 488.
3. *ibid*.
4. Diamond Sutra — trans. by Edward Conze.
5. In Search of England — H.V. Morton.
6. Buddhist Scriptures — Edward Conze.

New Centre for Glasgow



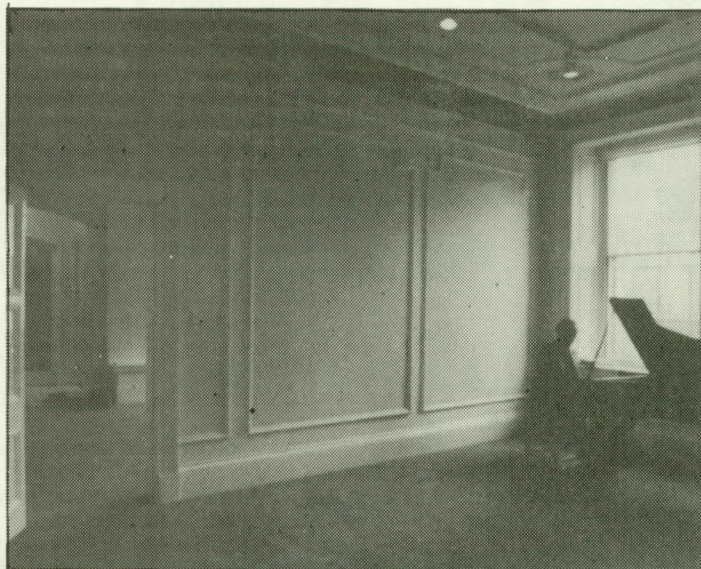
The shrine room

In a remote hostel beside the wind-whipped waters of a loch in the north of Scotland, sixteen men saw the new year in with an intensive meditation retreat. Although stormy gusts threatened continuously to burst the windows and engulf them all, the retreatants, led by Ajita, enjoyed a very good two weeks - the perfect preparation for the adventure that awaited them back in Glasgow.

For on their return, most of the retreatants joined up with a team of workers from Glasgow, Norfolk, and London, who had

been working night and day to bring the new Sauchiehall St Centre to completion on Jan. 20th. As had been the case with the opening of the London Buddhist Centre, some four years earlier, the last weeks and days of preparation saw a frenzy of enthusiastic and dedicated work, as carpets were laid, walls painted and repainted, and as the last fittings were installed.

It has been reported that when the last pile of builder's debris was swept away, even these who had worked on it



Tuning the harpsichord for opening night



Sauchiehall St. site

were astonished by the beauty of what they had created together. Indeed, all those who have visited the Centre - either for the Open Day, when, among other things, a baroque ensemble filled the place with music, or since then, report that the Centre exceeds all expectations. Only Padmapani, who largely designed it all, remains blasé. 'It has turned out just as it was supposed to', was his comment at a recent Order meeting.

Since the opening it has become clear that the new Centre, with its very full pro-

gramme, marks a new departure, not only for Glasgow, but for Scotland, and even the UK. Media interest has been keen. As well as newspaper, radio, and TV coverage of the opening, there are two substantial television features about the Centre going into production in February and March.

The Order team, now strengthened with the addition of Amoghavajra, Amoghavira, and Jinavamsa, who were ordained in Tuscany, is looking forward to the coming year with some excitement.

TUSCANY II

"Our actions are like ships which we may watch set out to sea, and not know when or with which cargo they will return to port."

I came across this observation, made by the novelist Iris Murdoch, at the beginning of November 1982. A few days earlier, on the first of November, thirty or so men had celebrated Sangha day far from their native shores, within sight of the glistening, silver-blue Mediterranean Sea. For eighteen of them, including myself, it was a unique Sangha day: the occasion of our Public Ordinations into the Western Buddhist Order. Each one of us, at different times and in different parts of the world, had set going a complex series of actions, like fleets of hopeful ships. Now, against all the odds, all our ships had found a safe haven together; in this particular place among the billowing grey-green hills of Tuscany, and on this particular sunny afternoon.

This sunny afternoon was the high point of a three-month sojourn in the seventeenth century Italian home, once a Catholic monastery, of an English opera-lover. While he is resident there, in the opera season, the music of Verdi and Mozart can be heard wafting through the surrounding olive groves. But for the past two autumns, passing ships, tortoises and Italian hunters might have been surprised to catch the strains of Buddhist devotional chanting echoing round the old cloisters. Indeed, the first of many transformations effected within the old monastery was the construction and dedication of a mandala in the cloisters. At its centre, an old well made an ideal foundation for a beautiful shrine to the 'archetypal' Buddha Vairocana, surmounted by an eight-spoked wheel and an iridescent flaming drop. The dedication of the mandala, led by Sangharakshita, preceded by

silent circumambulations of the cloisters, was a powerful and magical occasion. I was deeply affected by the ceremony, and as we circumambulated again afterwards, I noticed for the first time the striking remains, invisible to me before, of frescoes around the walls. It was as if the friendly spirits of the building had at last been awakened from a long sleep.

You will have guessed that the friendly spirits were to witness an Ordination retreat. However, the word 'retreat' does not fully reveal the nature of the programme; a 'Pre-ordination Intensive Course' was its official title. A number of men who had asked for ordination into the Western Buddhist Order were invited to Tuscany so that they could receive an intensive period of preparation for the momentous decision to Go For Refuge to the Buddha, the Dharma, and the Sangha. This preparation could be described as a three-fold process. Firstly, meditation and puja, secondly study, and thirdly Friendship.

A steady programme of meditation gradually deepened over the first two months, becoming most intense in the week of the private ordinations - the last week in October - when the greater part of each day was spent in silence. Towards the end of the course, an innovative way of sitting, liked by most, was adopted in the shrine room. The innovation (actually an existing tradition in many Buddhist monasteries) was to sit in straight rows, facing each other across a central aisle with the shrine at one end. The presence of a clear aisle gave participants the opportunity to perform full-length prostrations before the shrine during pujas. Many people took advantage of this opportunity, inspired no doubt by the exceptionally beautiful shrines created lovingly by Suvajra, Buddha-

palita and others. Every six days a Special Day was celebrated, devoted to one of the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas whose mantras are chanted in the Sevenfold Puja. On each special day a new shrine was created, and the beauty of these colourful shrines was a highlight of the course.

Before the Ordinations, study consisted of a systematic exploration of the Buddha's Noble Eightfold Path, using transcripts of Sangharakshita's talks on this theme as source material. We studied in groups and then brought any unresolved

by the near ideal conditions for spiritual progress. This was particularly noticeable when people gave their two talks, with everybody else as audience, one near the beginning of the course and one near the end. Without exception the second talk was far more confident, fluent and uplifting than the first. It was not just the names that had changed; new and shining beings shined out from behind superficial similarities of dress or hairstyle to the old ones! For me, 'other people' was the greatest of many fine presents I was given



The participants

questions to Sangharakshita. In this short article, not even a hint can be given of the breadth and depth of ground explored in these question and answer sessions. However, one point which confronted us again and again was the habitual uncertainty and superficiality in our use of words, which impeded our attempts to frame meaningful questions. After the ordinations, Sangharakshita led successive groups through *The Diamond Sutra*, *The Buddha's Law Among the Birds*, (a Tibetan text) and the *Satipatthana Sutta*.

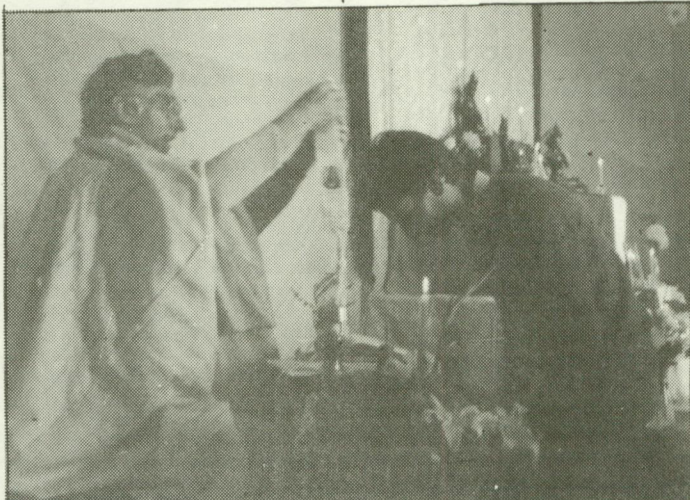
The development of friendship in general and of individual friendships in particular is a far more difficult set of experiences to describe than either meditation or study. Yet for most of us this was arguably the deepest and most indelible impression left after three months spent together in Tuscany. In several different ways the whole course was a developing crescendo of encounters with other people: with their minds, with their feelings. Three months of close contact is time enough for new lifelong friendships to germinate, for old friendships to blossom. And three months is time enough in which to see, and to be inspired by, crucial and liberating changes in people's personalities, induced

during the course. If I had to single out one such living 'gift', it would be Sangharakshita himself, who not only gave us the Dharma, but also the Sangha in the form of our welcome into the Western Buddhist Order.

Our welcome, on that sunny afternoon of the public ordinations, was accompanied by a story of eighteen previous members of the Sangha. They were not freshly ordained Dharmacharis, but members of the Aryasangha, the fellowship of those on the transcendental path. They were eighteen Arahants, all Enlightened disciples of the Buddha. Sangharakshita described how, using their magical powers, they are said to have flown off from North Eastern India to different parts of the world, to live and teach among other peoples as embodiments of the Buddha's Dharma.

So the ships of our actions had found a refuge in an ochre stone building on a Tuscan hillside. Since then we have dispersed again to different parts of Britain, even to other parts of the world. But perhaps we now have a memory of a glimmer of a glimpse of what it would be like to fly, unimpeded, through limitless space, like the eighteen magical Arahants.

Ratnaprabha



Khemavira receives his kesa

Britain

LBC

16

One of the developments at the LBC over the last session has been the forming of our Centre team. This now consists of ten people working full-time on Centre administration, care-taking, treasury and reception work. As well as having a meeting once a week team members meditate together in the morning before going off to their respective duties. Inevitably, with so many people getting to know each other in a work situation, there are personality clashes and difficulties. What is encouraging, however, is that there seems to be a real determination to work through these things and to harmonise into an efficient team. Prajnananda has joined the team with the task of turning our under-used annexe at 119 Roman Road into a lively yoga and massage centre.

Of course, we still rely on other Order members for a lot of help in running the Centre and would particularly like to highlight two people's efforts. Dhammarati used his winter break from art college to have a good look at our publicity and advertising and has come up with some new ideas on our whole approach to putting the LBC on the map. He enlisted the help of one of the Friends who had attended his recent Covent Garden meditation course, a woman with some experience of journalism and public relations work. Vairocana, who recently became the local mens' Mitra Convenor, has been expanding the facilities open to men mitras by introducing a class every Sunday morning.

We are also pleased to welcome no less than six new Order members: Amogacitta, Khemavira, Khemananda, and Harshaprabha home from Tuscany, and two women: Jayaprabha and Jayapushpa, both ordained in January.

This winter we held our open retreat in a new venue, a school in Battle. This was very successful and the new place proved itself well suited for such retreats. There's a separate report elsewhere in the Newsletter.

The main activity of the Phoenix Housing Co-op recently has been the continuing work on two houses in a street very close to the Centre. These houses have a 'life' of at least four years with the possibility of more or less permanent rental, so they represent a departure from the rather unsatisfactory but necessary short-life housing which has been the mainstay of Phoenix since its birth. Unfortunately the work has taken a lot longer than was originally hoped, but the houses are

almost finished, and will be a very worthwhile addition. They will house two communities of women. The big issue now is how to keep on expanding into long-term housing and with this in mind the work team has expanded, taking on the people who were, until recently, 'Friends Building Service' and one or two voluntary workers. It is hoped that as soon as the work on the two houses is finished, the team will be moving on to another similar project in the area.

W. LONDON

In the last Facets report on West London, the major point to be made was that the running of the Baker Street Centre marked a big step forwards in activities, but that there were still problems to be solved before the Centre could be said to be fully realising its potential.

The coming of a new year often seems to be accompanied by some change in fortune, or



shift in attitude, and so it seems with the advent of 1983. A more thoroughgoing and systematic approach to developing the Centre, especially in the area of publicity, is beginning to evolve. The Centre needs a team of full-time Order members and mitras to run it, rather than the skeletal basis which has prevailed until now. It will take time to achieve this, but a step in the right direction has been taken by the return to West London, freshly ordained, of Shantiprabha, to involve himself fully in the development of the Centre.

Change is afoot in other areas too. A larger and stronger men's community is urgently needed, and a campaign to find both this and a new and larger women's community is getting underway. On the business side of activities, two of the most experienced members of the Friends Foods team have recently left the venture, leaving room for newer people to take initiative and responsibility. Here, too, the new year ushers in the sound of change, and

anticipation of the future as an opportunity to be grasped.

BRIGHTON

After a lot of thought and consideration we have decided to close our vegetarian restaurant 'Sunrise'. The reasons were many and varied but mostly financial. So on Saturday 18th December we said goodbye to all our customers with a special evening meal. This is not to be the end of Right Livelihood in Brighton though, because, following the recent three-month pre-ordination retreat in Tuscany, Brighton now has three new Order members: Guna-pala (ex-Bernie Tisch), Buddhapalita (ex-Bipin Patel), and Silaratna (ex-Greg Harman) who, together with a couple of other men, are to form Brighton's new Right Livelihood business, a building and decorating team. We worked in this line for several months in Brighton last summer and it proved to be a very lucrative form of business. So by the time you read

three! One is a follow-up on the last course, one a six-week daytime course introducing Buddhism, and the other is another ten-week 'Introduction to Buddhism'. These courses, combined with weekly beginners' meditation classes at the Brighton Buddhist Centre, the Brighton Natural Health Centre, and Sussex University, (as well as daily meditation sessions for the university students,) a growing Regulars class, and Surata's ever popular Yoga classes, should prove to keep the Centre buzzing with activity. With the three new Dharma-Charis from Tuscany plus Surata (also back from Tuscany), and the four existing Dharmacharis, the South Coast at long last has a strong Order presence capable of sustaining such a hive of activity.

NORWICH

The beginners class continues to be well attended, and over the autumn we had two very successful beginners' retreats. Regulars' classes fluctuate considerably in numbers, but the one time when everyone came together was for our Sangha Day celebrations. We led into the celebrations with a weekend retreat, and on Sangha Day itself the mitra reaffirmation ceremonies, and a mitra ceremony, were incorporated into a very full, rich and joyful puja. The celebrations continued on the following afternoon with a basic puja and the making of the offerings from the Bodhicaryavatara, involving the children of Order members and mitras.

Saddhaloka ran a successful five week Dharma course, and such courses, together with our Monday evening taped lecture-discussion-meditation class, and our mitra study groups, mean the Centre is being very fully used.

We have been running a lunch-time meditation class at the University of East Anglia, under the auspices of a Buddhist society founded there by friends, and these will continue in the new year.

At the end of December Abhaya organised a very successful evening of poetry and music, with poetry readings by himself and Ananda, and music by Sthir-ananda (guitar and vocals) and Chintamani (guitar), and by two Friends Dave (flute) and Vicky (violin), who played Irish jigs and reels.

Activities at the Yoga Studio, where Brian Platts and Andree Ratzner run Yoga classes, Saddhaloka massage courses, and where Ian Wray works as a consultant psychologist, have been rudely interrupted by a break-in and a deliberately started fire, which left the premises unusable. We hope to see them redecorated and our activities there thriving again by early February.

this the business is hopefully well under way.

Almost immediately following the close of 'Sunrise', the rooms above the restaurant floor were converted to make a small community for three men who have now moved in.

After successfully obtaining planning permission from the Brighton Borough Council, the landlords of the property we were hoping to make into a new Centre (see last Facets, Newsletter 55) have decided to lease the building to another bidder. This is not really very much of a setback, since we have already started work on converting the garage at the Brighton Buddhist Centre into a large new reception room. This will provide us with a great deal more room and should enable us to hold two classes at the same time.

Public classes are in fact becoming a very important aspect of our activities down here. Devaraja's course 'An Introduction to Buddhism' that ran last session proved to be so successful that we are now running

BRISTOL

The session ending with Christmas 1982 was one of the most successful yet in the activities of FWBO Bristol. Apart from the usual regulars' evening and study group, both taking place at the community, we held two nine-week courses. The first, advertised to the public and held in a hired room in the city, attracted ten beginners, while the other, taking place at the university, was attended by upwards of fifty people for each of the four weeks dealing with meditation, and then by a consistent thirty to thirty-five for the ensuing five weeks of the Dharma course.

We also held three very successful beginners' day retreats at the community, with sixteen to seventeen people on each one. These were largely for the benefit of those attending the courses, although we are contacted by a steady, if small, number of people who hear of us by word of mouth or from other Centres. Undoubtedly this will increase as our presence in Bristol becomes more widely recognised.

Despite the unequalled success of last year's courses, the Spring session of 1983 will be a quieter one, and the energies of the team will be directed toward establishing some kind of livelihood with which to finance any further developments in our activities. We will be holding just one nine-week course, under the auspices of the University Student Union, which will be open to students and public alike, accompanied by several day and weekend retreats. Meanwhile, although hampered by our small numbers, we shall continue to pursue our long-term goal of finding a permanent city centre venue of our own, for our classes and courses.

CROYDON

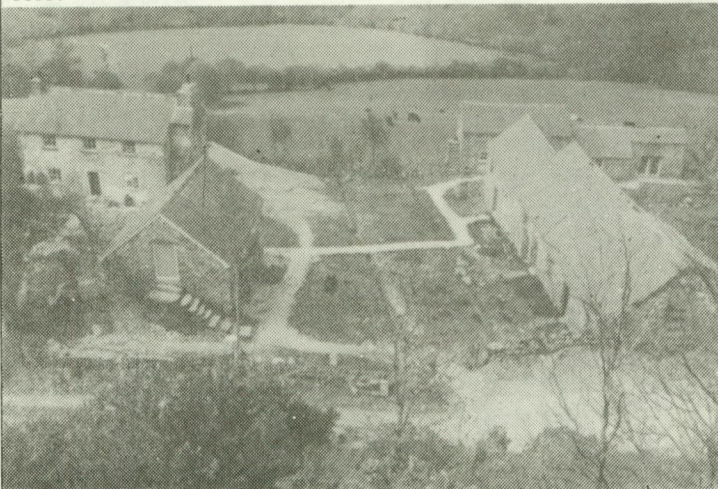
The beginning of 1983 saw dramatic changes for the FWBO in Croydon. When we moved into our present building in the High Street, two years ago, our first aim was to re-establish our prosperous co-operative business: the wholefood shop and vegetarian restaurant, while maintaining our centre activities at Aryatara. All our reserves of capital and manpower were put into this task, and it worked.

Since then our businesses have prospered and the profits used first to redecorate Aryatara community, but more recently to realise a vision for our High Street premises that has been cherished since we first moved there.

This February we open the first phase of the Croydon Buddhist Centre. We'd been holding classes in cramped quarters upstairs for almost a year, but now we have a large spacious light room at the rear of the

restaurant. The conversion work done to create this space (which also included the installation of w.c.s and storage space) means we can expand our Dharma activities here in the heart of Croydon to include lunchtime & evening meditation classes, regular and festive pujas, more elaborate talks, yoga and relaxation classes, retreats and special events.

In addition this opening marks another significant development. We are broadening the scope of our approach to the public at large and establishing 'Education Through Art', an arts charity that will stand literally alongside our Buddhist Centre and trading activities. We hope that a regular programme of films, plays, music and poetry recitals, lectures on the arts, slide shows, dance classes and exhibitions and other events, will provide a bridge for the general public between our shop & restaurant, which have always been friendly and pleasing, and our Dharma activities. All these various aspects will be found under one roof.



Vajraloka

As its name indicates, "Education Through Art" will introduce people to the artist's vision, to the subject of individual development in secular terms, and to the search for truth and beauty.

Later this year the second phase will be completed to provide a large reception room in a conservatory area, and an adjoining garden. By then we will have a regular programme of Dharma and arts events that will take maximum advantage of the space.

PADMALOKA

Apart from providing retreat facilities for men in the movement, Padmaloka is now providing retreats for newcomers to Buddhism, such as the Basic Buddhism courses and open retreats for Yoga, T'ai Chi, Karate, and Judo enthusiasts. A glance at our calendar will show just how busy we are! In 1982 we saw numerous complete beginners on retreat, and most have appreciated very much the experience of a Padma-

loka retreat. Our aim in 1983 is to advertise more widely, and to maintain the links already established with our visitors.

Our planned activities also include a six week Introduction to Meditation course in Diss, starting in February.

Our improvements continue as finance and labour allow, and what was once a stable is now four dormitories, (two still incomplete) and what was a woodshed is fast becoming a toilet and shower block. In April and May we will be having seventy guests on each of the Spring Events. We have an enormous amount of preparation to do for these.

We have five newly ordained men in the community, Ratnaprabha and Khemapala have returned from their Tuscany retreat, and Cittapala and Silabhadra have joined us from Tuscany, and will be transcribing recordings of Bhante's seminars for publication. Pranasiddhi has joined us from Tuscany and will be engaged in literary and Dharma

The first few months have seen the formation of two university Buddhist groups - at Keele and at Liverpool. Last October we started taking a regular weekly meditation class at Keele and this year we will be holding a Buddhism course there. In November Ratnaguna gave a talk on meditation and taught the Mindfulness of Breathing practice to fifteen students at the first meeting of the Liverpool group. Order members will be visiting frequently this term to give talks and to teach meditation.

Other events of the last three months included a retreat in Shrewsbury, organised by the Shrewsbury Buddhist Group, and attended by thirty-six people from Buddhist groups from all over the north-west of England and Wales, including students from Keele. A "Metta Weekend" in which Ratnaguna led study on the Karaniya Metta Sutta, is reported elsewhere.

Lastly, Ratnaguna delivered a talk to 900 boys at the senior assembly of the Manchester Grammar School. After the talk he spoke to eighty sixth-formers, which was followed by a very lively question and answer session.

We welcome Suvajra back from Tuscany and look forward to an eventful year ahead.

VAJRALOKA

There have been some changes in the community over the past months. Vajramati has moved to London to work with Windhorse Associates, the graphic design co-op, and Ruciraketu and Mike Howes, both from East London have moved in.

Vajraloka is becoming an increasingly popular place for those who wish to take advantage of the Christmas lull to make headway with their meditation practice. For the two weeks around the Christmas weekend, there were up to fifteen people staying, filling the community to capacity.

A major role that Vajraloka is playing these days is to act as a base for 'visualisation retreats'. In early February a Vajrasattva visualisation retreat was held for those Order members who have taken up this practice at their ordination.

Thanks to a very generous gift from a friend, work can now begin on another conversion job. The area beneath the dormitory, which is presently being used as a tool storage space, is now to be turned into two bedrooms. This means that there will be six single rooms available to people staying with the community, as well as the dormitory space in use on larger retreats. The work on this conversion is expected to take quite a long time, since work periods of two hours a day are the only occasions when the job can be done.

MANCHESTER

In the last Newsletter the men's community in Manchester was said to be "bursting at the seams". Since then it has burst, with three men leaving 'Grdhrakuta' to form a second community. They have decided to call the community 'Udyana', the name of Padmasambhava's Pure Land.

Since the Centre was started in Manchester only one or two women have become closely involved. Recently however, more women have stayed on the scene and five of them have started meeting together. They plan to meet regularly to meditate, study and go on retreat together, and they hope that women Order members will visit to meet them and take study.

Padmaloka Retreat

Simon Turnbull

I arrived at Padmaloka a London casualty, only superficially thawed out by an invigorating cycle ride from Norwich. In fact I felt rather apprehensive as this was to be my first long men's retreat. Although I knew I needed it, I wasn't sure what it was going to be, or whether I would enjoy 'it'.

As it was, my first impressions of the retreat, and of the team helping Vessantara, were of a spring - a source of great inspiration, energy and joy, bubbling up so strongly amongst people who had recently returned from Tuscany that I couldn't have registered its effect even if I had wanted to! The main

feature of the communication exercises over the first few days was a rapid increase in laughter as barriers were dropped and everyone became more open and friendly. In Surata's Yoga classes we felt the 'bliss' of getting to know our bodies, finding out exactly how much one can do to oneself whilst still being able to laugh.

In contrast, Khemapala's karate sessions were no-nonsense hard work, and the first one marked the beginning of the retreat proper for me. It felt as if I was getting into gear properly - contacting a new source of energy which I had only dimly been aware of and could not reach until Khemapala showed the way.

During the first week of the retreat the emphasis was upon 'morality', and featured some excellent talks about the precepts. Two points which struck me particularly were the emphasis on using the positive precepts to combat our bad habits as exemplified in the negative formulation of the precepts, and the enormous amount of elaboration which any of the precepts can undergo before its usefulness and significance are exhausted. Vessantara's talk on 'Truthfulness', following a tape lecture by Bhante on the 'Spiritual Significance of Confession' lent a lot more importance to afternoon walks with Order members.

For the second week of the retreat the theme was meditation. New people arrived, others left, and with an increase in the amount of meditation the atmosphere changed. Periods of silence became longer and the days began to pass in a magical way, each one marked by simple, pleasurable events - a smile over the meal table, new flowers in the shrine room, the waning moon in a clear starry sky. An image from Khemananda's talk about metta stays with me;

seeing oneself as an acorn, trying to grow into an enormous, majestic oak tree, whilst still realising that as acorns we are perfect and beautiful.

With the rampaging elephants of our minds at least a little more firmly tethered by the rope of mindfulness, we began the third week, dedicated to 'wisdom'. We replaced some of the meditation with study, which I think everyone found both stimulating and fruitful. Highlights of this week were talks by Ratnaprabha and Subhuti on the five Buddhas and Manjushri respectively and, of course, the penultimate puja. Suvajra constructed a mandala of the five Buddhas and each of us made offerings either to Akshobya, Amitabha, Amoghasiddhi, or Ratnasambhava. Everybody was moved by the spirit and beauty of this puja.

The following day, after the 'last lunch', we said our good-byes. I couldn't feel sorry to leave the friends I'd made, since having bathed in the refreshing spring of the Padmaloka retreat I was looking forward to getting back to London and starting the new year renewed and refreshed.

LBC Retreat

The London Buddhist Centre
Winter Retreat '82

*It will change your
'meditation';
it could change your life.*

The hard-sell come-on

"It will change your meditation; it could change your life". That was the hard-sell come-on devised by the LBC to entice people to the 1982 Open Winter Retreat. Either because of its irresistible appeal, or for other reasons, a total of seventy people visited the ten-day retreat, and each stayed an average of six days. But were we seeking to change our meditation, change our lives, or were we just looking for an alternative to the traditional bread and televised circuses of the great British Christmas?

Well, seventy retreaters plus thirteen organising team members makes eighty-three different answers to that question, but one unifying factor must, I think, be the acknowledgement that to retreat is not to escape.

The days had a steady and soothing pattern. The balance of meditation, communication exercises over the first few and taped lectures, and free time for Yoga, T'ai Chi, and walking was perhaps more suited to 'beginners' than to those who wanted something more intense and meditation-oriented (though the small shrine room was available). And it always seemed to be tea time.

New Year's Eve was a very special time. There was a festive puja with special offerings, and new year's resolutions offered to the shrine. One felt that this time there was some point in the old ritual of new year's resolutions. We had had the time and the conditions to analyse what had been happening in our lives - what should be discarded, what retained and strengthened - and resolutions made in such a context and arising from increased awareness will hold fast ("...it will change your life").

On the last night Kulamitra, who had led the retreat, gave a moving and encouraging valedictory talk. A distinctly out-of-season butterfly had appeared in the shrine room and had been disturbing meditations with the papery battering of its wings against the window, and this provided Kulamitra with a vivid symbol to evoke many ideas and states of mind. He exhorted us to hold on to what we had created for ourselves and each other on the retreat, and not to lose it once back out in the world ("it can change your life").

Karen Robinson

German Retreat

Christina Richter

This retreat broke new ground for the small FWBO presence in West Germany. Held near Hanover, in the north, it brought together nearly thirty people from all over Germany as well as a few from Holland and England. Though not the first retreat in Germany (one on a similar scale was held a few years ago) it was the first in which German replaced English as the working language.

Though the 'official' retreat language was German, separate study groups were held in English and German. Both groups studied the seven-fold puja, using Dhammaloka's recently completed translation.

The house was in a secluded area surrounded by open fields. A nearby forest was used for extensive walks - despite the

weather which was frequently stormy and often icy. Disease of the retreat was a particularly nasty strain of 'flu. Brought in by a German Buddhist from a Tibetan movement, it caused fever and shaking fits in all who caught it. "Tibetan 'Flu'", as it came to be known, will be long remembered by its unfortunate sufferers.

The weather, stiff knees, 'flu, and the genuine difficulties brought about by in-depth meditation proved too much for a few, who left the retreat early. But all those who stayed began, as the retreat deepened, to experience its truly positive aspects and, at its end, went back into the world changed, some profoundly.

Metta Weekend

Following letters of personal invitation from Ratnaguna there was a full attendance at the weekend event for the study of the Karaniya Metta Sutta - the Buddha's discourse on the development of metta (love and goodwill).

Ratnaguna led a study of the translation of the Pali text with the aid of Bhante's notes. The power and scope of the teaching gradually emerged. It is not a long text and yet one comes to its conclusion assured that whoever is able to follow its guidance will never again return to birth in this world.

The importance of the Metta Bhavana meditation practice

became clear, as did the need for a perfect upright demeanour and lifestyle.

The chanting of the sutta in Pali was taught with some success and the playing of a taped recording of chanting by Padma-vajra produced a period of reverent silence after which orders for the particular tape arose spontaneously to the accompanying rustle of cheque-books and pens.

This was an enjoyable and inspiring event. Profits enabled a contribution of £90 to be sent direct to Lokamitra in India to assist the work of the FWBO there.

Steven Timmins

MARTIAL ARTS

Nicolas Soames

Martial arts activities in winter have been marked by a steady growth in the number of week and weekend courses, indicating the continuing commitment that an increasing number of people within the FWBO are showing to Karate, T'ai Chi and Judo.

Padmaloka, as always, has been a focus for events, with perhaps the major development being the T'ai Chi week at the beginning of this year.

Nearly a dozen men from all over the country came to concentrate their practice during four hours each day at sessions led by Sthirananda, who has himself had an intensive T'ai Chi practice for many years.

It can be said that T'ai Chi is divided into three sections: **the exercise/meditation aspect** : when the main work is on forms, or set series of moves. Great attention here is paid to detail, not simply in precise movements, but also movements co-ordinated with breathing. The second section involves a sport aspect, where 'Pushing Hands' can be used in a competitive manner, as two people try to use T'ai Chi principles to 'uproot' each other, or break their balance.

The third section is concerned with the more advanced self defence aspects, taking T'ai Chi into the active role of a martial art.

The work being done by Sthirananda concentrates almost exclusively on the first aspect, working on the basic *Chen Man Chin* short form, introducing T'ai Chi, and covering the basic principles.

On the January week, the four hours of daily T'ai Chi was balanced by morning and afternoon meditations, and some study, sometimes devoted to T'ai Chi, and sometimes to Dharma. The week was designed to be treated as a T'ai Chi practice in the context of the spiritual life as envisaged by the FWBO.

The Karate weekend and weeks that have taken place have followed a similar pattern when they have been held at Padmaloka. However, the expansion of Karate around the London Buddhist Centre is based on the regular Tuesday and Thursday mixed classes. Some of the men and women in the classes recently hired a gym in Bethnal Green for a weekend training intensive.

It took place in early December, and was led by the regular instructor, Jim Lewis, 3rd Dan, who pursued a demanding programme for the two-day course. Elbow strikes, stamina training, as well as basics, comprised Saturday's programme, while Sunday was mainly devoted to kata, with four *katas* in addition to the *Kihon Kata* being introduced and studied in some detail.

The martial arts courses are, of course, marvellous opportuni-

ties not just for people within the movement to enrich their physical and mental life, but also as a way of offering more advanced martial arts practitioners a taste of the retreat environment.

Both Karate retreats and the Judo retreats have, to some extent, involved people experienced in their discipline but new to meditation. On one Karate weekend, several members of a club in Farnborough came to Padmaloka and, by all accounts, enjoyed the experience.

The Judo weekends, on the whole, have been fairly arduous with quite an uncompromising programme, which included some runs around Surlingham as well as two full days of Judo. But the coming Judo retreat - March 25th to April 1st - will be slightly different. It will be run much more in the context of a normal FWBO retreat, with meditation, puja, and some study, and provision will be made for beginners to Judo. There will, however, be two mats, so a more advanced practice can be pursued on one, while elementary work can be done on the other.

Each day there will be about four hours of Judo, and some emphasis will be placed on the introduction and development of *Juno Kata*, the Kata of Non-Resistance which concentrates on fluid movements, and requires great control, but does not actually involve the completion of throws. The cost is £49.

Women's Retreat

Linda Moody

Thirty-four women from countries as far apart as Ireland, Malaysia, and New Zealand participated in a ten-day retreat held over the New Year period at a Youth Hostel in the heart of the Peak National Park.

This was the second time that such a retreat had been held in this hostel, and once again we benefited from the kindness of the wardens who considerably eased our arrangements. So great was their interest in the use to which we put the hostel that they arranged for us to be interviewed by the editor of the 'Peak Park Journal'.

Led by Megha, the retreat centred around the theme of 'Transformation of Life and World in *The Sutra of Golden Light*', inspired by the powerful series of lectures given by the Ven. Sangharakshita in 1978. Listening to the tape recordings of those lectures and to extensive readings from the Sutra itself, one became aware of transformation working on many levels through the whole retreat. One's busy urban life became a life of time, space, and quiet; a youth hostel dormitory became a shrine room with an atmosphere of stillness; an ordinary cassette recorder became a transmitter of the

Dharma; tense faces and bodies relaxed into openness; strangers became sharers in a common warmth; cherished ideas became the subject of question; unskilful actions of the past year were transmuted into sparks and ash in the course of a 'confessional' puja as the Moon reached the full.

The retreat atmosphere cul-

minated in one and a half days of silence as the old year became the new year. And then, quickly, it was time for the shrine-room to become a dormitory, for the building to become again a mere youth hostel, for the participants to disperse, taking their transformed, transforming selves out into the world, into 1983.



Jayashri on retreat

Ordinations

On the 6th and 7th of January, three women mitras received their private and public ordinations at the Norwich Centre.

A day retreat was held during the day preceding the private ordinations which was attended by twelve women Order members and the three ordines. Part of the day was spent in the making of a 'bower', decked with flowers, in the reception room, thus helping to transform the area into a shrine room for the private ordinations.

Bhante stressed, both on the evening of the private ordinations and after the public ordinations, the strong connection which existed between these three people, even though they had come from so far afield.

Those ordained were Judith Dubignon, in England on a two month visit from Auckland, New Zealand, who became Jayashri, Liz Pankurst, who lives in London and works for Aid for India, who became Jayaprabha, and Elsie Kang, a Malaysian studying with the London Buddhist Centre, who became Jayapushpa. These names were revealed at the end of the public ordination ceremony which was attended by forty Order members, mitras and Friends from all over the UK.

N.Zealand AUCKLAND

20

Here in New Zealand, the Auckland FWBO has been following its pattern of ending the old year and beginning the new with a series of summer retreats. This period began on 24th December 1982, with a three day Order retreat, short and sweet, with four Order members present - Buddhadasa, Dharmadhara, Indrajala, most welcome from Christchurch, and Aniketa. Though small, this provided a valuable occasion for deepening friendships and preparing for the following retreats.

On 27th December the Order members were joined by most of the Auckland mitras, plus three mitras from Wellington, and two from Sydney - a mixture of men and women - for a seven day Order/Mitra retreat. This was auspiciously heralded by a brilliant rainbow arching its blazing trail across the whole expanse of sky, one end shimmering almost on the very spot where we were entering the shrine room for the dedication and first puja. Led by Dharmadhara, the retreat was action packed and full of surprises. There were a couple of innovations with up to eight or nine hours a day of meditation including

the 'six element practice' and full Shakyamuni visualisations. Looking back on it I'm amazed at how much was packed into each day, which started at 5.30 a.m. and ended around 10 p.m. Over the space of the seven days we heard three of Bhante's latest talks, did study, as well as accomplished a transformation of our surroundings in short work periods. Each day the shrine was decorated afresh, and dedicated to a different deity in each evening puja. This was a constant source of inspiring beauty. The last evening puja, dedicated to Vajrasattva, was a festive one, with offerings of the eight auspicious symbols. Some of these creations caused hilarity with their ingenious blend of the sublime and the ridiculous. In retrospect this curious mixture of the sacred and profane characterised this puja as if all aspects were called forth to be purified by devotion to Vajrasattva.

The next day, January 4th 1983, was change-over day, and after the sadness of saying goodbye to departing friends came the turning to welcome the arrivals for the Open retreat, among them was Priyandanda newly arrived from Malaysia and England, as well as six people from Wellington. This broadened the whole perspective and showed forth the wider Australasian nature of the

FWBO. Buddhadasa led this retreat with a full programme of meditation, study, and "The Higher Evolution of Man" series, and Bhante's latest talk on "Going for Refuge"; still allowing time to make new friendships and reconnect with old ones. Priyandanda took classes in T'ai Chi which were of great benefit, as they really helped to get us 'out of our heads' and loosen up bodily tensions. The retreat ended with a festive puja, with the eight traditional offerings of water, lights, perfume, etc. The shrine was magnificent, the decoration of which was the result of harmonious team-work, creating the focus for experiencing a taste of the Pure Land in all its jewel-like beauty.

In retrospect 1982 has been a very productive year for the Auckland Buddhist Centre. Despite the lack of Order members there has been an all-round expansion. The whole top floor of 79a Hobson Street is now in use, and the shrine room is being renovated, mainly by Dharmadhara. He has been putting so much energy in that while exploring the attic, the ceiling couldn't take it, and he fell through it, shaken but unharmed! More importantly, and without which there could have been no expansion, there's been the creating, through Buddhadasa's ingenuity and enthusiasm and the response of all those who jumped in with

him, of a flexible team structure of Order members and mitras available at any one time. This is based on a weekly Order/Mitra meeting, when we practice metta bhavana, puja, have a reporting-in, followed by live talks, with positive critical feed-back, or listen to Bhante's tapes, and develop our communication with one another.

The presence of the Order is being felt very strongly and enjoyably already, with the return of Priyandanda, 'on loan from Malaysia', as he puts it, for a year; and with Dharmadhara having finished his doctor's training and putting all his energy into the Centre activities before going to India.

Ratnaketu is expected any day now and Jayashri (ex-Judith Dubignon) is also returning from the UK soon, and Purna will be visiting from Wellington in late February.

What with the reinstitution of regular weekly Order meetings, more regular Order weekends, weekly Order/Mitra meetings and a full programme, including outgoing activities such as talks in schools, and even a low profile presence at "Sweetwaters" rock-cum-spiritual group festival in late January, the prospects for the Movement in Auckland look interesting indeed.

1983 looks as if it will be a "boomer"!

India



Purna says farewell

We are now in the middle of a particularly harsh Indian winter - it is so cold in Poona that even the Europeans sometimes have to wear sweaters in the evening, and Lokamitra has begun to boil water for his morning bath.

The autumn/winter session has seen a significant expansion in our activities, with several new areas being opened up. A series of retreats in November marked up two 'firsts' - our first major contact with the town of Solapur, and the first 'general' retreat to be led by an Indian Dhammachari, when Vimalakirti led the Bombay retreat. The Solapur retreat was a great success and they are now demanding a weekly class, and with a group already meditating together it is a demand we cannot easily resist. Also, Lokamitra and Bodhidharma spent two weeks in Nagpur and the surrounding area where they encountered great enthusiasm for our approach to the Dhamma, suggesting that we need to establish ourselves there as soon as possible as Nagpur has the second largest Buddhist population in India, after Bombay. In Bombay itself there are now two classes a week and many locality talks have been organised by our network of Friends in the city.

A common cry wherever we go is 'We have been Buddhists for twenty-six years, but until now

we had not heard the Dhamma properly explained to us.' All this outwardgoingness is not without its problems. Besides just stretching our resources it also poses the problem of providing adequate follow-up, of how to provide the contact, the Kalyana Mitrata, that will turn the thousands who hear our talks into mitras, and the mitras into Order members. With this in mind we are organising a month-long retreat in May for those mitras and Friends who might possibly be ready for ordination when Bhante next visits us.

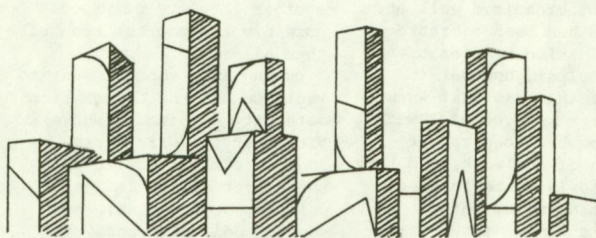
On the social work front, Virabhadra has been joined by Padmasuri, a nurse, and between them they are building up the medical side of the Dapodi project. The initial work tends to suggest that poverty - as much as poor educational and social conditions - is responsible for much of the ill health and malnourishment amongst slum children. Clearly we are going to have to encourage some sort of businesses to develop if our work in Dapodi is to consolidate and to this end we have had a fortnight's visit from Ralph Clark, an economist with many years experience of working on Third World Development projects, who came to advise us at his own expense, having contacted the Movement in England.

The new year saw another significant milestone passed with

the stone laying ceremony at Bhaja, where we have purchased some land for a retreat centre. With overcrowding in the home universal, retreats are very important for people to get a real taste of Dharma practice and we have never been able to hold them in suitable surroundings. The ceremony itself was a great success with about 200 people coming from Pune, Bombay, and Sholapur for an outing-cum-picnic which was enjoyed by all.

On a sadder note, Purna left us in December after three years here during which time he made a tremendous contribution at a crucial time in the development of our work. We wish him luck in whatever he decides to do, while nursing the wish that he will come back to India where his experience will be invaluable.

Finally, Jyotipala is giving "spoken English" classes four nights a week under the auspices of the Peoples' Education Society, in Aurangabad. In fact this class is serving a very useful function in a country where English is still a significant aid to a career. Also, the P.K.S. have always been very helpful to us in a number of ways, not least in the use of their buildings in Aurangabad and Bombay. We are happy to be able to do something for them.



BOSTON

In the clean, cool atmosphere of Boston, Manjuvajra, Vajradaka and Punya work hard to maintain the tiny Boston Buddhist Center in Brookline Village.

They moved into these premises a year ago and since then a steady trickle of people have found their way there, trickled off and then found themselves flowing back again, attracted by the sheer sincerity, friendliness and unpretentiousness of the W.B.O.'s presentation of the Dharma.

There are now regular series of talks at the three weekly classes as well as frequent day and weekend retreats, and Manjuvajra and Vajradaka have both given radio talks and initiated courses at local universities.

This Christmas Punya flew to the West Coast, to Oregon to visit ex-Sukhavatins Robert Gerke and Phil Miller, and to conduct a retreat at Phil's house with the friends he has been meditating with.

Meanwhile, back in Boston, Manjuvajra, Vajradaka and Marichi led a small retreat for a week in the apartment home of the community (Hayagriva). Marichi was very sorry to leave Boston in January after nearly four months there, and hopes to revisit the Center and keep in touch with the friends she made. Devamitra was also back in Boston over Christmas, fresh from Tuscany, re-evaluating the impressions he'd formed on his first visit a year before. Boston is a very attractive city and people are generous and helpful to visitors, but the five or six Buddhist groups established there all seem to experience some difficulty in attracting large numbers to their classes.

In this coming year Vajradaka & Manjuvajra are planning a series of Dharma workshops in various American cities to see what the possibilities are for making more contacts beyond Boston.

Friends in Germany

The first sign of an FWBO Movement in Karlsruhe (south-west Germany) came in October 1982. In an evening class about Zen stories the wish emerged among those present to learn practical meditation. So one evening Christine Richter, a friend of the FWBO, introduced the 'Mindfulness of Breathing' practice. People reacted very positively, and the meditation meetings became a regular feature after the evening class had finished. Naturally people began to ask questions about the background to meditation, so the evening expanded to include some simple Dharma studies. 'These studies are limited by my experience and knowledge of the Dharma', says Christine. 'A class at the evening school on Buddhist texts will be starting in March. We will attempt it, but we are fully aware of our limitations. If only we had an Order Member in Karlsruhe!'

Aid for India



Baby weighing in Dapodi

Padmasuri returned to India in October to take up full-time nursing work with the Dapodi medical project. Here is an extract from one of the reports that she sends regularly to the Aid for India team in London.

The AFI team, incidentally brought to an end its "Poona Appeal" at Christmas, which has raised just over a million pounds in covenants.

Padmasuri's report is largely concerned with the treatment of 'red', or malnourished babies.

The conversion rate for the rupee, incidentally is approximately sixteen and a half rupees to the pound.

1. I have started doing home visits to the families of 'red' children armed with my nutrition questionnaire, taking Vaishakha with me as translator. These children have been shown to be 'in the red' by coming along to one of our sessions; at that time if there is any obvious medical cause for the thinness then the child is treated accordingly by doctor, but most of the children have no obvious illness, and on inquiry the story is usually that the child is only taking breast milk at the age of two or more, whereas we are trying to encourage the introduction of solids as well as breast milk by six months. We inform mothers that in a few days I will be making a home visit to talk about nutrition.

Finding the home is not always easy. Firstly Vaishakha and I go to the house of one of the ladies who is helping us. Although we have the child's full name and locality often the mothers do not know the name of the chawl they live in, so if our helper lady doesn't know the family, it can sometimes take up to half an hour to track down the correct child. The reason we do home visits rather than just talk about nutrition and feeding during the sessions, is to make a clearer assessment of the home conditions thereby only giving relevant instruction on feeding. By quickly scanning the hut you can tell quite a lot - the size, materials it is made from, general cleanliness and so on. I enquire as to the number of occupants, their occupations and the earning total. (These visits are done in the morning when the husbands are not present. The ladies seem willing to give all this information when known.) I find out about the feeding habits of the child, and give advice taking all the above things into consideration. I also take this opportunity to give advice on family planning.

So far, most of the 'red' children come from families where the income is between 40 and 70 rupees per week, often with a family of five or six to feed, so mainly the

problem is social. Therefore although I give advice, and point out the dangers of malnutrition, we have yet to see the results. They are encouraged to come back and be weighed in 3 - 4 weeks. It is very valuable experience for me to see some of the worst hutments where families in Dapodi live. I try to make the visits as informal as possible, the outcome of this is that I am often told more intimate details about the family than would ever come out in a clinic session, also superstitions come to the fore which in the long run are going to help us to understand the people more.

2. Our second move was to try out ways of stimulating more interest in localities. Hence we have given two slide shows, one in Jai Bhim Nagar and one in Siddharthnagar concentrating on topics of malnutrition and associated diseases, feeding, and the importance of oral rehydration therapy for diarrhoea. These were done at night

in the open air. The one in Siddharthnagar was relatively well organised and about a hundred people came. The one in JBN was not organised well at all, there had been a breakdown in communication between us and the lady helper. However the outcome of this was that we made contact with an area of JBN that up till now has been rather suspicious of our work, and they are now showing some interest. We plan to do more, better organised shows in future.

3. The plan to start new activities with the help of our social worker friends has not yet materialised. One of them visited us during a session, but we have yet to discuss things properly. The room we want to rent in JBN has been a little held up, but we hope to have the use of it by the end of January.

Interest in our sessions fluctuates unpredictably. In Siddharthnagar in particular the feeling is one of apathy. There is only one lady there

who is helping us, and we suspect politics are playing a part in this. We hope to be starting work in Arun Talkies, another locality of Dapodi, possibly the poorest area of them all.

During last month I went to visit one of the Corporation maternity hospitals (where Vimalakirti's wife works). It is a similar one to this where most of our ladies deliver, so I was able to see the delivery rooms, the drugs used, the basic operation theatre for emergency caesarean sections, and also sit through an ante-natal clinic. The women do not see a doctor until the seventh month of pregnancy, so there is probably quite a lot we could do in keeping check on these ladies in their really antenatal period, to prevent or watch out for early signs of complications. However we would definitely need a proper room to be able to do this, with a certain amount of privacy.

Whilst doing our clinic in Siddharthnagar last week, one lady delivered her third baby at home. We just missed the actual delivery (the local Dai was there plus mother-in-law) but I went around to the hut immediately afterwards so as to prevent possible mishaps such as cow-dung being smeared onto the umbilical cord. In a room about seven foot square with sackcloth over the windows a wood fire filling the room with smoke, a blunt razor-blade to cut the cord, a mother who didn't show any interest in the new-born baby, but just groaned dressed in rags, one couldn't have found much worse conditions in which to deliver. But she probably couldn't afford the twenty rupees for delivery in the Corporation maternity hospital. I was wary not to tread on the toes of the Dai, but they all seemed grateful I had come and helped out, and on a subsequent visit I was given a warm welcome.

Dharmacharis & Dharmacharinis

If you are a reader of our magazine *Mitrata*, you will notice that issue number 40: 'Imagination - The Faculty Divine', was written, not by *Upasaka* Sthiramati, but by *Dharmachari* Sthiramati. This is the first time that the term *Dharmachari* (of which the feminine form is *Dharmacharini*) has appeared in print. It is therefore time that we announced a change in our terminology that has taken place over the last year.

From now on members of the Western Buddhist Order will be styled in this way. The word 'Dharmachari' means, 'one who walks/fares in the Dharma', which is to say, one who fully lives a Buddhist spiritual life.

The ordination ceremony by which one becomes a member of the Western Buddhist Order is, in traditional terms, an *Upasaka* ordination, and so members of the WBO are, technically speaking 'upasakas', and 'upasikas', but the use of these terms has often led

to some confusion.

In the Buddhist East, the word 'upasaka' has definite socio-religious connotations. There, the *upasaka* is a 'lay' Buddhist, someone who has a very definitely part-time, or even merely nominal involvement with the Dharma. His or her major role is seen to consist of offering material support to the bhikkhus, the full-timers. In the Buddhist East, anyone who considers themselves to be a Buddhist would be called an *upasaka* or *upasika*. To be styled thus offers, therefore, no suggestion that one is truly committed to the spiritual life. In fact, to some degree it provides a clear indication that one is not.

Our approach to things in the FWBO is, of course, quite different. We believe that one is only ready to Go for Refuge, to be 'ordained', when one is ready, willing, and able to make a deep and meaningful commitment to the Buddhist spiritual life. Individuals who have

Gone for Refuge may choose or need (often for Dharmic reasons) to apply that commitment in a number of different ways, and in the context of a variety of lifestyles, but their commitment to living to the full the spiritual principles of Buddhism is expected to take priority over everything else. Otherwise their Going for Refuge can have no meaning; otherwise they would not Go for Refuge.

Our use of the terms 'upasaka' and 'upasika' have sometimes caused confusion at conferences and gatherings, where people, from abroad perhaps, may not have realised that they were meeting active, committed 'full-timers', the problem of terminology has become more acute in India. It became increasingly necessary there to distinguish members of our Order from the literally hundreds of thousands of *upasakas* and *upasikas* among whom they are beginning to work and teach. For a while the term *dasa sila upasaka* was used, indicating that, by virtue of the

fact that Order members observe not five but ten precepts, they are more experienced in and committed to spiritual practice than others. But it was not an ideal solution.

After some years of reflection, in fact, the Ven. Sangharakshita decided that the terms best suited to our needs were the terms 'Dharmachari' and 'Dharmacharini' (although in India the Pali forms: *Dhammachari* & *Dhammacharini* are used, in order to offset any confusion arising out of the Hindu connotations of the word *Dharma*).

According to some traditions the spiritual aspirant can be placed in one of three categories. The *Brahmachari* is one who follows the spiritual life in a general way. The *Dharmachari* is one who leads a specifically Buddhist spiritual life. The *Bodhichari* is one who aims for perfect Enlightenment for the sake of all beings, as a *Bodhisattva*.

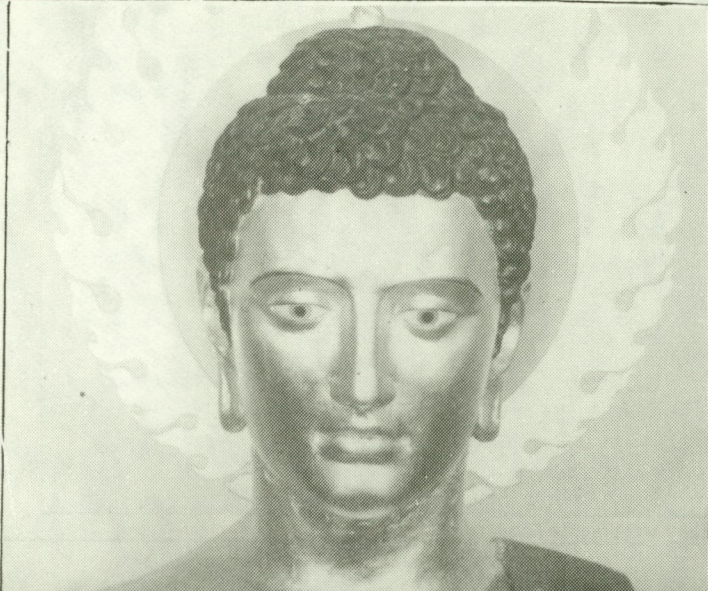
Nagabodhi

Buddhism for Today

At the time of writing, Subhuti's book, *Buddhism for Today* is at the page proof stage, so the project is now nearing completion. The publication date is fixed for March 20th, in time for the Wrekin Trust event, at which the Ven. Sangharakshita is to give a talk. If you have already ordered a copy then you will be receiving it soon. If

you have not ordered one, then you will be able to obtain a copy from your nearest centre, or from Element Books Ltd.

On April 6th, which is the anniversary of the founding of the FWBO Subhuti will be at the London Buddhist Centre to introduce his book there with a talk. All are welcome to attend.



MITRATA

On February 15th was launched the first issue of Mitrata under its new editorial board headed by the Ven. Sangharakshita. The bi-monthly magazine returns to its original policy of providing study material specifically geared to the study needs of mitras, although copies will be on public sale through Centre bookshops or by subscription.

For the next two years, the magazine will be systematically exploring *The Buddha's Noble Eightfold Path*. There will be two or more issues on each 'limb' of the Path, the first of which will be based upon an edited transcript of the relevant lecture in the Ven. Sangharakshita's series on the Eightfold Path, together with highlights from question-and-answer sessions with the Ven. Sangharakshita during the 1982 Pre-ordination Retreat in Tuscany. The second will develop the theme further, using extracts from seminars and lectures by the Ven. Sangharak-

shita. The complete series will form a thorough exposition of this teaching which is central to all Buddhist schools both in traditional terms and in terms of its practical relevance today.

The first issue, *Perfect Vision I*, will consist of the lecture, 'Perfect Vision', newly edited by the Ven. Sangharakshita, and a number of extracts:

- I.a. An image of the Path.
- b. Wrong Views, Right View, and Perfect View.
- c. Spontaneous Mystical Experiences.
- d. The 'Point' of Break-through.
- e. Intellectual Understanding and Intuitive Insight.
- f. True Selfhood.
- g. Does the Buddha Feel Pain?

If you would like a copy or to subscribe please write to:
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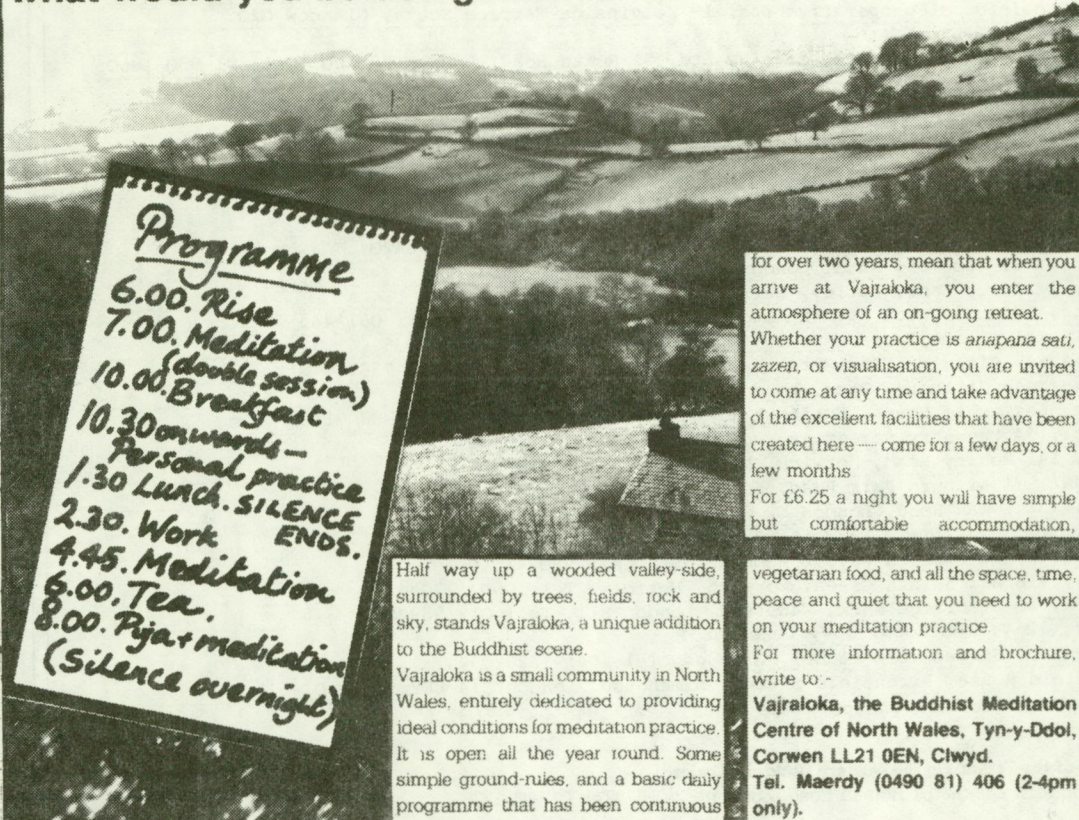
M · I · T · R · A · T · A

THE NOBLE EIGHTFOLD PATH



Perfect Vision I

if you were there today —
what would you be doing now?



Programme

6.00. Rise
7.00. Meditation
(double session)
10.00. Breakfast
10.30 onwards —
Personal practice
1.30 LUNCH. SILENCE
2.30. Work ENDS.
4.45. Meditation
6.00. Tea.
8.00. Pja + meditation
(Silence overnight)

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VEN. SANGHARAKSHITA AT WREKIN TRUST

The Wrekin Trust has been providing courses and conferences to promote better understanding of various forms of psycho-spiritual knowledge for the last eleven years. At the end of March, it will be holding its sixth 'Mystics & Scientists' open weekend conference. The focus for the this year is 'Reality, Consciousness and Order'. The Ven. Sangharakshita will be making one of his rare public appearances on this occasion to give a lecture on the Bodhisattva Ideal, teach a session of meditation, and together with the other speakers (who include David Bohm, Arnold Keyserling, Rupert Sheldrake and Monica Furlong) will answer written questions. Sir George Trevelyan will give the opening address.

The weekend's events will take place at St. Alfred's College, Winchester, on 25-27 March, and will cost £49 including board and lodging, or £42 non-residential. For further details and bookings, contact the Wrekin Trust at Golden Valley (0981) 540224.

Following this weekend conference Ven. Sangharakshita is going into retreat in Wales for the next three months.

* Vajraloka is a men's retreat centre which is open to women at particular times of the year — for details of women's retreats contact London Buddhist Centre, 51 Roman Road, London E.2., Tel 01-981-1225.

Friends of the Western Buddhist Order

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 appointment). Tel: 049-081 406 (between 2&4pm)
 FWBO Stockholm, Hillbersvagen 5, S-126 54 Hagersten, Sweden. Tel: Stockholm 97 59 92

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