

Friends of the Western Buddhist Order

# *The* NEWSLETTER

Number 62

Price 80p



*Sangharakshita:  
Twenty years in the West*



# About the Friends of the Western Buddhist Order

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

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

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

The Order forms the nucleus of a new society or culture in which the values of human growth are para-

mount. As a result of Order members taking responsibility each for their own lives and attempting to communicate honestly and openly with others, that new society is becoming a living reality. In those areas where Order members have gathered together there are found three things: Communities, Co-operatives, and Centres.

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

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

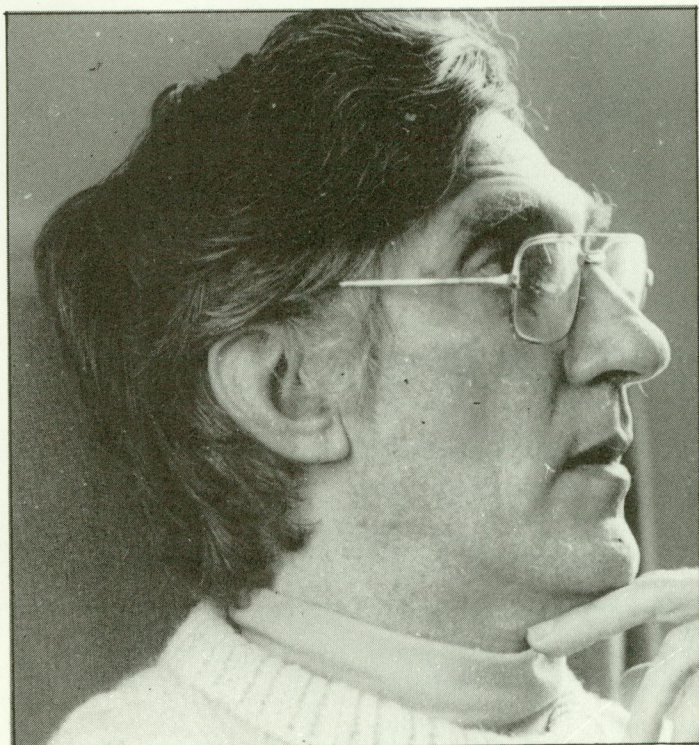
together in businesses which financially support the workers and which fund the further expansion of this New Society. Present businesses either running or being set up in the Movement include a printing press, wholefood shops, a silkscreen press, a hardware store, cafes, a second-hand shop, bookshop,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

The most direct and effective means to the evolution of consciousness is the practice of meditation. At the Centres, members of the Order teach meditation and conduct courses, study groups, talks, and discussions on the principles and practice of Buddhism. There are

also ceremonies, festivals, and arts activities. Yoga, massage, and other practices are taught as valuable, though less central, methods of development. Centres are places where you can make contact with Order members and others already in touch with this burgeoning New Society. Above all, through the Centres, a bridge is formed over which those who wish may cross to a new and total way of life based upon the growth and development of individuals.

The Friends of the Western Buddhist Order ('the Friends') is, then, a movement, always deepening and expanding, of people who wish to be authentic, integrated and dynamic. It was initiated in 1967 by the Ven. Maha Sthavira Sangharakshita, who spent 20 years in India as a Buddhist monk. He there studied, practised, and 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.

## SANGHARAKSHITA IN SEMINAR



### ★ The Way to Wisdom

— an investigation of the Five Spiritual Faculties

### ★ The Threefold Refuge

— an exploration of a theme central to the FWBO

The transcripts of these two seminars are now being prepared for publication.

They will cost £5.00 each.

We will be printing only a limited number of these books, so please order your copy now in order to help us plan our print order.

Unfortunately, the publication dates have been delayed, so our special offer of £8.50 for both will now last until 15th August.

Please send cheque with order to:-

Windhorse Publications (Seminar)  
21 Hope Street  
Glasgow G2 6AB



## The NEWSLETTER

**Summer  
1984**

**Editor**  
Nagabodhi

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

**President**  
The Ven. Maha Sthavira  
Sangharakshita

**Layout & Design**  
Nagabodhi and  
Dick Trattell

**Editorial Assistance**  
Jonathan Brazier  
Judy Swift and Joan Peters

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

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

© Windhorse Publications  
1984

**Subscription**  
£4.00 pa (Surface mail to  
(£5.50, airmail)  
Please make cheques and  
P.O.s payable to:  
Windhorse Publications

**Cover Design**  
Dick Trattell

**Cover photo**  
Nagabodhi

Subscription address:  
21 Hope Street  
Glasgow G2 6AB

## Editorial

On the 12th August 1964, Dennis Lingwood who had first gone East as a conscripted member of the Royal Signal Corps, returned to England for a short visit. Twenty years, almost to the day, had passed since the young wireless operator had embarked for Bombay in wartime garb of khaki and webbing. He was returning in the bright robes of a Buddhist monk, and was by then the most senior bhikku to have been born in Britain.

During the years in-between he had wandered the byways of India, begging his food, meeting some remarkable 'holy men' and receiving teachings from them; he had contributed to and edited some of the most influential Buddhist journals in the East; he had founded an inter-denominational Centre for Buddhism in Kalimpong, on the Indo-Tibetan border, and counted incarnate Tibetan lamas among his closest friends; he had become respected as a scholar, an author, a speaker, a guru, and as a poet. He had also acquired a new name: Sangharakshita, which means 'Protector of the Order'. And he had decided to spend the rest of his life in India. This issue of the Newsletter celebrates the fact that he changed his mind. He has now spent exactly twenty years back in the West.

Sangharakshita is of course the man who established the Friends of the Western Buddhist Order (FWBO) and the Western Buddhist Order. He is the founder and teacher of our Movement.

Starting his work in the West with no money, no influence, and just a few friends, he has inspired and guided the development of a Movement which is now in contact with tens of thousands of people in eleven countries on five continents, and which is developing a form of Buddhism that is immediately accessible to the modern world.

Yet, in striking contrast to the familiar image of the jet-age 'flying guru', he travels as little as possible, preferring to concentrate on his literary work, a prodigious correspondence, and personal contact with anyone who makes an effort simply to arrange a visit. In the early days, of course, when there were not many people around to help, he placed adverts in shop windows to advertise classes, and cut the sandwiches for the tea breaks. He taught every meditation class, gave every talk, led every retreat, and chaired every business meeting.

To those who can only believe that this troubled world will only be improved by mass action based on mass consciousness, Sangharakshita, a true individual, provides the challenging reassurance that one man's influence and effort can achieve a phenomenal amount of good, so long as he is tirelessly active, concentrated, clear-headed, totally committed to his ideals, and willing to be — and to act as — a friend to everyone that he meets.

Sangharakshita is in his mid fifties, and comes from a family blessed with long life. So there is no question of this being a special 'retirement issue'! It is a celebration of his first twenty years in the West — and a vote of thanks.

Nagabodhi

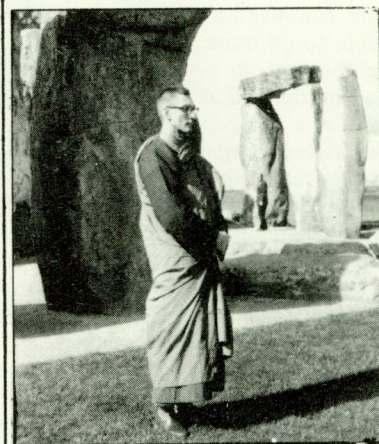
## Contents

### Features

Record of a Friendship	4
Buddhism in Britain	8
'Just Living My Life'	9
Raising the Pillars	16
In Search of Friendship	17

### Facets

A Buddhist Arts Centre	21
Centres around the world	23
Retreats, Order Office, AFI	29

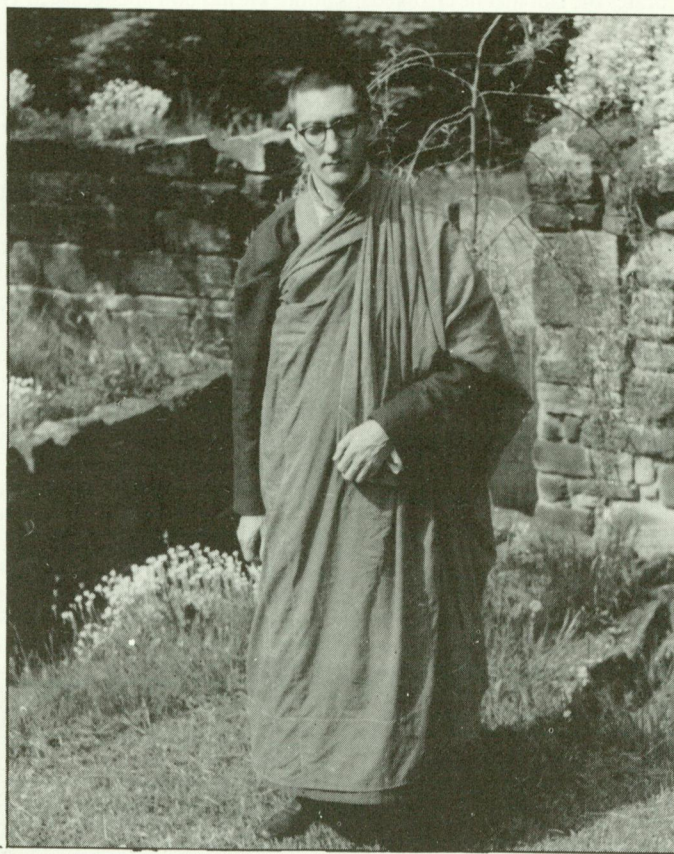




# Record of a Friendship

By Abhaya

I first met Bhante one sunny afternoon in early September, 1967. He was standing in the vestibule of Quartermaine, an old country house in Haslemere, Surrey, welcoming, as they arrived, the retreatants to the second ever retreat held by the Movement, then only a few months old and known as 'The Friends of the Western Sangha'. His complexion seemed quite dark, his accent distinctly Oriental. I assumed he must be Anglo-Indian, if not completely Indian. There were very few of us on that retreat, no more than ten in addition to the few friends and organisers Bhante had brought with him. The first event on the programme was a meditation session. In his introductory remarks, Bhante commented that it was possible to go quite a distance along the Path in a very short period of time, that is, in the course of a week-long retreat. With this encouraging send-off, he guided us through a twenty minute session of the mindfulness of breathing practice. For me it was a real launch, a taste of what he later told us that the Zen people call "Beginners' Mind"; fortunately it stayed with me for the duration of the retreat. We all sat on upright chairs. Not many of us looked supple enough even to attempt the cross-legged posture anyway. Bhante himself sat on a chair. It was not until my second or third Quartermaine retreat that some-



At Biddulph, shortly after his return to England

one actually adopted the traditional meditation posture, on cushions on the floor; it seemed mildly eccentric.

At teatime, the next event on the programme, a lady stood up and introduced Bhante as 'Bunty'. Everyone called him 'Bunty'. In a letter to me a few weeks later, he commented, "English people hearing me addressed as 'Bhante' for the first time usually hear it as 'Bunty' and, vaguely connecting

it with a character of that name in children's story books, wonder how on earth I come to be addressed in that way".

It was much easier in those early days to be immediately very impressed with Bhante, not only on account of how we were, but also because of how he was. Nowadays, as has been observed, one could so easily, on a cursory first impression, pass him by as just a typical Norfolk country

gentleman. But in the late sixties, he always wore his flowing saffron robe over a high-necked, long-sleeved maroon Tibetan garment. I remember walking with him thus bedecked along the West Bournemouth promenade on a summer evening, when he had come to visit me and my wife for the weekend. I felt bad afterwards for subjecting him to so many stares; with a little more forethought, I could have taken him somewhere less crowded. But perhaps my choice was subconsciously deliberate, in that it provided me with an opportunity to bask in the charisma of the guru! Bhante vigorously rejected any such projections from me or anyone else as he became aware of them, conscientiously sweeping aside any tendency to place him on a pedestal from where, hopefully, he might just agree to take over responsibility for other people's lives! For some time, I inwardly resisted his resistance to that kind of thing; perhaps I thought he was just being modest!

Once, we were invited to dinner together and our host lived the other side of London from Highgate, where Bhante was living at the time. I was driving, and although I knew from the directions we were given that it was not an easy place to find and that under normal circumstances I might well get lost, I was fully confident from the start that Bhante, with his supernormal powers, would direct me infallibly. His first few suggestions as to the possible correct turning



proved to be wrong, and we had very great difficulty finding the place. We eventually arrived, very late, and with my faith in his infallibility rudely shaken. My naivety in this respect was finally eradicated some time later when I referred in the course of conversation to something which I considered to be of great import that I had told him several months before; to my astonishment and great disappointment, he asked me to 'refresh his memory'. It was a severe blow to my ego as well as a fatal one to my faith in his exhaustive powers of recollection. Later on, when I came to know him better and understand a bit more about the mechanism of projection and the psychological difficulties it invariably led to, I came to have respect for Bhante's quiet insistence on being treated as another human being. 'I can't be myself', he once complained, with reference to the way I related to him, 'until you are yourself'.

But, projections apart, he was different. For one thing, he was always so utterly self-possessed and impressively mindful. This was something I couldn't help but notice on the few occasions I travelled with him, by bus and underground, from that first tiny FWBO Centre in Monmouth Street, 'Sakura' to his flat. Once we were in the house, his force-field of mindfulness was relaxed somewhat, in that it was easier to maintain in the relative calm of home; but in the swirl of the potentially distracting energies of the Underground and the London streets, it took on a certain sharpness, an unremitting vigilance in the face of possible attack. Several years later, in a seminar on the text *Mind in Buddhist Psychology*, Bhante associated such qualities with the positive mental event known as *apramada* (Pali: *appamada*), which the Buddha with His dying words urged his disciples to maintain.

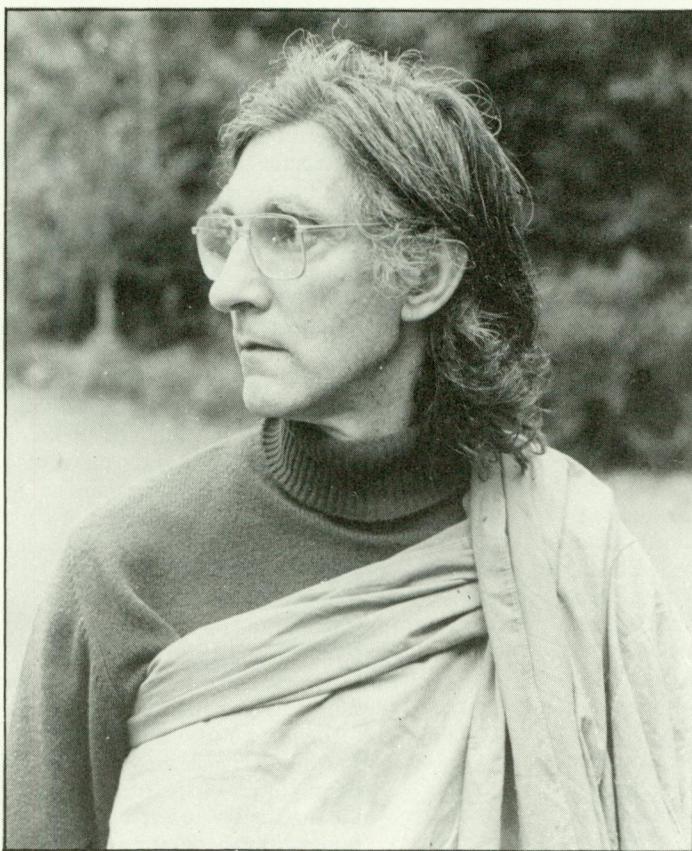
Nor was it only those individual qualities that I could isolate and identify that set Bhante in a realm apart in my eyes. I could sense, if not fully appreciate, his spiritual stature, and I found it rather awesome, even, at times, overwhelming. He had clearly mined far greater depths in him-

self and had access to much richer resources than the rest of us. Not only that. As a friend of mine put it, 'Bhante KNOWS something that I don't; something very important'! It was the late sixties; the hippy era was well underway. A lot of us were 'experimenting' with drugs and what Bhante later referred to as 'perhaps forcible entries into the dhyanas'. We wanted our spasms of bliss and our flashes of Insight and we wanted it all pretty well gratis. It was a time, like many another, of contradictions. There was, on the one hand, the apparent air of peace, positivity and optimism represented by the image of the flower power people, an attitude

Zen that didn't really appeal — that Reality is to be discovered in simple boring jobs like washing up. It was *Experience* we were after.

Yet Bhante was patient, even, he might think in retrospect, long-suffering. He never exploded in the face of our obdurate resistance to even beginning to put the Bodhisattva Ideal into practice as distinct from gobbling up the theory. He did not condemn the widespread attachment to 'babyfood', a term he once used in reference to marijuana, nor our grasping attitude to Enlightenment.

Although I badly wanted to spend a lot of time with Bhante in



"He had been letting his hair grow"

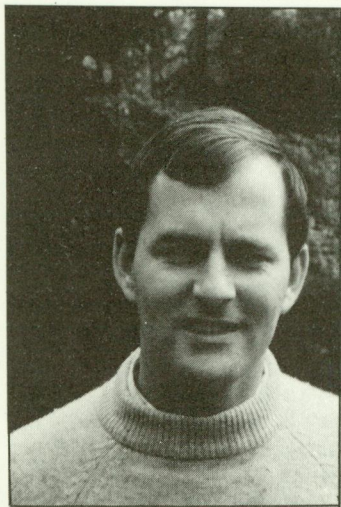
of altruism and generosity that many of us outwardly conformed with; on the other hand, there was the reality, still recalled by Bhante in tones of shocked bewilderment, the reality that people coming along to the Centre would never put more than a few coppers in the Dana bowl and would offer to help with the washing up only under the severe pressure of an embarrassingly long silence. That was the side of

those early days, my contact with him was very sporadic. He lived in London; I lived in Bourne-mouth, then later even further away, in Cornwall. I yearned for those two retreats a year at Haslemere, one round Easter-time and the other in the summer. Apart from the rare occasions when we visited one another, or when I drove up to London to attend one of his lectures, there was a bit of correspondence between us and

that was about it. In 1969 we were seriously thinking of changing all this by sharing house. The idea was for me and my wife, with our little daughter, and Bhante with a friend to pool our meagre financial resources and live together in a house, either in Wales or Cornwall, if we could get a mortgage. At one point, Bhante almost secured a place, what sounded from his description like a rather grand Queen Anne house on the Welsh coast. His plan was to divide his time between his Movement responsibilities in London and his literary activities in Wales. Though he actually got as far as discussing a possible regular lifestyle in the community (he said that all he was going to insist on was that we get together for a puja every evening), I was never able to experience the project as more than a dream. The fact is that I myself was putting very little energy into the actualisation of the dream and, when we failed to secure a mortgage on the Queen Anne property, it became clear that the Movement was beginning to expand at such a pace that it would be impossible for Bhante to spend long stretches of time in the country anyway. But the interesting thing is that he was seriously considering at that time living with a man and his wife. In those days, as he has so often pointed out, Bhante had no thought at all about the possibility of single-sex activities or single sex communities in the FWBO.

I remember sitting with him on the grass in the sloping garden of Keffolds (another retreat venue in Haslemere), beneath the stone balustrade of the patio. The lawn was besprinkled with happy looking retreatants, both men and women, some just sitting, others doing their spiritual reading. It was an early Keffolds retreat, before such events had started attracting more than about thirty people. I was expressing my satisfaction, even delight, at the way of life we were tasting. Bhante commented that that was how he envisaged it. I presumed he meant men and women living together permanently in large country houses, practising the Dharma. It was before the early experiments with mixed communities had been tried and had failed, before the larger Keffolds





Abhaya then ...

retreats, at one of which the element of sexual polarisation and game-playing threatened to swamp the spiritual atmosphere completely.

In the beginning, Bhante was much more patient with people's preoccupations with their own psychological difficulties. He was familiar with the writings of Freud and Jung, Adler and Melanie Klein, Wilhelm Reich and Abraham Maslow. He made free use of Jung's terminology of the different archetypes in his conversation and in his lectures. There seemed to be more of a psychological emphasis generally in those days. There was a keenness to bask in the psychological, a readiness to become endlessly involved in one's own, often quite negative, states of mind. In the end, Bhante got really bored with it. Just before he left London for his year-long retreat in Cornwall, he said that it had got so bad that he felt he was for the most part not being treated as a human being at all but as a psychological problem solving machine. Whereas up to then, he might listen patiently to fruitless burrowings for a childhood trauma that might be the origin of some psychological stunting, nowadays he would more likely advise one to get on with one's meditation practice and work. He had become far less accommodating in this and other respects, to his disciples' tendencies to self-indulgence.

At first, he was not averse to encouraging quite a lot of people to give up full time employment which stultified their energies,

perhaps at least half expecting that with their new freedom they would spring into life and pour their released energies into their practice of the Dharma. When he saw that this was far from being the case, he began to emphasise the Zen teaching of work as spiritual practice and spearheaded a campaign which eventually led to the building of Sukhavati, master-minded by Subhuti, and the setting up of the first FWBO Right Livelihood projects. But this is jumping ahead somewhat.

On the eve of one of his visits to us in Millbrook, Cornwall, he telephoned me about final arrangements and warned me, in rather playful tones, to be prepared for a cultural shock when we met. The shock came the day after, in the form of Bhante alighting from the train, not in the usual bhikkhu's garb, but instead a pair of jeans and a T shirt. It was bad timing as far as I was concerned. Though I might not have admitted it to myself, I had been looking forward to impressing my Millbrook friends with an introduction to my saffron-robed guru who might well regale them with a discourse on Dharma. Instead I was leading in what seemed to me a somewhat physically reduced version of Bhante, dressed like any other holiday maker, who insisted for the most part in restricting himself to casual conversational remarks. For about a year before this incident, he had been letting his hair grow, not just a bit but very long, shoulder length — and wore bushy Dickensian sideboards. He would have no truck with the second Fetter right from the start, with any tendency to identify Buddhism with certain Oriental cultural trappings or with details of appearance.

On the whole, Bhante did not encourage us to study texts which, though widely acclaimed in the Buddhist world, were so spiritually high-powered as to be of little use to us at the level we were at. This was in line with his teaching on the importance of regular steps, though at that time he had not yet formulated it for us in those terms. It was to be the subject of a lecture at a later date: 'The Path of Regular and the Path of Irregular Steps'. On that first retreat at Quartermaine he had very briefly dealt with one gentle-

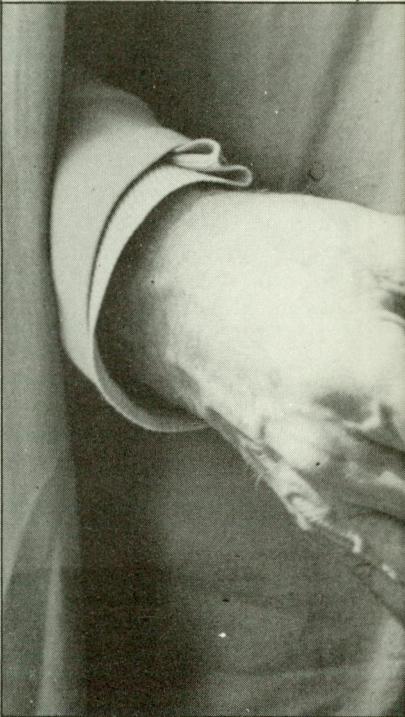
man's question on the *Diamond Sutra* and discouraged further questioning. I had been dipping into *The Tibetan Book of the Great Liberation*, a profound teaching on the One Mind, which, read on a superficial level, made it all sound so easy. I mentioned my reading of the text to Bhante in the hope of drawing him into conversation about it, but he politely brushed the reference aside with only the comment that he was familiar with the text. When he did eventually deliver a lecture on the *Diamond Sutra*, he placed the text on its rightful level, far above where we were, suggesting that were we really to get near it, we might well be scorched by its fire!

He was concerned from the very start to supply us with what we really needed, that is, the basics: some grounding in awareness by way of the mindfulness of breathing practice and the development of at least a modicum of positive emotion by way of the *metta bhavana*. Keenly aware, as we were not, of our emotional starvation, he insisted from the start on performing the Sevenfold Puja on retreats. At first I strongly reacted to this, on account of my Catholic conditioning. But it was only a matter of days before he seduced me into the delights of devotion with his measured, strong yet gentle intoning as he led us into the Worship: "With ManDArava... blue LOtus... and JASmine..."

Another impression I have of Bhante in the seedling phase of the Movement is that he was quite starved of people to talk to, as man to man. He would make a bee-line for me on those early retreats and regale me with fascinating stories of his life in Kalimpong, or try to get us launched into discussions on English literature, his second love, it seemed, after Buddhism. But even in that area, I felt on unsure ground with him, teacher of English literature though I was. He was much more widely read than I was and had amazing powers of absorption. It felt very much a case of the genius overestimating the capacities of those who surround him. Though this aspect of contact with him could be a trifle overwhelming, it was also truly educational in that he unwittingly smashed through all sorts of false bases and made

me realise more exactly where and who I was.

Bhante has, over the years, changed some of his ideas and made certain adjustments in his methods of running the Movement, but his basic approach has been constant in other ways: namely, his insistence on the need for regular steps, and the importance of having one's emotions engaged in the spiritual life. Another insistent note in his teaching from the beginning has been the importance of Spiritual Friendship, especially Spiritual Friendship in practice, which depends on regular contact between



people over a long period of time. I noticed early on that he is very reluctant to lose contact with anyone who has shown a strong interest in the Dharma and the Movement, no matter how far they have drifted away. In my own case, I was a bit lazy about keeping in contact by letter and living as I did, so far away from London, I rarely met with Bhante. But he would never let too long a period elapse before sending me at least a friendly card, if not a letter, with the underlying if not overt message that he cared enough to want to keep up contact. I remember one occasion in particular, when I had decided that the distance between us, both geographically and spir-



itually was that bit too great and, perhaps, the Friends was not for me after all. Yet, one day, there was the envelope on the mat, addressed in the familiar small neat hand.

Looking back on those early days of my friendship with Bhante, when my own involvement with the Movement was shallow and sporadic, I have the impression that he was generally feeling his way into things. He had spent the previous twenty years in India and was now very carefully taking in the different atmosphere, cultural and psychological, not in any hurry to come to conclusions with regard to

ence, how they realised with a shock the implications for them of what he was saying. The implications for me of what he had been saying and doing for a number of years gradually saturated my consciousness, drop by drop as it were, so that the realisation, when it eventually did dawn, had a sort of harsh, stark quality to it. I would have to change my life!

His vision of the Movement, of the Order in particular, was something which I had not been able to grasp for a long time. I'm told that the first batch of Order Members had the same experience, even after their ordination. I was impressed by Bhante, very

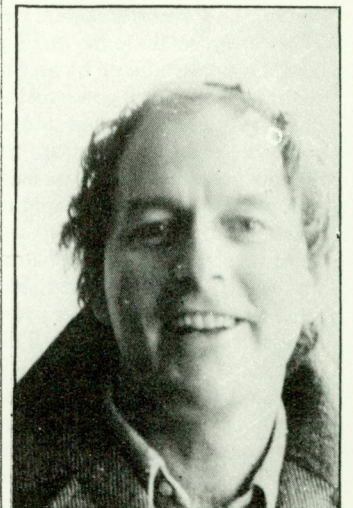
sion of the Western Buddhist Order. In some blind way, I was interpreting this as a sort of foible in his makeup, an aspect of his 'monkishness' which I secretly hoped might drop away as time went on.

Around the end of 1969 or early 1970, whenever I met him, Bhante would talk about feeling that he was on the verge of entering a phase of expansion. He would expatiate on the theory that the spiritual life develops through alternating phases of contraction and expansion. From his return to the West, presumably, until then, he had been in a period of relative contraction (though it hadn't seemed like that to me!); now he was about to spiral up into a great phase of expansion. I had an uncomfortable feeling of being left behind. The Movement was visibly growing. From the handful of people who had attended the first retreats, the later retreats at Keffolds had swollen to over eighty. Bhante had started referring to friends of his that I had not met. The whole scenario was changing. At one of the last Keffolds retreats there were the ordinations of Buddhadasa, Vajradaka and Vajrabodhi, a sort of landmark, in retrospect, in the history of the Movement. It was not long after this that Bhante came to Cornwall near where I was living, for his year-long retreat, leaving a small group of relatively inexperienced Order Members to run things in London. But the period of expansion was really underway. Though I was geographically so close to him now, closer than I had ever been, and though, towards the end of his retreat, he would regularly stroll down to our house in the village to collect his mail and have a chat, I felt there was a gap between us that was widening all the time. In fact, this had nothing to do with any change of attitude to me on his part; he was as genial and helpful as ever. It was to do with my enduring inability to take this Movement of his really seriously.

In February 1974 he wrote me a letter saying he would be returning to Millbrook for a while to wind up his affairs there before moving into the new centre at Castle Acre in Norfolk. When he came back, I asked him for

ordination and shortly afterwards moved to Norfolk with my family, to be closer to the hub of the Movement. Even if the rate of progress was not perceptible for a long time, I had entered a phase of expansion myself. The pace of the Movement was getting to be more exacting, now that certain Order Members were really getting into their stride! From time to time, I would find myself looking back rather nostalgically at those early days, when I could drive down to London and spend a leisurely afternoon walking with Bhante on Hampstead Heath, he in his bhikkhu's robes, the days when he was nearly always available and accessible. Now that he was unequivocally my teacher, he seemed sterner and more demanding. I could understand this, in that more and more demands were being made on him as the Movement expanded.

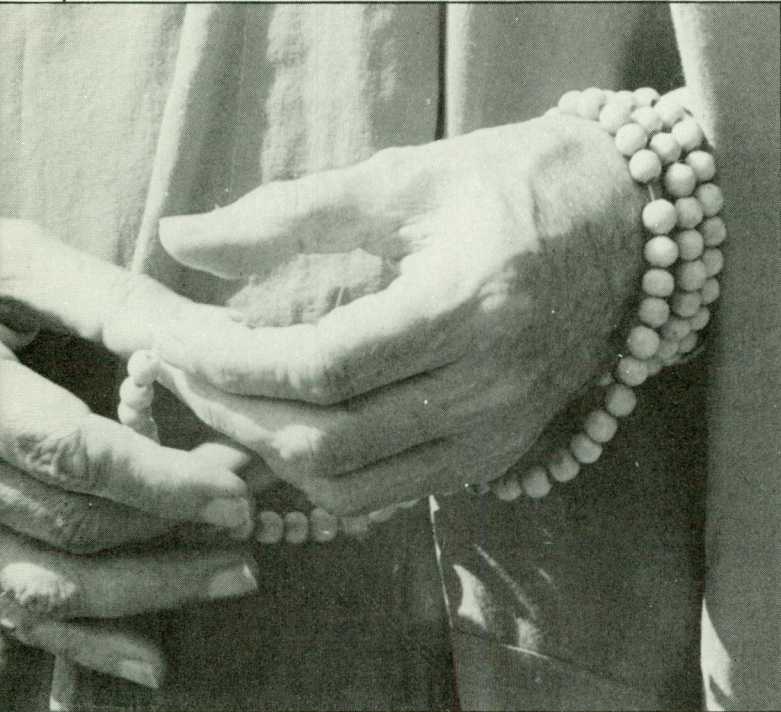
At the breakfast table at Padmaloka, he once reflected aloud on how it wasn't easy to lead a movement. However, it was never long before his face lit up with that characteristic grin, in the wake of some penetrating remark of his. Yes, commitment to spiritual growth and development was hard work, was demanding. On the other hand, I could always look back and realise that I was without doubt a much happier man than I had been in September 1967, thanks largely to the FWBO, to Bhante. Associating with a friend of the stature of Bhante will, I know, always be something of a challenge and, if I continue to keep the pace, an increasingly rewarding one.



Abhaya now

what might be the best approach to the spreading of the Dharma in the West, being wary, as always, of what he calls the 'premature synthesis'. His care, the thoroughness of his approach and the circumspect quality in his makeup was always in evidence. He had to see what the raw material was really like before he could seriously get to work on it. When the truth finally dawned on me of the magnitude of the task ahead as far as my own spiritual growth and development was concerned, it was a humbling experience. He had told me once about observing, in the course of one of his lectures, how the visible effects of the impact of his words registered on the faces of some of his audi-

pleased to have the opportunity to talk to him when I felt the need, but actually joining the Spiritual Community was another thing. I wanted my freedom. Calling yourself by a Sanskrit name seemed unnecessarily eccentric and I could not divine the real significance of Ordination. Thus there remained, as the years went by, this strange dichotomy about the relationship. On the one hand I was lapping up everything he had to say about the Dharma and taking very seriously all he could tell me about what I needed to do to overcome my own personal difficulties; on the other hand, I was not taking seriously what in fact he was devoting his whole life to, namely, the growth and expan-





*The following article first appeared in The Buddhist, in 1965. It reveals Bhante's concern, even then, with the need for a new form of Buddhism.*

# Buddhism in Britain

*By Sangharakshita*

**T**hough Buddhism has been known in this country for a hundred years or more, its 'official' introduction may be said to date from April 23rd 1908, when the English Elder Ananda Maitreya (Allen Bennett) arrived at the head of the first Buddhist Mission to England. The event was unique in several respects. For one thing, whereas in the case of all the Asian Buddhist lands it was foreign monk-missioners who were responsible for the full scale introduction of the Dharma (Mahinda in Ceylon, Kasyapa Matanga in China, Padmasambhava and Santarakshita in Tibet etc.), in the case of England it was introduced by an Englishman who had gone to the East with the sole idea of undergoing the training necessary for the purpose, and who possessed, moreover, a clear understanding of the historical and spiritual significance of what he was doing. Thus the English can almost be said to have converted themselves to Buddhism. This circumstance may partly account for the fact that English Buddhism, while willing — indeed eager — to learn from all available Eastern Buddhist spiritual and cultural traditions, has

increasingly tended to be a sturdily independent growth with an attitude and outlook of its own.

This is particularly true with regard to the vexed question of the different, sometimes rival, claims of various schools of Buddhism. In the course of the fifty-seven years that have passed since the landing of Ananda Maitreya's mission we have not only witnessed the introduction of the Theravada as a living tradition and the laying of the foundations of an indigenous Ch'an/Zen movement, but also had our first direct contact with Tibetan Buddhism, besides hearing something of Shin. From all these forms of Buddhism, the English Buddhist feels he has much to learn. True, he may, and indeed often does, specialise in one or another of them, the one to which he feels most strongly drawn, but his loyalties are not exclusive, and occasional lapses from grace apart he refuses to carry with him over into Buddhism the narrow sectarianism which disgusted him in Christianity and which was, perhaps, one of the main reasons for his abandoning that religion.

Such liberal-mindedness may disappoint, even irritate, those Eastern Buddhists who, failing to

understand both the spirit of Buddhism and the realities of the current situation, would like to see their own school of Buddhism and their own version of the Dharma established in the West to the exclusion of all others; but for the English Buddhist, with his wider (sometimes deeper) knowledge of the Buddha's Teaching, and his greater objectivity, no other attitude than one of liberal-mindedness is possible.

A similar independence of outlook is discernible in connection with the various national cultures with which, in the East, Buddhism is associated and with which it sometimes tends to be identified. The English Buddhist has, most often, been attracted to Buddhism on account of the spiritual principles of which it is the embodiment — principles which he tries, with varying degrees of success, to put into practice in his own life. He is much less interested in the various national cultures wherein, throughout the traditionally Buddhist countries of the East, these principles are embedded. Generally he tends to believe that, as the Dharma becomes acclimatised in this country, it will tend more and more to express itself, through the mouths of its qualified native ex-

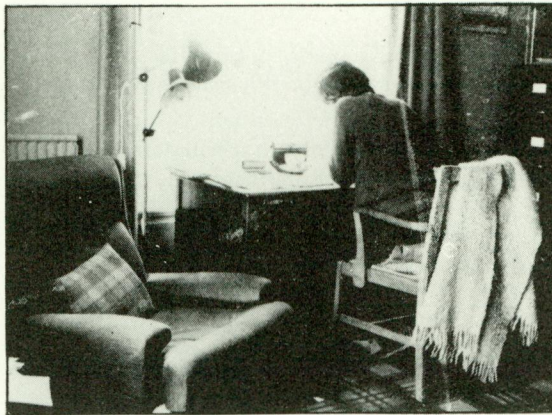
ponents, in terms of the best indigenous thought and culture. English Buddhism, he hopes, far from remaining a frail transplant carefully sheltered from the chill northern blast in some secluded pseudo-oriental hothouse, will in time develop into a sturdy and vigorous growth true both to its own high spiritual ancestry and the conditions under which it has now to live and propagate its kind. Almost the last thing English Buddhists want Buddhism in this country to be is a feeble replica of any of its Eastern prototypes, however admirable these might have been in their own time and place and however inspiring and instructive now as examples.

Time will no doubt show (and the next few decades will probably be decisive in this respect) that the Buddhists of this country, drawing upon the streams of all available Buddhist traditions, and resolving their differences at the highest attainable level of spiritual experience, are capable of creating a form of Buddhism which, finding comprehensive expression in terms of the best of Western thought and culture, will be able to meet the deepest spiritual needs of Western man.



# 'Just Living My Life'

*An Interview  
with Sangharakshita*



**Nagabodhi:** *In a lecture you once gave, 'The Nucleus of a New Society', you said that until you received an invitation from the English Sangha Trust, you had no plans at all for returning to the West. Is that really true?*

**Sangharakshita:** Not only had I never thought of returning, I had quite consciously, definitely and deliberately made up my mind that I would be staying in India. I liked India. I liked the Indians. India was, after all, the original homeland of Buddhism. I was quite happy with my whole way of life there and what I was doing. So that being the case, I had no plans for returning.

*But you did come back, originally for just a visit...*

Officially it was just to be a four month visit. When I received the invitation my

initial response was to say no. But it was Bhikkhu Khantipalo who put it to me that perhaps I did have a sort of responsibility towards the Buddhist movement in England. At that time the Buddhist movement in England — though perhaps I should say London — was divided into two camps, so to speak, and there was a lot of tension between them. Khantipalo suggested that a visit from me could perhaps help to heal the rift, and he put it to me that I had a sort of duty to do what I could.

*Had you kept in touch with developments in the Western Buddhist world during your time in India?*

I had been kept in touch. For instance, I received *The Middle Way*, and had been reading that year after year. I was in correspondence to a limited extent with

Christmas Humphreys, and a few other people like Jack Austin, Dr Conze, and Mrs Bennett. Also, Christmas Humphreys had been out to India twice, where I had met him. He had been out to Kalimpong.

*What were your impressions of the English Buddhist movement on your return?*

I had got the impression that the British Buddhist movement was very much bigger and more vigorous than it actually was. *The Middle Way* was quite a good Buddhist magazine but, as I discovered after my return, it was not really the product of the British Buddhist movement at all. It drew on a much wider range of talent than was actually contained within the active Buddhist movement in Britain.

*Did you find that the rifts and the difficulties were as serious as you had been led to believe?*





On his farewell tour of India in 1966

I don't find it very easy to recall. I think I found that the difficulties were much more complicated.

There were, on the whole, two main camps: one based on the Buddhist Society, and the other based on the Hampstead Buddhist Vihara. But there were several people who had a foot in each camp, as it were, without necessarily always agreeing among themselves. There were also complicating factors like the Chiswick Vihara (The Maha Bodhi Society's Centre), and the Thai Bikkhus; and of course, personalities played quite a part. So there were in fact quite a number of rifts over a number of issues, some of which overlapped. It was sometimes quite difficult to get to the bottom of things and find out what had gone wrong.

Broadly speaking, the Buddhist Society stood for a more ecumenical approach to Buddhism, and the Hampstead Vihara stood for an exclusively Theravada approach. But to complicate matters, there were some people connected with the Buddhist Society who were quite strongly sympathetic to the Theravada, and there were one or two Theravadins who had Zen sympathies in a rather inconsistent sort of way. In addition, of course, there were people who were involved with psychological approaches of various kinds.

A big issue when I arrived was the question of the so-called 'Vipassana' meditation. Some people in the Buddhist Society were seriously worried about this — I think quite rightly — because the way in which it was being taught by some of the people connected with the Hampstead Vihara was certainly very extreme, and they had had a number of quite severe psychological casualties. This had, perhaps, crystallised the issue between the

two groups.

*Did you see yourself as having the specific job of trying to heal the rift, and then returning to India?*

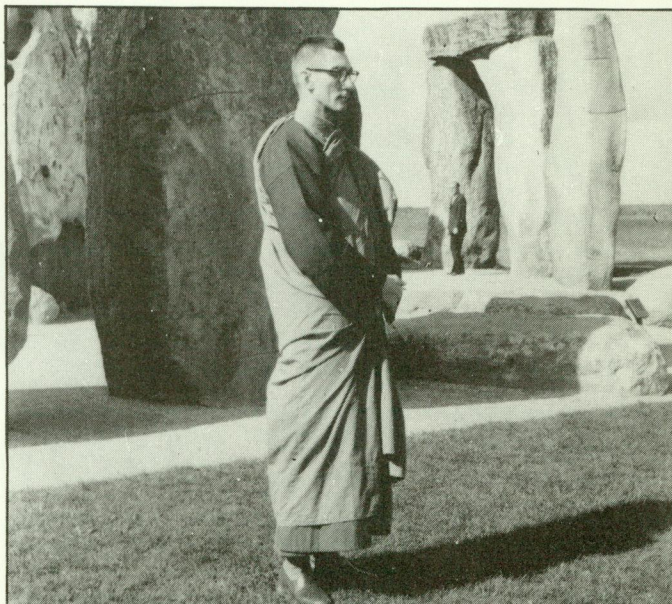
I didn't see it in such specific terms. But it had been put to me that I could be of help. I was, as it were, an outsider; I was a fairly well-known Buddhist of English origin, of some standing and of some seniority in the Order. Actually, it didn't work out quite as simply as that.

In both camps there were moderate, reasonable people, and there were extremists. Some people connected with the Hampstead Vihara didn't like the fact that I used to go along to the Buddhist Society on friendly terms, and even give classes and lectures there. On the other hand, there were people at the Buddhist Society who were very displeased that someone from the 'enemy camp', as they saw it — because I was living at the Hampstead Buddhist Vihara — was actually having the audacity to come to the Society.

So although I may have succeeded in bringing together the moderate people, I think that in the course of two years I offended the extremists in both camps!

*In 1967 you returned to India for a 'farewell visit' before returning to work in the West. But during that visit you received a letter from the English Sangha Trust discontinuing the invitation to work in England. You have said that when you read that letter you immediately saw that it signified a new Buddhist movement. Had you not already seen the need for such a movement?*

I had definitely seen the need, but I had not really seen my way through to getting a new



Looking for cultural keys?

movement going. I had talked about the matter with some friends, and had even made some provisional plans to start what might turn into the beginning of a new Buddhist movement.

I definitely felt the need for some kind of new departure, but I knew quite well that the situation in London was such that even my strongest supporters would not welcome the idea of a new Buddhist group or movement. The general feeling was that it was unfortunate that the Buddhist movement was split already, and that there were already quite a number of groups not getting on. People didn't want another one, even if it was a good one.

*So, in a way, the letter cleared the ground?*

I felt that I now had, so to speak, the perfect excuse. I had tried to heal the rifts, but now no one could blame me for starting up something new.

*I wonder, having read some of the things you wrote in the East, whether you had already formulated a blueprint for a new Buddhist movement?*

I had thought about it quite a lot. For instance, there were two articles I wrote in the early sixties, entitled 'Wanted: A New Type of Upasaka', and 'Wanted: A New Type of Bhikkhu'. Those two articles alone show the way my mind was moving. Even earlier, there were all the strictures, especially on the Theravada, in *A Survey of Buddhism*. But perhaps I should say that even those two articles were 'reformist' rather than, to use the term, 'revolutionary'. They didn't represent thinking in terms of a new Buddhist movement so much as in terms of updating the old one. I was thinking of a reformed Sangha, rather than a Sangha put on a



completely different, that is to say, its original basis, as we have now in the Western Buddhist Order.

*So when you actually began to set up the new movement, in 1967, to what extent did you feel that you were following circumstances, devising it as you went along, and to what extent did you feel that you had thought it through already?*

I can't say that I followed circumstance, but on the other hand I can't really say that I had thought it through. Looking back on my life, it doesn't seem that I have operated in these two ways, actually.

I have always had a very strong sense of the general direction in which I am moving, but I have never been bothered about the details. So when I look back over my life I can see that I am very definitely moving in a certain direction, but I rarely think in what direction I am moving in any sort of specific way. It is as though, if I do what just lies to hand, the fact that I have some overall ideals and principles leads to the creation of a pattern. So I wasn't simply reacting to circumstances, nor did I have a sort of clear-cut plan thought up in advance. You may say that there were these archetypes operative within me, in accordance with which I responded to circumstances, and which therefore resulted in the creation of certain kind of pattern and the creation of a certain type of movement.

*But were you aware at the time of what a unique project you were engaged in?*

I was certainly aware of it being different. Though perhaps even that statement has to be made with reservations, because I certainly saw the FWBO as a traditional Buddhist Movement. I am by nature, you might say, a traditionalist. I don't think of myself as an innovator or revolutionary, or

anything of that sort. If I am a revolutionary, it is a reluctant revolutionary: a revolutionary by force of circumstances. But I was very conscious of certain things that I didn't want to happen in the FWBO. I didn't want it to be the sort of Buddhist group or movement that I had so far experienced in England. On the other hand, I was very clear about the basic Buddhist principles that I wanted to see followed.

*It seems that at the time you were working very much alone.*

One must remember that I was quite accustomed to functioning on my own in India. It wasn't as though I had had the support of a very strong Sangha there; far from it. I had very worthwhile contact with certain individuals like Bhikkhu Kashyap, and later on with Dhardo Rimpoché and other Tibetan teachers, but I certainly never functioned as part of a team. I was quite accustomed to working on my own.

*In India, where I've heard you teaching among the new Buddhists, the medium of communication for the Dharma seems to be predominantly social: the Dharma as a social force. Here in the West, the language seems to have been predominantly 'personal', individual, psychological: the language of individual growth. Do you feel that this is closer to your own, personal approach?*

Oh no. Not at all. I think by nature I'm not especially sympathetic to the psychological approach, nor am I particularly sympathetic to the social approach. My own interest is more definitely spiritual, doctrinal, metaphysical. I get onto these sorts of topics as quickly as I can, using the psychological and the social simply as means of approach. I certainly don't think

that Buddhism is all about psychology in the modern sense, nor do I think it is all about social life, again in the modern sense.

Having said that, I should add that after coming to England I did develop some limited interest in psychology, and did study a little of it. Similarly, as a result of my contact with the ex-untouchables, I did become more aware of the social dimension of Buddhism.

*So did you feel frustrated by a lack of appropriate conceptual models, or cultural keys in the West that could serve as a medium for the communication of the Dharma?*

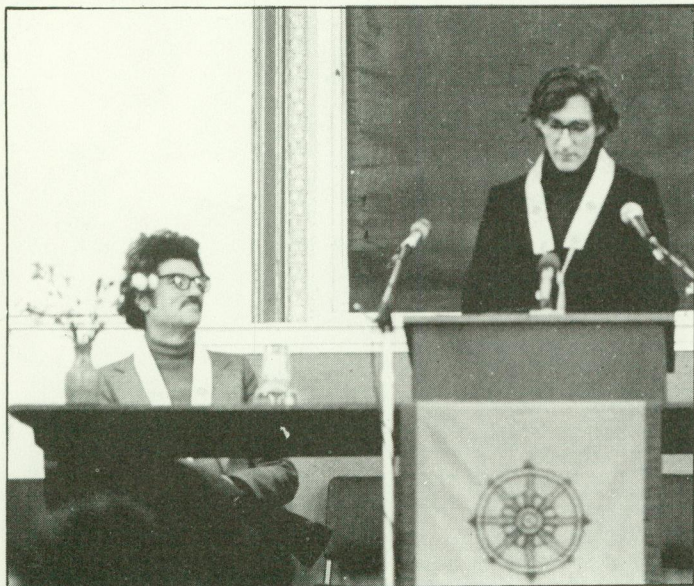
No. I can't say that because I did, after all, use the evolutionary model. If I've ever felt frustrated by anything, it has been simply lack of time, — including the lack of time to acquaint myself with the various models of Western thought.

*In the very early days you did seem to cast your net quite widely. You would quote from the Gospels, Jung, Fromm, Maslow ...*

Those names were very much in the air at that time. A lot of people who came along to classes and lectures had read those particular authors. I just wanted to create a sort of atmosphere of being at home with those authors, recognising a certain amount of common ground, using them as bridges even. I must say, my personal interest in all these writers rather quickly waned.

*So you were in no way looking for a synthesis between the Dharma and those current models?*

I never had any idea of creating a synthesis between the Dharma and those things. I never saw them as being on anything like the same level as the Dharma. If you think of the Dharma as being the expression of the Enlightened consciousness, and these other things, however interesting, as being



A lecture on the Sutra of Golden Light



Leading a puja at the London Buddhist Centre







the product of groupings of unlightened minds, the idea of any synthesis between the two would have seemed really quite absurd.

*At that time, those books and ideas were to some extent tied up with the 'hippy' culture. You seemed to be making yourself quite accessible to that culture...*

Clearly one was addressing people who were looking for something, people who weren't able to find what they wanted, or what they needed, within the existing social system or religious framework. So, in a sense, one was addressing people who had to some extent 'dropped out'. I think that the majority of people who were coming along were not 'hippies' in the literal sense, but people who were looking for an alternative and had in some cases already looked at the various alternatives.

*Nevertheless, some people did think that you were getting a bit too close for their comfort to the hippy generation, and even now the FWBO is sometimes regarded as being a bit of a hangover from that era ...*

I remember someone who became very upset about what he referred to as the 'hippies who were taking over the FWBO'. So, one day, I sat down with him and we went through all the people who were coming to classes (there weren't many of them in those days!). Looking at the individuals concerned, he had to admit that, after all, only one of them could perhaps have been described as a hippy. So I think it was almost entirely projection. In the case of this particular person, clearly he saw the hippy as wild, undisciplined, dirty, erotic, — all those things which he had suppressed, I think, in his own life.

But really, one is not going to recruit one's members from convinced Christians or regular churchgoers! You have to recruit them from people who have, as it were, dropped out. They may still have their jobs and their families, but spiritually speaking one might say, they have dropped out. The mere fact that you have a Buddhist movement at all means that you recruit from these people. Any Eastern tradition that takes root in the West, necessarily, by definition, is alternative, and draws on that pool of alternative people. So to say that the FWBO is an alternative Movement is a truism. So is everything that is not Christianity in this country. The Buddhist Society itself is alternative.

*Are you generally content with the way in which the Movement has developed?*

Well, yes and no. So far so good. Of course I feel that things have not gone nearly far enough yet. There are a lot of things that I would like to see happening. Order members emerge at a much slower rate than

I would like to see. We haven't really effectively covered the United Kingdom; what to speak of Europe; what to speak of the world. We are mainly established in the South-East corner of England, and we have a very long way to go yet.

*Have you felt frustrated by this slowness?*

I have sometimes wondered why progress isn't quicker. Sometimes it has seemed that progress is unnecessarily slow, especially when I see people who have been exposed to the influence of the FWBO for quite a while, but who don't seem to have such a great appreciation of the urgency of the situation as one would expect.

*It is sometimes suggested that when you took a year away from direct involvement with Centre activities, in 1973, there was something of an ultimatum involved. Some people thought that if we didn't pull together and get things moving you might even return to India.*

I don't think that possibility crossed my mind. There were other factors which perhaps people did not appreciate. One was that I had been fully involved in active Buddhist work for quite a number of years. Before my six years with the FWBO there had been two very busy and active years with the Hampstead Buddhist Vihara, and before that, my work in India. And, of course, I had my memoirs to be finished. One of the very important reasons why I went to Cornwall was that I wanted to finish them. Which I did.



### Some of Bhante's recent literary output

*I believe you quite recently said that you have often been surprised to realise how hard some people find it to change.*

I do know that there are quite a number of sincere people who have been involved with the FWBO, perhaps for five, six, seven, and even ten years or more, who try quite hard, who struggle quite hard, but who

nonetheless seem unable to change very much at all. This does sometimes surprise me.

Of course, there are on the other hand quite a few people who do change quite dramatically as a result of their exposure to the FWBO, and their involvement with meditation, spiritual friendship, and so on.

*You seem to be one of those! From what I know about you it would seem that you have always been 100% clear, 100% committed, — to the extent that I sometimes find myself wondering, ‘What’s different about him?’. When did you struggle? When did you have trouble with your commitment? Can you remember such times?*

I can certainly look back and remember some things with regard to which I can connect with others in this way. I had to make a definite effort, even to struggle, with things like mindfulness. I've worked on mindfulness for years together. — Not that I was especially unmindful, but I was very, very conscious that I needed to be much more mindful than I was. So I can certainly remember having to struggle with certain things. But I've certainly never had any sort of doubt as regards my overall direction, or about my — for want of a better term — involvement with the spiritual life. I think that I can also say that whenever I came to exercise my mind, I was able to understand the Dharma. I think that one of the things that surprises me most about people is their inability to think clearly. I think I can say, without claiming too much, that this has been natural to me.

*Again, it seems remarkable about you, so far as one gathers, that you don't seem to have suffered from the kind of emotional unclarity that perhaps gives rise to unclear thinking in others.*

I think I've always had confidence in my own basic direction, so that I did not have to be overscrupulous, for instance, about my interest in things like poetry. Some people whom I knew clearly regarded that as a sort of deviation from the spiritual path. I didn't really think that, although I was influenced by that way of thinking for a while. But eventually I had sufficient faith in myself to feel that my interest in poetry was not inconsistent with my commitment to spiritual life. I think I was to a great extent free from emotional conflict because I had this confidence in myself and in the fact that the direction in which I was moving was the right one.

The more I have been left to my own devices and the less I have had to do with other people, the easier have I found things. So, in a sense, the latter part of my life has been the least easy because I've become increasingly involved with people, and therefore increasingly involved with their



problems and difficulties — which are not my own, and have never been my own. I'm often quite surprised by people's lack of conscientiousness, their unreliability, and so on.

*How, then, have you managed to avoid becoming cynical?*

I can understand people being cynical. But what is cynicism? I think cynicism arises when there is a lack of emotional positivity to safeguard one from cynicism. But I can also see that, despite their lapses and backslidings, and stumbling and straying, people do very often make, at least intermittently, a very sincere effort. So one appreciates that too. It's not as though the backslide is the whole of the story. I'm also very conscious of the fact that a lot of people have had a very unfavourable start in life, so one can't help feeling for them, and understanding, certainly in some cases, why they find it so difficult to make progress, and why there are so many things to be sorted out.

*After the founding of the FWBO it seems that you devoted the first few years to explaining and introducing Buddhism; then a period followed when you put a lot of thought and direction into the more material superstructure: the centres, co-operatives, and communities. More lately, perhaps, your main input has been in the tracking down of woolly thinking, wrong views, and so on. Has this just been a matter of historical circumstance, or would you see that order as representing a hierarchy of priorities in your mind?*

It didn't represent a conscious hierarchy of priorities. In fact I don't think that I had had any idea that I would have to direct my mind to things like co-ops. I directed my mind to those things because they were needed. Certainly I would have preferred to study another poet, or something of that sort.

*I sometimes get the impression that you are taking a view of the Movement's development that extends, literally, hundreds of years into the future. Is this the case?*

I would agree, yes. There are quite a lot of things that I say, or things that we say in the FWBO, the more far-reaching implications of which hardly anybody realises — apart from myself. But I suppose that is only natural.

This is a more conscious thing; it is tied up with my historical sense. I've always been interested in history, so I think I can say that my sense of history is very well developed. I'm very conscious, therefore, of the position of the FWBO and the WBO in the broader context of history and of Buddhism itself. Within that context, twenty years seems to be a very short time indeed.

*Do you think it has been long enough for us to come up against the major obstacles that we will have to face?*

That's very difficult to say. We have to bear in mind that we have limited ourselves to a great extent. You know, we have started the Movement in England, which is perhaps the easiest country to start something like the FWBO in. If we had tried to start in a Communist country, or an Islamic country, say, it would have been a very different matter. We have had a very easy time so far, in the sense that we haven't come up against any real opposition at all. But clearly we will have to move into more difficult areas.



*For much of its history the FWBO has been small, financially poor, 'low-profile' in terms of public image, and very dependent on the input of people with a high level of commitment. But now we seem to be growing bigger, a little richer, and there are more levels of involvement available. We seem to be broadening out. I think this is something you've said in the past that you would welcome. But how do you think we will best maintain the radical spiritual integrity of the Movement as we do broaden out?*

One could think of course in terms of our just broadening out in the sense of dilution; that is to say, with the average level of commitment becoming lower. I don't want to see that sort of broadening. The other kind of broadening is a broadening in the sense of the small committed group operating along a broader front. I see that as something quite different. So when I say I'm happy to see the Movement broadening out, what I mean is that I'm happy to see the committed nucleus operating along that broader front.

*But our centres will doubtless attract into their orbit people whose level of commitment is less than that of, say, Order members. Is not some kind of dilution inevitable?*

I don't think that need represent a dilution. The whole structure of the FWBO is such as to keep 'power', for want of a better term, effectively in the hands of Order members — the spiritually committed — so that they have a deciding voice in everything. As long as we maintain that principle and that structure there is no danger of dilution, however many people there are involved with the Movement. — That is, of course, provided that the Order itself maintains its present vitality. There can be no built-in guarantee for that because that rests on the sense of responsibility, or the spiritual awareness, of each individual.

*But could there develop a 'split' between the strongly and the not-so-strongly committed, perhaps akin to the 'monk-laity' split encountered in the East?*

I think there is that possibility. It is there all the time when one does have radically different lifestyles. But such a split will not develop if people maintain the same level of commitment, regardless of lifestyle.

I think that the danger very definitely lies with those who are committed to, for want of a better term, the family and domestic life style. There is a definite danger that, owing to that sort of life style, that sort of situation, there will come about some weakening of their commitment. If that happens — if there are too many people involved in that sort of life style and with a weakened commitment — a split will



develop, so to speak, between them and those people who are not following that sort of life style, and whose commitment is more vigorous and more alive.

So I think the first point is that the split will not come about at all if Order members equally, regardless of life style, keep up a full commitment to the Three Jewels, and secondly, if those who are involved with a family and domestic type of life especially, are careful to see that they do maintain their full commitment.

It is the responsibility of Order members to keep each other up to scratch. This will be one of the main responsibilities of the Order chapters. Where the Order chapters are not conterminous with a single-sex community it will be good to have a mix of people in them: a balance of people — those who are living in small, single-sex communities, and those who are living at home with their spouses and families.

*Over the next twenty years, would you envisage consistent steady growth along the lines that we are witnessing at the moment, or would you envisage any kind of quantum leap in the Movement's development?*

I would like to see a few more quantum leaps. I think they can be expected from time to time in the life of the Movement, just as in the life of the individual. It would be surprising if there weren't any quantum leaps in the Movement. Such a leap did take place with the creation of the 'Sukhavati'-LBC complex. Again, a quantum leap took place with the establishment of the Tuscany Pre-Ordination Course. You could say that the whole 'Aid for India' project was a quantum leap. It seems to me that such leaps are likely to be associated with particularly capable or gifted individuals.

With regard to the future, I'm thinking here of someone perhaps becoming involved, becoming an Order member who is, for example, a very gifted poet or novelist, who is widely recognised as such, who through his poetry or his fiction could achieve a breakthrough into the whole world of literature for the FWBO. It could of course be into the world of film, or business, economics, and so on.

*So could we be doing more to create the conditions for those quantum leaps?*

Well, the more alive the Movement generally is, the more alive the people it will attract. Certainly the standard has improved over the years. We are now attracting more healthy, capable and balanced people than we formerly did. So it is to be hoped that we will likewise attract in the future more and more people who are positively talented and highly skilled — which will represent a very great increment to the Movement.

*Do you think it is at all possible yet to isolate any trends in the FWBO that may give a clue to the more final nature of Western Buddhism?*

I think it's probably too early. Before then I would like to see the single-sex communities multiplying much more than they have done, and I would like to see the Women's Retreat Centre emerging. I would like to see much more activity on that front.

When Subhuti's book (*Buddhism for Today*) was published I saw this as a landmark, not only for the Movement but for me also. I felt that something had been passed on that would continue. In some



ways I was as happy with the publication of Subhuti's book as Subhuti was himself!

*You have often said that you would like to see Order members conducting ordinations. Do you have any idea how long it will be before that is happening?*

I can't say. I would like it to be this year, but I know it's not going to be this year. It is, in a sense, a responsibility I want to hand on, to leave myself free for other things. I've enjoyed giving ordinations; I love going to Tuscany; I enjoy ordination retreats. But I see other things as now being even more important.

If I look back to the very early retreats, in those days I couldn't even entrust the evening puja to anybody, — not even to an Order member. There were evenings when I had to rush up to London to take a class there and then rush back, hoping that nothing had gone wrong during my absence, in time to take the evening puja, because nobody else could do it.

So consider the tremendous difference between then and now! I don't have

anything at all to do with retreats, except to go along and give ordinations. And it's not as if the retreats now are only as good as they were when I was taking them; they are far better, because they now have the weight of the Movement behind them. So, yes, I can envisage the responsibility of ordinations being taken over by the more experienced Order members sooner or later.

*What are those things to which you want to give priority now?*

As I see things at present I want to give priority to my writing for two or three years. I also want to keep in touch with India; I see myself making regular visits there for as long as I can, if only to give ordinations and give a few lectures. I also want to operate, personally, along a broader front, if I possibly can, and make more contacts in the outside world. Last year, for instance, I had contacts with groups of clergymen, and I gave a lecture to the Wrekin Trust's 'Mystics and Scientists' conference. So I shall perhaps be trying to do more of that sort of thing if the opportunity arises. But my main priority is, of course, my literary work.

*One last question. Do you ever stand back from your work and recognise how much you've achieved, how much you've given?*

By the very nature of the part I've played it's very difficult for me to do this. I'm just living my life, doing what is natural for me to do. I must say that in recent years I have received so many letters from people in the Movement expressing their appreciation of the FWBO, and their appreciation of me for having started the FWBO, that I can no longer really ignore the fact that I really have started something.

*You never allow yourself a glow of contentment?*

I can't say that I experience anything of that sort. To me it seems that I'm just living my life; I'm doing what I want to do and what I think it is right to do, and that's that. — Just as, on another level one might say, the ordinary person doesn't think, 'Well here am I; I have held this job for all these years, and I've brought up these two children and...' He doesn't look back on that with a tremendous glow of pride, because it's just his life.

*Yes, but that is a life lived more reactively — in reaction to certain instincts and conditionings; whereas you have lived your life creatively. Surely there's more individual initiative involved?*

Yes, but in the same way that the reactivity is natural for him, creativity is natural for me. So it doesn't seem such a big deal. Do you see what I mean?



☆ **The Ten Pillars of Buddhism** by Sangharakshita  
Windhorse Publications, London. Price £3.50

16

**I**n April this year over half the Western Buddhist Order assembled in London to celebrate the sixteenth anniversary of the Order's founding. For many, the highpoint of the event was the presentation by Sangharakshita of a paper — a paper which had expanded in the writing to such a length that it had to be read in two 'shifts' with an interval, the total presentation lasting some four hours. Its subject was the seemingly basic one of the ten precepts which members of the Order undertake to observe. I say 'seemingly basic' because it is a maxim of the FWBO that basic Buddhist teachings should be examined deeply, with an effort to see the principles which underlie them, and their practical implications. This is the approach that Sangharakshita took in his paper on the precepts. In fact, as we shall see, he managed to mine so deeply into their significance that he produced enough gold, silver and other precious materials to make ten great pillars. This tour de force has now been turned into a small book by Windhorse Publications.

Although the paper was originally delivered to an audience of Order members, its relevance is certainly not confined to them. At points in the book one feels Sangharakshita addressing different audiences. The book is divided into two parts, and the second part especially would provide food for thought for followers of any spiritual tradition.

The first part is divided into eight sections, and deals with the ten precepts collectively. In it Sangharakshita argues that in many places the precepts have become the 'highest common factor' of Buddhism. As a result Buddhists have tended to put overmuch emphasis on the number of precepts observed. This has consequently divided the Buddhist community into 'first class Buddhists' — monks observing large numbers of precepts, often in a very legalistic way — and 'second class Buddhists' — ordinary people who feel they have done enough if they lead reasonably moral lives and support the 'fulltimers'.

This situation is both unheal-

thy and artificial. The book points out that many of the monastic precepts are simply more detailed workings-out of what was implicit in the simpler lists of precepts. Some have no ethical significance at all, and others were only promulgated to regulate community life when cenobitical monasticism became fully developed. It is also unfortunately true that some monastic precepts are taken in the full foreknowledge that they will not be kept. This, as Sangharakshita points out, is bad psychology, and undermines the spiritual life.

heart of the Going For Refuge. This makes it ideally suited to be accepted as a '*mula pratimoksha*', a common ethical code to which all Buddhists could subscribe. This would further strengthen the unity of the Spiritual Community, wiping away distinctions based on pettifogging concerns about minor precepts, and harmonising the various socio-religious groups into one great Spiritual Community or *Mahasangha*.

It is an inspiring vision, and it is achieved largely by cutting back the luxuriant accretions which have hidden the edifice of

Enlightenment.

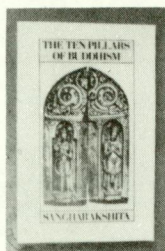
There is much else of interest in the first part of the book, including a correlation of the ten precepts with the *angas* of the Noble Eightfold Path and a tantalising hint at a trade in ideas between Buddhism and both Zoroastrianism and Sufism.

The second part deals with the ten precepts one by one, bringing out their deeper import. In each case we are clearly shown the principle underlying the precept. This is done in part by describing the '*kusala dharma*' — the positive counterpart — of each precept. For example, the book shows that following the first precept is not simply a matter of abstaining from killing; it implies more than being a vegetarian. It involves a radical transformation of one's whole way of life to give up wherever possible any invocation of the 'power mode' (i.e. any means of forcing other people to do things against their will, by any means, from killing to the subtlest forms of emotional manipulation), and replace it with a way of dealing with others based entirely on love. (Love here being not sentimental concern but the 'vigorous expression of an imaginative identification with other living beings').

Each precept in turn becomes a pointer, a signpost directing us in a positive direction, on a journey that never ends. (For one can always become more loving, or wise. Each of the positive counterparts is capable of limitless development.) The beauty of this conception is enhanced by the imagery of the book. Each precept is compared to a great pillar made entirely of a precious material. For instance the tenth precept (leaving behind wrong views and moving towards wisdom) is likened to a pillar of sapphire, the colour of the vast unclouded sky. These ten pillars together are represented as supporting the whole edifice of the spiritual life.

All in all the book provides much food for thought. Sangharakshita offers a vision of a revived Spiritual Community, and an array of insights into Buddhist ethics. It can be recommended to those wanting to set up the 'ten pillars of Buddhism', and indeed to anyone trying to practise an ethical life.

## Raising the Pillars



☆  
*By Vessantara*

After diagnosing the malady Sangharakshita offers a cure. His thesis is that the unnatural split in the Buddhist community can be healed by restoring the Going For Refuge to its rightful place as the central act of the Buddhist life (Going For Refuge here meaning the explicit commitment to following the path to Enlightenment, and helping others to do likewise). If the Refuges become the 'highest common factor' of Buddhism, the common commitment of both monks and 'laity' will be emphasised, and the Buddhist community will be unified.

He argues that the set of ten precepts, because of its correlation with the traditional Buddhist analysis of the individual into body, speech and mind, is the formula which brings out most clearly the principle of individual transformation which is at the

the Dharma for centuries, pruning back to essentials, so that it is possible to see the significance of the basic teachings once again. In a section on 'The Canonical Sources of the Ten Precepts' he shows that they are mentioned in the *Digha*, *Majjhima* and *Anguttara Nikayas* of the Pali Canon, as well as in such important Mahayana works as the *Vimalakirti Nirdeśa*, the *Sutra of Golden Light*, and the *Perfection of Wisdom in Eight Thousand Lines*. In these sources they are represented as being taught to monks as well as to laymen.

**T**he book also strongly attacks the idea that the ten precepts are in any sense rules. For Sangharakshita they are really ten great ethical principles under whose sway one's life more and more falls as one progresses along the path to



☆ **Men and Friendship** by Stuart Miller  
Element books, Salisbury, Price £4.95

17

# *In Search of Friendship*

*By Padmaraja  
and Barry Goddard*

**M**en & Friendship is about Stuart Miller's quest for male friendship over a period of three years. The main question that the book is trying to answer is whether adult men in the mainstream of modern urban life can find true friendship.

The book begins with the statement that most men are disappointed in their friendships, which instead of being a true echo of their manhood, are characterised by thinness, insincerity and chronic wariness. Men become disillusioned with friendship. A crisis in life may cause a renewal of the search for friendship, but this search is only rarely successful. The author himself was faced with a crisis in middle life that made him feel the need to reach out to others. In so doing, he too found his friendships to be unsatisfactory, and so he decided to search for deeper friendship. He realised that he would have to include his own search for friendship in this book, as most of what he read on the subject, and most of the interviews he held, did not truly convey a sense of friendship. The emotional realities were left out; people did not communicate what friendship meant to them. The reader is asked to use his own experience in approaching this book. We are asked to use the author's discoveries to make our own discoveries.

In the first chapter, Miller recalls that when he told people he was going to write a book on male friendship, their reaction was that it would be taken to be a book on homosexuality. "Male friendship. You mean you're

going to write a book on homosexuality? That's what everybody will think, at least. Could be dangerous for you" was a typical reaction. He was surprised. He had thought that people would think of the great western tradition of male friendship that is celebrated by figures such as Homer, Aristotle, Montaigne and Shakespeare. He concludes that "... the estate of male friendship — indeed, of nearly all human relationships — is sufficiently sunk that mere sex remains at the centre of people's imaginations. The only moving human relationships that people seem able to conjure up are erotic ones." Deep friendship between adult men, he says, is quite rare in modern American society. Many men think that they have friends, but in fact do not. The question 'Do you love your friend enough to

put your life in danger?' quickly clarifies the distinction between true, deep friendship and the superficial friendships that a lot of men take for true friendship.

Stuart Miller then states what he calls the 'critical dimension' of friendship. Though we usually conceive of friendship in terms of action — what we do for our friend and what he does for us — the most important factor in friendship, the critical dimension, is a 'holding in the heart'. If this 'holding in the heart' is present, then we have a friend; if it is not present, then we do not have a friend. Continuing the theme of the essentials of friendship, Stuart Miller presents some interviews, in one of which we read that 'Real friendship ... is a kind of divine act that enables two people to share feelings, feelings that life denies continually.'

Another aspect to friendship, he says, is the overcoming of competitiveness. We are normally always on our guard with other men; to some extent, we see them all as potential enemies. But with a male friend we are at ease; we trust the other man fully, and we move from expectations of roughness to those of softness and peace. In so doing, our 'cultivated aversion and alienation from masculinity, inevitably including a degree of self-alienation' is overcome. The author feels that the admiration close men friends feel for each other is an especially important part of friendship, and goes right against the tendencies to compete that are encouraged by modern society. The chapter is summed up as follows: 'These are some of the special aspects of close male friendship: a willingness to take a dangerous stand for another; a special relaxation and safety; an end to competitiveness, alienation and self-alienation; a pleasure in doing masculine justice to others, an enhancement of men's own vitality and being. Above all, a holding in the heart.'

In the next chapter, entitled 'The Death of Intimacy in our Times', the author gives an analysis of the vast social forces in America working against friendship. He himself had to work against these forces in his own quest for friendship, and this led to his understanding of them. The main point in his analysis is that an intimacy, a sense of relatedness, was historically the norm in western society, and out of this social fabric male friendship could emerge. Male friendship is, in fact, the norm in most societies. Since then, however, there has been a change

**MEN**  
*Friendship*  
STUART  
MILLER

☆



in emphasis from the *collective* need to the *individual* need, and a consequent breakdown in intimacy. The author gives an outline of the economic, religious, social, philosophical and political factors contributing to this change in emphasis. We are also shown the effect that modern working conditions often have on the possibilities for friendships. The overall effect is that we become detached from our emotional, physical and social nature, and come to identify with a socially cultivated mask, a mask that is characterised by its lack of human depth and its lack of feeling. In this condition, he says, we are incapable of friendship.

Marriage can also have an adverse effect on friendship. Society used to consist of a tight fabric of relationships. Now that this has broken down, people have attempted to use just one relationship as a substitute: the relationship of romantic marriage, which most people see as a life-long, exciting intimacy with one other person. But it is not so. In a world that tends to denature the emotional being, the modern man clings to his wife, and sees her as his best friend. This causes fear and guilt to become attached to any relationships the man might have outside marriage. Within marriage, the man has become totally emotionally dependent on his wife. He fears making a mistake, because with changing legal status and better job opportunities, his wife can afford to leave him. Vital masculine energy that might be used to bond with another man is drained away. Even if the husband wants male friendship, he is cautious about asking his wife for permission. As his relationships with other men become less vital, he starts to feel suffocated in the arms of the Great Mother, an archetype he gradually projects onto his wife. His wife may see what is happening, and may suggest he develops male friendships. But, with the forces in society against him, he may find it impossible. He starts to experience himself as a male failure, unable even to implement his wife's simple advice.

This loss of vitality in the man sours his marital relationship. It also sours his sexual life. If men

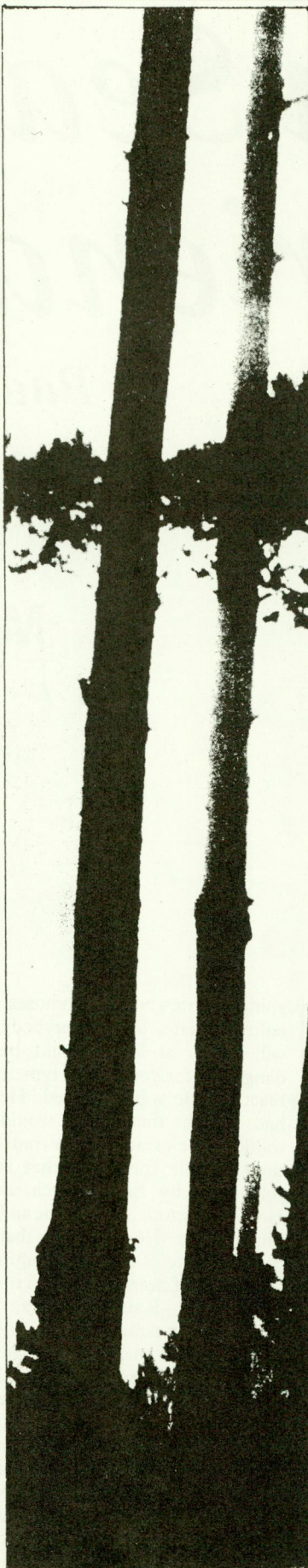
had deep relationships with other men, their married sex lives would be better.

Also, we tend to discard our male friendships in the name of a 'personal growth', an individualism that does not value consistency in human relationships, and which helps destroy the very idea of serious male friendship. This discarding of friendships causes a shame and mourning in us that is so bitter that we repress it. We then feel a puzzling emptiness in our lives, which we rush to fill with the love of women and with notions of our growth into rational adults. This repressed shame and mourning leads to a hardening of the heart, and we become less open to friendship.

An important effect of these analyses for the author was that they enabled him to feel the legitimacy of his quest for friendship. He could see that the absence of friendship in modern society is an abnormal situation, and that the desire for friendship is a perennial human need. We deny our nature and our past by thinking it un-masculine to be interested in male friendship, and by thinking it connotes an unwillingness to stand on our own.

Miller then describes his own first attempts to develop deeper friendships. They were unsuccessful; his established friendships seemed to be locked into grooves, and the new friendships he tried to develop, although sometimes showing promise, faded away. He was simply dropped by these new friends, and the fact that they could do this, he concludes, is the result of there being no social matrix out of which friendship can arise and establish itself, no background expectations of a publicly esteemed institution to live up to. He realises at this point that to succeed in his quest will require 'a wise and patient art, perseveringly practised and fed by irrational faith'.

He then makes the point that, unlike in the classics, there are no models of friendship in contemporary literature to guide us, and so to learn more about the art of friendship he interviewed some men who had friendships. We are given vivid reconstructions of three of these interviews that seem to capture the nature of the



friendships; in fact, all the interviews in the book, as well as the author's accounts of his own exchanges with his friends, have this quality, which makes the author's quest very real and involving for the reader. The value of these interviews is that they embody, rather than stating abstractly, values found in male friendship. Some values emerging from these three interviews are deep emotional involvement, a loyalty to one's friend persisting beyond his death, and the valuing of one's friendship.

An account follows of the author's experience of friendship when he goes to live in Europe and is isolated from his old friends in America. He writes to his friends, and in so doing they come alive for him as 'vividly imagined realities', and he is able to see them, and the nature of his relationships with them, more clearly. This causes his feelings of friendship for them to intensify, but he can see that he still needs to engage more deeply with them. He starts to feel intensely the desire for a deeper engagement. This desire, he says, is the repressed reciprocal of the modern diseases of loneliness, boredom and insecurity.

He then describes a deeper engagement which occurred soon afterwards, when a friend of his, who is normally proud and irascible, let down his defences and asked for help. That moment, says the author, 'focussed an understanding' between them. In an encounter with another friend soon afterwards, the author came to realise that an aspect of deep engagement is the support it enables friends to give each other.

In a friendship then presented to us we read that true friendship involves 'breaking down the barriers of ordinary social distance — barriers of touch, of criticism, of secrecy and of possessions.' The two men in this friendship are homosexual, and Miller says that when it comes to friendship, heterosexual men are less masculine than homosexual men.

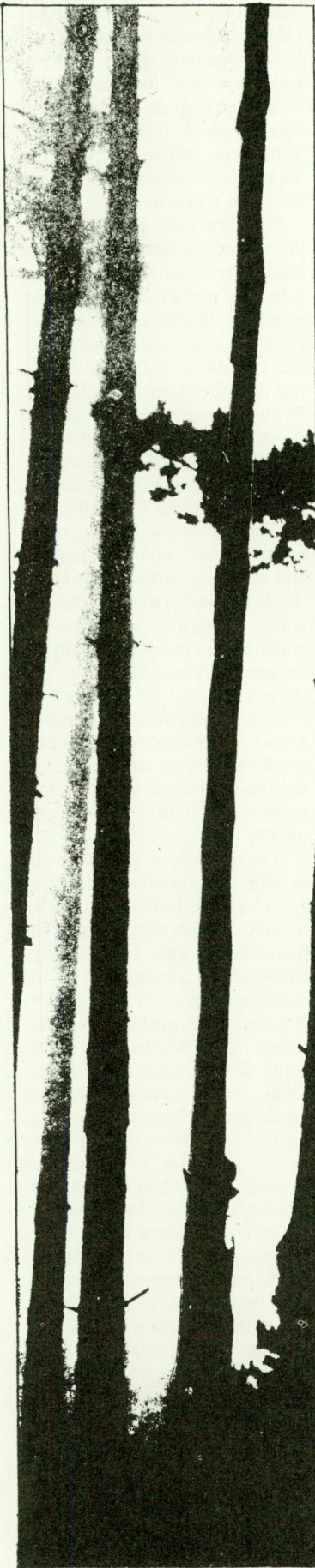
In a later chapter entitled 'male Friendship in Europe', we are given an analysis of the differences between friendship in America and in Europe. In Europe, as in America, true friendship is very rare, but in



European society we find the presence of continuity, obligation and complicity. In Europe, there is an inner expectation of continuity in our friendships; even if we have not seen someone for years, the relationship still exists for us. There is also obligation; we feel socially obliged to meet the needs of others, which is not the case in America. And there is complicity. Complicity between two men is a 'secret understanding' that exists outside the conventions of society and which, paradoxically, one is socially obliged to keep up. The essence of complicity is that one feels free to be oneself with one's friend, one is not bound by convention. With reference to the absence of complicity in American friendship, the author says: 'The notion of friendship as allowing and even fostering a profound inner freedom is one that we need to bring back to our sense of what serious adult relationships can be'.

In the final chapters of the book, the author's quest for true friendship starts to come to fruition. He visits America, and has stronger contact, with more good feeling and interest than he had expected, with the friends he had been writing to whilst in Europe. He realises, though, that these are not yet deep friendships. He feels his friendships lack commitment, a commitment in which each friend has full claim on the other. Commitment, he says, should be more than just naturally arising — it should be declared. This was once the case; friendship between men came with socially sanctioned brotherhood oaths, and mutual assistance was obligatory.

Just before he visits America, however, one of his friendships starts to seem full of possibility for a deeper involvement. We are given vivid descriptions of this friend, who is called Larry, and of their encounters with each other. Over a period, Stuart Miller feels a strengthening bond developing between them, which he feels is mainly due to the seriousness with which both take the friendship. One point that Larry makes is that one has to have the heart for friendship; in the past, he had been let down by people, and he knew from this that they could never be friends.



Miller feels that he is on the brink of a deep friendship with Larry, and this is the note on which he writes the final chapter 'In Lieu of a Conclusion', in which he states that this book cannot be concluded, as the quest for friendship is an ongoing process. This final chapter is dense with his own conclusions and with advice on developing friendships.

He says that this book, instead of providing answers, has more often provided painful and urgent questions. He hopes that these questions have helped to 'strengthen men readers, to shake men out of the deadening self-isolation, their programmed obsession with work and achievement and personal growth, timid lack of commitment, and learned fear of intimacy - on all of which the state, the corporation, and various other organisations of modern life prey'. He has tried not to simplify or to idealise friendship, and has noted all its complexities, such as 'the longing, the embarrassment and shyness, the stiffness, the excessive excitement over small gestures of caring, the easily bruised feelings, the resentments, the shame, the guilt, even the boredom'.

He declares that true male friendship, which is very rare in America and in Europe, requires intimacy, complicity, engagement and commitment, and is profoundly personal. Intimacy, he says, is a sense of 'being at ease, and being understood and understanding'. He describes engagement as '...a place in a man's inner being, a space in his life, that is daily occupied by another man, a place that is regularly charged with love, concern, thoughtfulness — and sometimes, resentment, anger, even deep hurt. Engagement means emotional involvement'. Commitment is 'the understanding that a friend will be there, will not let go, that a friend will maintain the engagement in the face of obstacles, misunderstandings and temptations, that a friend is prepared to undertake inconveniences, even sacrifices'. True friendship is personal in that it does not depend on the situation in which it arises. If the situation changes, the friendship, if it is an essential friendship, will not be changed. Then, with reference to deep emotional engage-

ment with a friend, we read '...from such inwardness, all necessary, dignified and pleasant actions can grow'.

The author feels that his own quest, though incomplete, has been worthwhile, and he senses instinctively that the quest would be worthwhile for others. His quest has intensified all his friendships, and having this circle of friends who care for him makes him feel that life is 'subtly richer, more secure, less alone and more sacred'. The most important factor in the deepening of his friendships was that he gave himself to people in many little ways. He recognises that the level of friendship he has created with most of his friends, though it is not deep friendship, does have a value of its own, and contains the potential for further developments.

He then gives his advice to the reader on developing friendship. Firstly, we must accept the necessity for an art of friendship. We must be deliberate about it, especially with so many opposing factors in our culture, factors we should be keenly aware of. He says that 'Bold acts of consciousness are... the true basis for an art of friendship... The arts of friendship we need are inner acts, acts of the depth of the heart, of self-searching, and of decision'. The two basic inner acts are accepting the necessity to give friendship one's closest attention, and recalling the social obstacles to friendship. We must also be willing to acknowledge the hurt of our own loneliness, we must be shameless in thinking and talking about male friendship, we must be willing to be hurt repeatedly by people we befriend, and we must be persistent; people back away — friendship, nowadays, seems strange to them. We must commit time to friendship, and we must set an example to our potential friend by 'acting forthrightly... and with the courage of your own delicate needs and desires by living the openness, generosity and commitment you want from him'. As we practise it, the art of friendship becomes easier: 'gradually, you give up the shame and embarrassment while still retaining an essential vulnerability'.

The book ends, deliberately, on courage. When two people



take friendship seriously, then it no longer seems unnatural. They take courage from one another, courage to overcome the social obstacles to friendship. We also need courage to give friendship the total commitment it requires. The author himself, on the brink of a deep friendship with Larry, finds himself backing away with questions such as: 'Are you sure you want to get this involved? What if he makes demands on you? Gets sick, loses his money?' To meet such fears, he says, only courage will do. The book ends with Pindar's prayer: "Oh Gods! Let me have the strength and courage to love my friends!"

**W**e could explore at length many of the aspects of friendship found in *Men and Friendship* — in fact, to do them all justice would require a whole book. We can, however only mention a few of the most important aspects.

Firstly, a brief description of friendship as found in the FWBO will give us a context in which to place *Men and Friendship*.

Two kinds of friendship can be found in the FWBO — 'vertical' friendship and 'horizontal' friendship. Both kinds of friendship are based on a shared ideal, the ideal of Human Enlightenment. Vertical friendship exists between two people of unequal spiritual development. The person who is more developed has a greater experience of the ideal. He is called a 'spiritual friend' and is committed to his less-experienced friend's development, to his emotional and intellectual education. He educates him by exemplifying the qualities that his friend wishes to develop, and by showing him those areas he needs to change in himself. This education takes place in a context of mutual appreciation and trust. Horizontal, or 'peer' friendship is found between two people of similar spiritual development. The value of this friendship lies in the support and sustenance it enables the friends to give each other in their efforts to develop.

We do not find vertical friendship in 'Men and Friendship', nor do we find the ideal of Human Enlightenment as a basis for friendship. We do, however, find horizontal

friendships — friendships between equals; friendship is an ideal for Stuart Miller, an ideal which, at best, he shares with his friends.

There is a chapter in the book entitled 'The Fear of Homosexuality' which is not covered in our summary. This fear is an inhibiting factor in friendship. Stuart Miller says that a factor in this fear is that most men confuse gender identity with sexual preference, so that to be homosexual is to betray a lack of manliness. One way in which this fear inhibits male friendship is that nowadays it is possible to have both sex and friendship with a woman, and this combined with the 'pseudo-Freudian truth' of all relationships being fundamentally sexual, leads to the assumption that all male friendships involve homosexuality.

Overall, though, this chapter presents a confused picture, and we are left with no clear impression of whether or not homosexuality is acceptable, and how it stands in relation to friendship. Miller does admit to being afraid of homosexuality himself, and it is probably from this that the confusion arises. He finishes on a clearer note by saying that sex may or may not be present in a



**Stuart Miller**

friendship, but what is most important is being true to one's love and tenderness with a man.

Perhaps we should add that if homosexuality is present, then it is perfectly acceptable. It is important to the development of true friendship to overcome the fear of homosexuality, a fear that can be present whether or not one is homosexual. We should therefore feel free to explore this area for ourselves.

A chapter entitled 'Women's Lessons' is based on interviews

with women on male friendship. One woman says that young boys have a tenderness, an ability to feel, that gets lost due to the almost exclusively 'rough, tough' way in which their fathers play with them. Miller concludes that we will need real strength to bring back this tenderness.

The first point to make is that young boys do not have a genuine tenderness. Genuine tenderness is born of strength, not weakness. Secondly, the 'rough, tough' play can contain an implicit warmth — it is not always the denial of feeling that the woman thinks it is. Being a woman, the interviewer is probably only accustomed to warmth expressed in a more explicit manner. It is the difference between a mother's love, which is explicit and unconditional, and a father's love, which is implicit and makes demands on the child. 'Father's love' is a masculine love which is born of strength, and which is very much lacking in our society, with its emphasis on sexual equality and the glossing over of sexual differences. Thirdly, Stuart Miller does not tell us how to develop this tenderness; he does not give us a method, a method which, in the FWBO, we possess.

The first way in which we can develop this tenderness, this ability to be more fully human, is by restricting our most important friendships to men. In a relatively undeveloped person, 'love' is invariably a desire to incorporate, or appropriate, qualities which are absent from his or her own personality. For instance, in the case of a man, he is unable to experience his 'femininity' except indirectly, through the projection of those innate qualities out onto a woman. In friendship with a man, however, though this same projection may be present, it is not so intense. There is not the polarised attraction of opposites that we find between men and women, and so the projection is more easily removed. We are thus in a better position to develop those innate 'feminine' qualities within ourselves.

The most ideal conditions for developing these qualities can be found in the men's community. In this single-sex situation, we have to learn to care about others, and not live out this 'softer' side of

ourselves vicariously through women. Negatively speaking, we have to overcome the tendency to compete, the tendency to see other men as potential enemies and rivals. Unless this element of care is present, there can be no community.

We also read in this chapter that women share feelings with one another, and that men generally do not. This may well be the case. But just as men tend to relate over-exclusively through ideas and reason, in the same way, women have a tendency to get caught up in their own emotional reactions and subjectivity. Men must develop their ability to feel, and women must learn to be objective, to relate through concepts and ideals. A friendship based on feeling alone remains on a purely subjective, psychological level. Real friendship has to contain an intellectual element; in fact, the deepest friendships can only be founded upon a shared spiritual ideal. G. Lowes Dickinson describes the nature of this sort of friendship in *The Greek View of Life*: 'For it was the prerogative of this form of love, in its finer manifestations, that it passed beyond persons to objective ends, linking emotion to action in a life of common danger and toil. Not only, nor primarily, the physical sense was touched, but mainly and in chief the imagination and intellect.'

Friendship in the FWBO is of central importance, for without it there can be no spiritual community and therefore, for most people, no truly spiritual life. The spiritual community is a free association of people all upholding the same ideals, following the same path, and helping each other to evolve and develop as individuals. The author does not have this spiritual perspective, this wider context in which to see friendship — friendship as the blueprint for a more truly human society.

This book is still, however, an important one, containing many interesting ideas and insights which we can make use of within the wider context of the spiritual life. In the absence of any contact with a living cultural or religious tradition and the support it gives, Mr Miller is to be congratulated for re-discovering for himself the human necessity for friendship.



# FACETS

## A BUDDHIST ARTS CENTRE

21

By Satyadeva



Padmaraja, Chairman of FWBO (Surrey), compares the growth of the Rainbow businesses in Croydon to the setting up of the Hogarth Press by Virginia and Leonard Woolf, who began by producing limited editions from a small hand press on their dining-room table. Their subsequent success was described by John Lehmann in *Thrown to the Wolves* as 'a triumph of imagination over capital', a phrase which could be applied to the progress of Rainbow from a back street wholefood shop with stock worth £50 in 1978, to a thriving High Street business turning over about £330,000 a year.

When the new premises were taken in Croydon High Street in 1981, Rainbow Building undertook the major task of transforming the old furniture showroom into what now comprises Hockneys Restaurant and Wholefood Store, the Croydon Buddhist Centre, and the new Arts Centre and bookshop, each stage of the work being financed by the increasingly successful businesses.

The final phase of the building work was the reception area. Limited film seasons had already been taking place in the main hall, but it was not until the reception area was complete that the Arts Centre could function fully.

Early this year, a date was fixed for the grand opening of the Arts Centre in its completed form: the Centre was to be launched on April 27th. Thus began an increasingly intense period of planning and preparation of many different kinds. Against the backdrop of all the usual industry in the businesses and the Buddhist Centre, letters were going out almost every day to prospective speakers, the programme was being designed, the film sea-

sons were being planned, books and postcards were being ordered for the bookshop - and of course the new reception area was being built.

The reception area is a beautifully designed space - very light, with large glass doors and skylights, and white tiles on the floor. It is a very busy focal point for the whole complex. It is where people arrive for all Buddhist classes or arts events; it houses a bookshop, which sells books connected with all our activities; and it is the information point - this is where people's enquiries are answered. Therefore it is the main interface between the Centre and the world. There are many opportunities here to make contact with people - with a much wider public than before.

This is really the purpose behind the whole conception of the Arts Centre: to bring into contact with the movement different kinds of people - people who may not be interested in, say, meditation classes. It is another medium for the communication of the Dharma. In the programme for the opening season, the aims of the Arts Centre are clearly explained:

"We are not simply trying to set up yet another Arts Centre. We are not concerned with art simply as entertainment.

"Art is not a luxury. We see art as a necessity - a means to the propagation of human values. Just as the work of, for instance, William Morris, Ruskin, Gerard Manley Hopkins or the Pre-Raphaelites can be seen as an assertion of humanity in the face of the Industrial Revolution, a voice for all that is most genuine and of truly human value in the midst of the growing materialism and mechanisation of their age, so we are trying to contribute to the assertion of human values today.

"We feel this is no less necessary now than it was in the 19th century - perhaps the need is more pressing today than ever. Our resolve to set up an Arts Centre reflects our belief in the power of art to change people - to educate them both emotionally and intellectually; in other words, to communicate a sense of values that can transform their lives."

The Arts Centre also gives us a way to establish links with influential people - for instance, the people who have already expressed their good wishes and sympathy with our work include Michael Holroyd, Stephen Macdonald, Sir Michael Tippett, Richard Attenborough, E.P. Thompson, Rollo May, and Sir Peter Pears, who will be coming to give a talk at the Arts Centre next year.

All the arts events are taking place in the main hall of

the centre, a multi-purpose space which was built to be adaptable to uses as varied as a cinema, lecture theatre and yoga studio. Like the new reception area, it is light, airy and spacious. Behind the stage hangs a huge backdrop - a painted reproduction of a Picasso lithograph of a soaring dove, with wings outstretched, and carrying flowers - which was chosen as the motif for the Arts Centre's opening season: an exploration of the theme of non-violence. This theme was chosen because it is not only very central to Buddhism, but is also a vital contemporary issue. Running concurrently there is a season on Surrealism.

The Arts Centre's inaugural programme consisted of three special events on consecutive evenings, on the weekend of 27th to 29th April.

The first of these was a lecture by the well-known literary



The reception room and bookshop



figure Michael Holroyd, biographer of Lytton Strachey, Augustus John and George Bernard Shaw. He delivered to a packed house a brilliant lecture which he had specially written for the occasion on 'Lytton Strachey and the Victorians'.

Part of the lecture was devoted to Strachey's most popular book, *Eminent Victorians*. In speaking of the book, Mr. Holroyd drew attention to the preface, where Strachey wrote that 'Human beings are too important to be treated as mere symptoms of the past. They have a value which is independent of any temporal process - which is eternal, and must be felt for its own sake'. Yet the four eminent Victorians he chose to write about were not independent of the temporal processes of Victorianism. They were, in fact, perfect examples of the two false moral systems of the Victorian age that had merged together; ecclesiastical Christianity and the religion of worldly success. Strachey suspected each of these eminent Victorians, and thought they were scoundrels. For instance, he suspected Cardinal Manning of being a scheming and ambitious prelate, especially cunning at outwitting the pangs of his own conscience. But these four Victorians were in fact examples of something much more. Cardinal Manning, Florence Nightingale, Dr. Arnold and General Gordon were examples of, respectively, Victorian evangelism, Victorian humanitarianism, Victorian liberalism and Victorian imperialism, each of which Strachey debunked, or 'took the humbug out of'.

'We see General Gordon indulging his secret passion for pain, and becoming a willing instrument, not of God, but of the extreme imperialist faction of the British Government', said Mr. Holroyd. 'The messianic religiosity that motivated Gene-

ral Gordon was all too well-recognized by the weary generation just back from the trenches of the First World War, a generation that was sickened by the chauvinism of bishops and journalists who had been declaring that God, though not themselves, was in the trenches on their side. No wonder *Eminent Victorians* was so popular after the war.'

The First World War severed the 1920s from the past. The profound emotional impact of the horror and slaughter convinced many that the values which held good before the war must now by definition be wrong if indeed they were not responsible for the war.

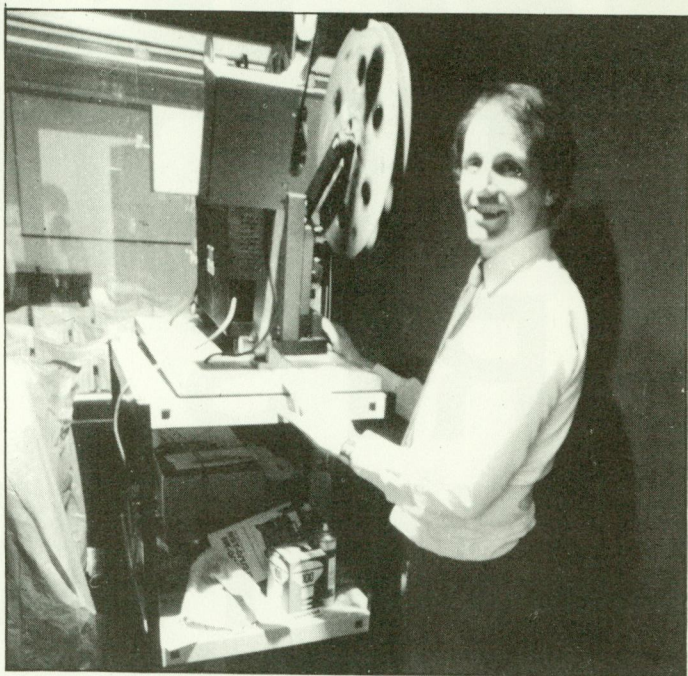
Mr. Holroyd also quoted the novelist David Garnett's thoughts on *Eminent Victorians*. Garnett had realized that 'Lytton's essays were designed to undermine the foundations on which the age that brought war about had been built'.

The evening had an extremely exciting atmosphere. Rainbow Building had been working round the clock for the previous few weeks to finish the reception room. It was finished that afternoon. The paint was still drying when Mr. Holroyd arrived.

The weekend marked the culmination of an immense amount of work. There was a great sense of a vision being realized - of history being made.

Mr. Holroyd's lecture was very well received, and was followed by a sparkling question and answer session. Afterwards he sat amongst the crowds in the bookshop signing copies of his books.

On the following night there was a concert by members of the celebrated Koenig Ensemble, the first event in our surrealist season. The programme included music by Satie, Poulenc, Faure, Ravel and Debussy, and some clarinet pieces by Stravinsky. The evening culminated in a showing of the film 'Entr'acte'



**Khemaloka in the projection room**

Rene Clair's famous avant-garde short, accompanied live by Satie's original four hand piano score. The film, which featured appearances by Man Ray, Erik Satie, Francis Picabia, and Marcel Duchamp, was composed on the high crest of the Dadaist movement and 'unified by its contempt and disdain for the bourgeois version of culture', as the critic put it. The film is a succession of outrageous jokes, such as mourners nibbling at the hearse decorations at a funeral. This film and the piano accompaniment provided a superb finale to the evening.

The third event was *Not About Heroes*, the highly acclaimed play about the friendship between the war poets Siegfried Sassoon and Wilfred Owen. Stephen Macdonald, the author, introduced the play, which was specially adapted for the occasion, and played the role of Sassoon.

The play began with the first meeting of the two poets in a mental institution during the war - where they had both been sent as victims of shell-shock. It went on to show how, even in these most adverse conditions, feelings of love and tenderness developed between them.

Sassoon, who at the time of their meeting was already quite well-known, perceived that his friend was potentially a greater poet than himself, and quite selflessly nurtured Owen. Under Sassoon's guidance, the younger man's genius gradually flowered.

The play was a perfect exposition not only of the ideal of non-violence, but also of the theme of friendship between men.

The two seasons - non-violence and surrealism - have continued with series of lectures and films. The next lecture in the non-violence season is 'Tippett's Pacifist Ideals' on Tuesday 26th June. Meirion Bowen, a close friend of Tippett, will be speaking on this major theme in Tippett's work, and particularly

about Sir Michael's latest large-scale composition, 'The Mask of Time'. *The Guardian* called this work, which is dedicated to Mr. Bowen, 'an anthem for a nuclear age'.

On 3rd July, Mark Kinkead-Weekes, Professor of English at Canterbury University, who has written a biography of D.H. Lawrence, will be speaking on 'Lawrence and the Great War'. The lecture will go into the growth of Lawrence's anti-war attitudes and his unsuccessful scheme (with Bertrand Russell) for mobilizing public opinion against the war through lectures and essays. Professor Kinkead-Weekes will make particular mention of the works of Lawrence which reflect his anti-war views, such as *Women in Love* and *England, My England*.

On 10th July there will be a lecture on 'Tolstoy and the Discovery of Peace' by Dr. R.V. Sampson, one-time professor of politics at Bristol University. He will talk about Tolstoy's life and his theories of the causes of war - 'why we're in the mess we're in' - referring especially to Tolstoy's many essays and letters.

On 24th July, Jennepher Duncan of the Courtauld Institute will be speaking on 'John Piper as War Artist'. This lecture, which comes in the wake of Piper's eightieth birthday celebrations, will review his paintings between 1939 and 1945.

On Monday 30th July, The Venerable Sangharakshita will bring the season to a resounding conclusion with his perspective on the theme of non-violence, under the title 'Buddhism, World Peace, and Nuclear War'.

There has also been a series of lectures on surrealism. In the surrealist season, Richard Humphreys, a Tate Gallery lecturer, has given a series of four illustrated lectures on the surrealist painters Marcel Duchamp, Giorgio de Chirico, Salvador Dali and Rene Magritte. There will also be a lecture on



**Music at the opening celebrations**



'The Velvet Gentleman - Erik Satie and his Music', by Jennifer Purvis of the Guildhall School of Music, on 17th July.

There has also been a poetry reading by Jeremy Reed. He gave an inspired reading from his most recent anthology *By The Fisheries*, published by Jonathan Cape, which *The Guardian* acclaimed as the best book of poetry since Ted Hughes's *The Hawk and the Rain* in 1958. There was a very interesting question and answer session afterwards, and Jeremy signed copies of his book.

Valuable assistance in the planning of the surrealist film season was given by Paul Hammond, the organizer of the surrealist film season at the National Film Theatre. The season includes classics such as the Bunuel and Dali films 'L'Age d'Or' and 'Un Chien Andalou'. Mr. Hammond also gave a lecture on 'L'Age d'Or'.

The non-violence films include Attenborough's 'Gandhi' and 'Oh What a Lovely War', 'The Deer Hunter', and the silent screen version of 'All Quiet on the Western Front'. On 25th May, in front of a very full audience, Kevin Brownlow introduced his film 'Winstanley', about the establishment of a Leveller Commune in the wake of the English Civil War.

Future seasons are already being planned. The next major season begins in January, and will be devoted to the theme of friendship, another subject of crucial importance in the spi-

ritual life.

This autumn, there will be film seasons connected with the A-level and O-level English literature syllabuses - films of Shakespeare, Dickens, Steinbeck and Golding, for instance. This will provide an opportunity to establish contact with teachers and students in local schools and colleges, which is an essential aspect of integrating the Arts Centre into the local community.

Very often the FWBO has been described as functioning through three aspects - residential communities, right livelihood co-operatives, and public Buddhist Centres. In Croydon, a fourth aspect has now been added: the Arts Centre. It is, of course, an experiment - a new departure for the movement, but at least in Croydon, it promises to be as successful and as important as the other three aspects of the FWBO.

The Arts Centre's influence could eventually become very far reaching indeed. Perhaps in a few years' time it will be at the heart of a thriving Croydon - or South London - Arts festival. In setting this up, perhaps we could look to and take our inspiration from Benjamin Britten in his creating the Aldeburgh Festival.

He started, with Peter Pears and a small circle of friends, by staging concerts in local churches and village halls. Today Aldeburgh is an established international festival of music, with world renowned performers.

At the centre of this achievement was the all-pervasive influence of Britten's genius. How much more might be achieved in Croydon, as a result of the

influence of the Dharma - or, more specifically, of the Venerable Sangharakshita's vision of for the Movement.

## Buddhist Activities

There have been two new Buddhist classes going on: our regulars' class now takes place on a Sunday morning, leaving Thursday night free for our new 'Intermediate' class. At this class, which is already very full, we are having meditation, discussion groups, and a series of talks on the Lotus Family. It provides a more natural next step from the beginners' evening than our regulars' class and, with so many beginners coming along, has been an important innovation.

This change also means that the regulars' class is attended only by those whose involvement with Buddhism is more serious. There is also more time on a Sunday morning, so it has become an opportunity for more intensive practice of meditation and puja - it can even be extended into a day session - or for study groups which go deeper than discussion on Thursday nights.

With all this happening, as well as the arts events, the Centre is now in use every day of the week - very often with two events happening on the same evening. For instance,

after the Yoga course finishes on Fridays, the hall is immediately filled with chairs for the film; and as our regulars disperse after the Sunday morning class, there are usually others arriving for perhaps a beginners retreat, or a Yoga day, or even a non-violence workshop.

We celebrated Buddha Day with a packed Open Evening at the Centre, with many different activities available. There was meditation instruction, a Yoga demonstration, a video of the Venerable Sangharakshita, and communication exercises. Giving yet another opportunity for new people to make contact with us seemed a perfect way to celebrate the occasion.

Another extremely successful event was the showing of Graham Coleman's highly acclaimed trilogy of films on Tibet. It was satisfying to show to very full houses, films which not only depicted Buddhists, but seemed to be directed in a very Buddhist spirit. Through all these different media, the Dharma is being very energetically propagated in Croydon.

## LBC

Most of the administrative functions previously undertaken in the LBC reception office have now been moved elsewhere, and many people have already commented on the improved meditative atmosphere around the Centre. Danavira has joined Vajracitta in manning the Centre during the day, and as a result there are meditation classes every lunchtime, Monday to Friday, as well as a more welcoming reception for visitors, and an increased use of the Centre for meditation and devotional practices.

In April the Centre was the venue for what was probably the largest gathering of Order Members to date, when about one hundred and twenty attended an Order weekend which coincided with the triple celebration of the anniversaries of the founding of the FWBO, WBO, and the birth of the Buddha. The Venerable Sangharakshita presented his paper, 'The Ten Pillars of Buddhism' to the Order at the local town hall during the weekend. (See separate article)

We were fortunate again when Bhante paid us another visit to take part in the festival celebrating the Buddha's Enlightenment. On this occasion he chaired a symposium of talks and led the festive Puja, which

included mitra ceremonies. We were happy to welcome many visitors from the West London Centre, who had joined us for the day, and the numbers of people present were such that we had to use closed-circuit television to relay the event to those who could not find a space in the main shrine room.

The Dharmachakra Tapes and Transcriptions team (mentioned elsewhere in this issue) have now established themselves in our basement, while further down the road the Cherry Orchard restaurant have started opening in the evening, - with promise of success to judge by initial reports; and although we cannot claim direct credit, since it is definitely a facet of life around the LBC we are happy to report that the latest Aid for India appeal looks to have been another great success.

## W. London

At the end of March, the men's community at 'Ratnadvipa' moved house to a new property near the Portobello Road (a road famed for its antique market). The community has also taken on a new name. It is now 'Padmavyuha', which means 'Array of Lotus'. Being a two-floor flat in a large West London house, it is a much more spacious and attractive place for a community than the old 'Ratnadvipa'.

In the meantime the women's community, 'Sarvasiddhi', have had to move from their old premises, and are now living at the old 'Ratnadvipa'. This is a temporary measure as possible, however, and it is a priority to see them housed in permanent premises shortly.

On the Right Livelihood side of things, both businesses have been moving ahead in 1984. In Friends Foods, the new year saw a reorganisation of the business, and with its new manager, Annie Fowler, has been picking up financially and also as a team situation. In Friends Gardening, more large prestigious contracts have been coming their way. In particular, the team has undertaken to maintain many of the gardens in the ownership of the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea and has taken on a contract with the health authority in the Borough of Haringay. This work is enabling the business to donate large sums of money to the Centre over the summer months, thereby helping to spread the Dharma to more people who wish to be in contact with it.

The lease on the Centre premises in Baker Street ends in May 1985, and since a larger, permanent centre is called for, we shall not be wanting to renew the lease. Plans for a new project are in the pipeline, and deve-

lopments will undoubtedly be reported in the future. In the meantime, we can fruitfully use the Centre in every way possible: to give the Dharma in the present, and to build up resources for the future.

## Leeds

Since the last report we have had a very enjoyable and successful day retreat in Leeds, organised by the Leeds Buddhist Group. Over twenty people attended the day which was led by Aryamitra and supported by a few people from the Manchester Buddhist Centre. Aryamitra hopes to hold another such event in the near future, and meanwhile he holds classes every week both for beginners and regulars.

Purchasing the new Centre is being met with the usual sort of drawbacks of property buying. Negotiations are still underway to put a six bedroomed house close to the city centre. Many people both in Leeds and other areas have generously donated towards a deposit but we are still far from meeting our financial requirements and donations are always gratefully accepted.



## Padmaloka

24

'I don't know where we're going to put them all', was Ric's response to the growing booking sheet for our Open Spring Retreat. Fortunately he managed to find somewhere for everyone to sleep on the event which, as well as being the first of its kind held at Padmaloka has also been one of the most successful events held there.

The retreat was of the 'Open' type, suitable for all men whether they had meditated before or not. It attracted people from all areas of the country; some who had been on retreat before and others for whom this was their first contact with the FWBO.

Nagabodhi led the retreat with his unflagging energy and enthusiasm, giving people an exciting taste of the Dharma. He was backed up by an experienced team of Order Members, who gave talks, taught Yoga, Tai Chi and Karate, and took people for those country walks that characterise every retreat at Padmaloka.

Shortly before this retreat there was another new retreat held here - a day Sesshin. Vajrananda led the programme of intense meditation that constitutes a Sesshin, which he combined with the practice of Puja and periods of silence. People taking part found that they had engaged with their practice afresh and reached deeper levels in meditation. We will be holding a similar event, lasting a weekend, later this year.

As well as these new retreats, there have been two more 'Men's Events' so far this year. The first, on the theme of 'The Mandala of the Five Jinas' was very well attended. A special shrine in the form of a Mandala was built in front of the main shrine by Suvajra, Buddhapalita

and Saddhaloka. This beautiful mandala, combined with the large number of people participating, produced an almost awe-inspiring effect in the Pujas. The six talks, given on different aspects of the Mandala were chaired, with his usual good humour, by the Venerable Sangharakshita.

The May Men's Event, entitled 'Ekayana' (the One Way), lasted three days over the Bank Holiday rather than the usual two. The difference that this made was most noticeable on Sunday afternoon, when people would normally be preparing to leave, instead they were starting to really settle in. The next Men's Event will also last three days. The fact that numbers attending were less than the one before was noted by Bhante in his summing up, and he used the opportunity to remind us how important these events are. He pointed out that it is on these occasions that we have the opportunity to establish links with people from other centres and to appreciate the national, indeed international nature of the Movement. He also commented on the high standard of the talks at Men's Events and said that anyone attending them regularly would receive a very good basic education in Buddhism.

## Manchester

In the last few months we in Manchester have been quite active in taking the Dharma out to people outside the context of our public centre. In March Suvajra spent a weekend in Liverpool, attending the annual Spiritualists Conference. Suvajra was invited by the organisers of the conference to give a talk on meditation and to teach it to anyone who was interested. Many people were and Suvajra sold over £50 worth of Windhorse Publications during the weekend. About ninety people attended



Sarvamitra circulates after Devamitra's talk

the conference, and most of them insisted on thanking Suvajra for his contribution which took most of Sunday afternoon. Suvajra found the weekend well worthwhile and enjoyable. He hopes to be invited again next year.

On the 15th April, Suvajra was on his way to Wolverhampton to attend and speak at the British Celebrations of Dr. Ambedkar. The celebration was organised by the Dr. Ambedkar Memorial Committee of Great Britain. Suvajra was asked to give a short (five minute) talk. He was ninth in a programme of twenty six speakers! The celebration was attended by 200-300 people, all of them from the Punjab community of Great Britain, mostly from the Midlands of England, although there were quite a number from other areas too, especially Glasgow. The Glasgow contingent were all famil-

iar with the Glasgow Buddhist Centre and with Ajita. The afternoon passed very typically of Indian meetings of this kind, judging by Order members' reports from India. Many speakers gave rousing speeches on Dr. Ambedkar in Hindi. The talks were interspersed with almost deafening music, mostly songs about Dr. Ambedkar. In Suvajra's short talk, stretched to seven minutes, he emphasised the importance of the individual act of Going For Refuge, the act with which Dr. Ambedkar started the Dharma revolution in 1956, which has spread all over India and has continued to this day. He then spoke about the projects that the FWBO have initiated in India: Jai Bhim!

Coming back to Manchester, Suvajra and Ratnaguna were asked to run a 'meditation workshop' at the 'Cahoots Festival' - a week long kind of 'Mind Body and Spirit' festival. Although the festival had the inevitable 'all is one' flavour, it was well worthwhile our having a presence there. Many people enjoyed and benefitted from our meditation workshops.

Lastly, Devamitra gave a public lecture at the Manchester Town Hall on May 8th, organised by the Manchester Buddhist Centre. Thanks to our publicity campaign, Devamitra delivered his lecture 'The Buddha of the North' to an audience of seventy-eight people. The evening was a resounding success and, partly as a result, our Thursday meditation class has been filled to capacity in the weeks since the talk. Thank you Devamitra. We plan to hold another public lecture of this kind, followed up by a Buddhism course, also perhaps held in the City rather than at the Manchester Buddhist Centre, in October.



A work period on the Easter retreat

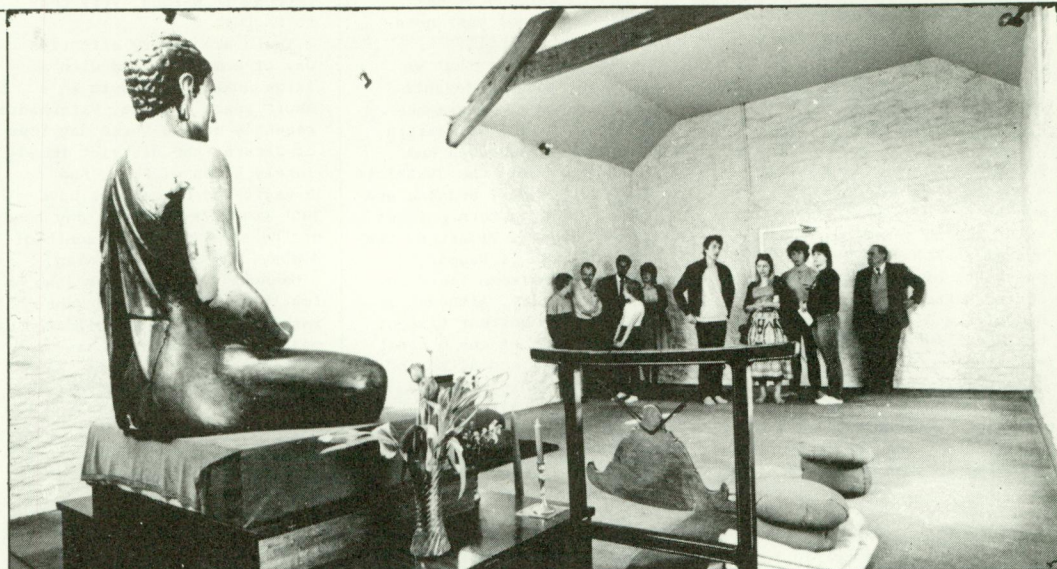


## Vajraloka

The last three months have been, as usual, the quietest of the year, with only twenty-five men in all staying in the Centre for varying periods of time. The weather has been remarkably mild, with a two-month drought that has only just broken - in the middle of May. It has been very pleasant to be able to spend more time in the open air.

At the height of the hot weather, at the end of April, Vajraloka held its first ever open day. We invited all our neighbours, as well as everybody else living locally with whom we have made some kind of connection. The day marked our fourth anniversary, and we decided to hold it because during those years - which for us have passed very quickly - we have seen virtually nothing of the locals, not even our nearest neighbours. Our way of life of course makes any kind of meeting rather improbable. This is as it should be, but we were concerned that any doubts about the sort of thing we get up to should be allayed! The local people, like people generally, know virtually nothing about Buddhism. When we first came here we encountered a lot of local opposition. This dissolved after we had lived here for a while and people discovered what Buddhists are actually like. So we wondered what people thought of us now.

We initially sent out some thirty invitations, with a small, intimate affair in mind. But there was a 'media leak'. A small piece appeared in a



Guests are shown the shrine room on Open Day

local Welsh language newspaper, which was in turn picked up and reported in an English paper. We knew nothing about all this, and only found out when a reporter from Harlech TV arrived to do a short report for a news programme!

In the event it was a beautiful, sunny day, and well over a hundred visitors arrived, many from Betws Gwerfil Goch, the nearest village, and quite a few others from miles away.

We showed them round the buildings and the shrineroom - the focal point of interest. All afternoon there came a succession of groups, who would stand, surrounding a community member, to discuss Buddhism and ask questions. Christianity is quite strong locally, and many of our guests had come from Chapel that very afternoon.

There was some quite lively discussion, though it would have been useful, where finer points needed to be made, to have known some Welsh.

Sagaramati had set up a bookshop and a photographic display, showing the place as it had been before we worked on it, and this jogged many people's memories. One of our visitors had actually lived here as a boy, and knew the place well. Many seemed impressed by the work we had done, and everybody was clearly pleased to have had the opportunity to visit us. It seems likely that we will repeat the idea annually.

The ten days leading up to the open day were taken up by a working retreat. Before that, the work periods for two weeks had been spent laying a conc-

rete floor in the space under our dormitory, so that walls could then be built. A lot was achieved during the ten day working retreat, though the two new guest rooms were not quite finished. The final glazing, plasterboarding, and painting should be done by the time you read this.

As well as almost transforming the dorm, we also almost completed re-roofing the upper barn, and we also repainted the shrineroom and other guest rooms.

The rupa and shrine itself have now been brought forward a few feet, so that we can circumambulate the Buddha between meditations. This makes quite a difference to the way in which we experience the shrine.

Kamalasila

## Norwich

Since their return from Tuscany our two new order members Advayacitta and Satyapriya, have put themselves wholeheartedly into the Centre's activities. Advayacitta has been supporting and leading classes and acting as Centre secretary. Satyapriya, has been putting his energies in Friends Building Service, our cooperative. Both of them have provided a very welcome boost to our efforts.

The building business now involves four men working full time, and with plenty of work on their books. With plans for training courses and evening classes in the future to upgrade the skills of all involved, it promises to become a very solid right livelihood project.

At the Norwich Meditation Centre we recently celebrated Buddha Day with a very successful day of meditation, lasting from 7:00am to 6:00pm. At 6:00 Order members, mitras, and friends

from Norwich and Diss came together for a meal, followed by two talks and a festive puja, which included a mitra ceremony. The occasion was added to by the appearance on the shrine of a new rupa, sculpted over the past eighteen months by Do Phillips, a Norwich mitra. Unfortunately our photographs have not been developed in time for this Newsletter, so we will be giving a fuller report on the rupa next time.

## Glasgow

The Glasgow Buddhist Centre is now well into its second year. The day-team manning the Centre is still the same as it was in Jan '83, with Ajita, Amoghavira and Jinavamsa working full-time. In the evenings we are still running a full range of classes with a new meditation course every four weeks. These have been successful, with between ten and twenty people attending each course.

Padmapani was here for four weeks earlier in the spring, and he has now completed the

magnificent mural in the first reception room.

Over Easter we closed the Centre for ten days. Ajita and Jinavamsa went to Norway to teach meditation to some Norwegian Friends, while Uttara led a ten-day introductory retreat in the Eastern Highlands. Fourteen people came for the four days over the Easter weekend, and ten stayed for the whole period. Every evening one of the Order members gave a talk, which was followed by a discussion. The talks gave a basic introduction to the FWBO and Buddhism, covering the Three Jewels, the Precepts, and the Sevenfold Puja, and the Bodhisattvas whose mantras we chant at the end of the puja.

A measure of the retreat's success was the marked increase in attendance at our Centre afterwards, - two of the men asking to move into communities, and another joining the gardening team.

The first big event of the new session was our Wesak celebration. About forty people attended the festival which started with meditation and readings from *The Light of Asia*. In the evening we had a

meal, followed by a talk and a festive puja.

Recently we held our annual 'flag day' for Aid for India, collecting £174.00 during the day. On the first of June we are holding another, this time for Dharpo Rimpoché's school.

Over the past year, Dharma-vira has been going from strength to strength with his Karate class at the Glasgow School of Arts. He now runs three classes a week, each with an average attendance of 25.

The two co-operatives are both doing well. According to Tejmitra, the manager of Friends' Gardening: "This year we have already completed a large number of important jobs. The team is now five-strong, and we seem to be working at a much higher level of efficiency than ever before".

'Ink' now have a seven-man team, two of whom, Susidhi and Dave Living will be going to Tuscany this Autumn. They have recently bought £17,000 worth of computer equipment which, among other functions, will deal with all their estimating and invoicing. They are also planning to move into bigger premises later this year.



# POONA

26

For us, the most significant event of the last couple of months has been the foundation stone laying ceremony of our hostel at Lohagaon, on the outskirts of Pune, on 8th April. Shri N M Kamble, a leading Buddhist and the President of the Maharashtra Congress Party, was kind enough to do the honours. It was a very successful programme and perhaps the grandest that the village of Lohagaon has ever seen. The building work started immediately after, and now considerable progress has been made.

The hostel is the first of those being funded by Aid For India's 'Action in Education' appeal. It will eventually house about thirty boys from the age of eleven to sixteen. They will be mainly Buddhist, although some will be taken from other backward communities such as the nomadic tribes and ex-untouchable communities. They will be taken from villages and home situations where it would otherwise be difficult for them to get a proper education. Fees will be minimal - about 60p per month, and in cases of extreme economic hardship, even this will be waived (the average cost of keeping each child is likely to be £10-£12 a month, about half of which will eventually be refunded by the government).

The hostel will start in June although the buildings won't actually be ready by then. However we are fortunate to have got the loan of a big house until the hostel is completed. Otherwise we would

have had to wait until next June as the school year goes from June until April.

Immediately after that we celebrated Ambedkar Jayanti. Besides the usual programmes in Pune and around, Lokamitra, Bodhidhamma, Sanghasena and four mitras toured the districts of Yewatmal, Akola, Budhana and Amaravati, the eastern part of the area known as Vidarbha, the centre of which is Nagpur. In all we gave fourteen lectures, usually two a day. Although it was almost the hottest time of the year in one of the hottest places in India and although we were often doing five or more hours travelling a day, it was by no means a difficult tour, but on the contrary most enjoyable and extremely effective. Everywhere we were welcomed, and what we had to say was very much appreciated. We concluded the tour with a two day retreat in an orange grove near Amaravati.

This was our third tour of Vidarbha. As has been mentioned before in the Newsletter, this area is very important for Buddhism in Maharashtra. The people are more enthusiastic and confident than elsewhere and it was in Nagpur that Dr Ambedkar converted to Buddhism. It is therefore seen as the centre of the Buddhist Movement in India. Bhante has very strong connections here and is keen to revisit as soon as possible. The Nagpur people remember him very well with strong feelings of devotion, and are looking forward to his return. So we are preparing the ground. Sanghasena spends most of his time in that area going from village to village with Bhante's tapes, our publications, and giving lectures himself, as well as preparing our tours. This coming October we are planning to have a week long

retreat in Wardha, very near to Nagpur.

Tours are a very effective way of communicating with a large number of people in a short space of time. Virabhadra recently made a three day tour of Satara, the district immediately south of Pune. And Asvajit and Dhammodaya have just completed a seven day tour of the coastal region south of Bombay, known as the Konkan.

Meanwhile in Sholapur (the fourth largest town in Maharashtra) we have consolidated our Dhamma activities, and since February have been having weekly courses and classes led there. First Shakyand and Dhammarakshita conducted courses on the Three Jewels, and in April Vimalakirti conducted his extremely popular and effective course on Dr Ambedkar's Dhamma Revolution, based on a lecture Bhante gave in Bombay two and a half years ago. This month Asvajit and Dhammarakshita are to take a four day retreat there. The local people are very keen for us to have a permanent centre there, but at present there is just no one able to take that responsibility.

In Pune we are giving a new structure to our beginners' general classes. We are planning a year's course based around the twenty-two vows that Dr Ambedkar asked his followers to take while converting to Buddhism. These vows make it very clear what old religious and social practices to leave behind, and what basic Buddhist practices they should try to follow. This is a very useful list and obviously very necessary when one remembers the millions of followers of Dr Ambedkar and the fact that besides him there was almost no-one else to give any guidance to them. And 95%

if not more would at that time have had no formal education at all. Unfortunately not enough attention has been given to these, and many people are confusing Hindu and Buddhist practices, which if continued will lead to the rapid deterioration of the Dhamma here. We use these twenty-two vows as a basis for many of our talks, and hope that by using them as a basis for a year's classes, and therefore penetrating them a little deeper we will be able to clarify a number of very basic points on Dhamma of direct relevance to people here.

At the time of writing our annual month's Mitra Retreat is taking place at Saddhamma Pradip, our meditation Centre. This year as last year we have three distinct parts to the retreat. In the first and last parts we study, and in the middle section we do a lot more meditation, with periods of silence lasting up to four days. Last year we were in a delightful mango grove the other side of Pune. But delightful though it was, we are very happy this year to be in our own Centre. Besides the obvious benefits, it does mean we can do a lot of constructive work on the land. And with the rains about to start, this is a very important time of year. We are preparing to plant many trees as well as rice in our field.

Since Bhante opened the Centre on December 11th last year, a lot of use has been made of the building, with womens' retreats, mens' retreats, general retreats, Mitra retreats, and Order week-ends. Already the present building is too small for our needs and as soon as we have more money we will start the second stage of the building as well as buying more land.

(Editor's note: In India, Poona is called Pune)

# BOMBAY

March to May is the hot season here - the combination of temperatures up to 110 (F), and high humidity inclining one to no activity more vigorous than lying under a fan groaning. As luck would have it, these are also the busiest three months of the year for outward going activities, especially as Dr Ambedkar Jayanti falls on April 14th and Buddha Jayanti in May. Virtually every night one or other of the Order members is out giving a talk in a locality - our most basic activity, and one we are currently emphasising so that we can become as widely known as possible, as well as communicate to as many people as we can what it means to be a Buddhist. To back this up we have started some new classes in different areas of the city to provide follow up for those interested in finding out more. Shortage of manpower prevents

us doing more than the three beginners' classes, one regulars' class and two study groups that we currently run each week, in addition to the locality talks.

Our activities have been, however, seriously disrupted by the recent communal violence between Hindus and Moslems in the city, our Centre being situated in a particularly sensitive area, making it unsafe to go out after dark for the past ten days. Indeed, as I write, the army is very much in evidence on every corner, patrolling the main roads in jeeps, the alleys on foot. Since their arrival the situation has improved, though their presence can only be temporary. In the long run this atmosphere of mistrust and hatred may, perhaps, add an edge to the urgency we already feel to spread the Dhamma here as widely and as quickly as possible.



We have no report from Malaysia for this issue, but we do have this picture of the members of a new community that Jayapushpa has established there.



# AHMEDABAD

Since our last report, besides our on-going classes and study groups, the main events have been Ambedkar Jayanti on April 14th, and Buddha Jayanti on May 15th. On Ambedkar Jayanti, Mangala and Bakula went to Sidhpur and Unjha in North Gujarat, where they both gave well-received talks at programmes organised by the 'Mass Movement'. As a result, we are now organising a retreat there, since many people showed interest in what we are doing.

Apart from these talks, Mangala also gave several talks in Ahmedabad, including one at the Arya Samaj Hall, where a new TBMMSG publication, *Castes in India* by Dr Ambedkar, which has been translated into Gujarati, was released to the public.

On Buddha Jayanti, TBMMSG joined forces in the morning with the Gujarat Dhamma Society

at Gandhinagar to celebrate the occasion, before returning to Ahmedabad for another celebration in the evening. On these occasions Mangala gave talks, and another publication, *The Ideal of Human Enlightenment*, the first in our series of booklets, called Dhammadipa was launched.

Our attempts to find somewhere to hold retreats has so far been unsuccessful, though we may shortly have the use of a three-roomed flat in a quiet area, which, while not ideal, will be very helpful. Also our attempts to find land or premises for a hostel have not met with much success, but we will continue with our efforts, as such projects are very much needed to help poorer children receive a reasonable education.

# Auckland

Out of the need for better planning and organising two things have emerged. Firstly, a 'forward planning' meeting has been formed where ideas can be explored, views expressed, misunderstandings and confusions cleared up, and where a greater clarity and harmony can arise about our goals and the best ways and means to actualise them. Secondly, a system of teams, circling round a nucleus Centre Team, has been formed, responsible for day-to-day maintenance. This includes an 'events team' to organise festivals and special activities. This system overall is operating quite well, and fresh inspiration is beginning to flow.

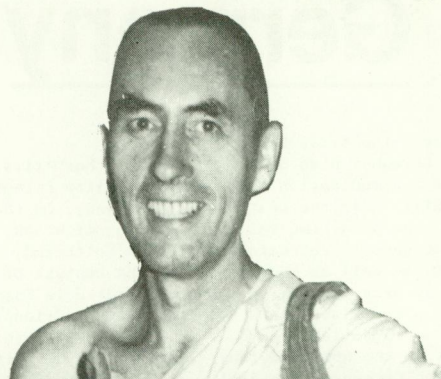
Another innovation is a 'facility charge' for our Centre activities except those with specific fees like Meditation Courses. This was introduced, after long and soul-searching debate, to counteract the need to make constant 'dana' appeals which, in a way, seemed to defeat the whole purpose and meaning of 'dana'. We also wanted to call forth a greater sense of responsibility for maintaining the Centre financially from all of us who use it. So far the system appears to be working well.

A couple of events stand out. First, the celebration of the Buddha's Birthday. One of the notable features, and something quite new, was an exhibition of Buddhist art (paintings, thankas, rupas, books, etc.) which a Friend, Trish Sole, devised and presented. The items were from several people's personal shrines. She set up mini-

shrines with associated 'families' of Buddhas and Bodhisattvas, and the atmosphere which built up in that small, simple, central room was amazing - so tangibly serene and peaceful. Cushions and a couple of chairs were placed so people could sit and contemplate the display and experience the 'presence' of the 'glorious company' of the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas.

One of the exciting parts of FWBO Day for many of us was a telephone call to Bhante, which had been arranged beforehand by some of the women mitras, as a surprise for the rest of us. While we were gathering in the evening Bhante was preparing in the morning, to leave Padmaloka for the celebrations in London and to present his paper on 'The Ten Pillars of Buddhism'. The recording of the call was not all that good, but it was enough to give us a feeling of Bhante's presence as we gathered for our festivities, adding a specially joyful quality to the proceedings, and evoking an awareness of the world-wide nature of the Friends.

On Buddha Day Purna gave a talk entitled 'Calling the Earth to Witness', drawing illustrations from the 'mythical', archetypal accounts of the Enlightenment experience of the Buddha, and emphasising the need, both individual and collective to rise to a higher level of understanding and positivity, in order to overcome the modern day equivalents of Mara, that threaten to undermine our spiritual confidence.



# AURANGABAD

A nucleus of people who are really interested in what we are doing is now forming, and they are coming to our study group Wednesday nights. Our regular class at Killiark Vihara is still poorly attended by the locals, however, but kept going by the same nucleus of regulars. In June we will move this class to another viihara where the response should be better.

Our most successful and enjoyable functions are still our garden parties, which are now held in a park next to the bus station. The one at the end of April was attended by a hundred people. Since it is so hot now, we have singing games instead of races! Then we all eat together, our plates loaded with tiny portions of different foods. Finally I give a talk or ask for questions. We always conclude with the chanting of

the Last Vandana.

I have been out in the Maratwada area to give programmes, and Mahadhammavir, who stays with me, has been out several times to Gaikwadi and Bhokadan to give talks and do marriage ceremonies. On Ambedkar Jayanti I did a country programme which included a procession in a bullock cart preceded by a country band and shouting people. Every hundred yards the procession would stop and the men would demonstrate their skill with the use of lathis - long sticks, a kind of martial art. The previous day I had dedicated a viihara in Beed District.

Nagasena has now started a small class of his own, which is much appreciated in the locality. Our mitras are all well, and we now have a very active lady mitra, Mrs Labhane.

Jyotipala

There were about forty-six people including a few children, who gathered in the shrine room for the final festive puja, which Ratnaketu began with an explanation of the eight auspicious symbols banners of which he had borrowed from the Dorje Chang Institute. These were really impressive. Displayed the length of one wall, they summed up and shone forth as did the shrine, demonstrating in a way that words couldn't, the significance of this auspicious occasion.



We've had a full quota of retreats so far this year, catering for many diverse needs. The single-sex retreats over the long Easter

period were particularly appreciated. The women's retreat was attended by seventeen people. The study periods were particularly interesting and helpful. Two groups studied the *Mitratas* on 'Perfect Speech' and a third, mainly of mitras, *The Bodhisattva: Evolution and Self Transcendence*. The pujas were particularly memorable because they were enhanced by the excellent acoustics of the hall of the camp. Obviously a lot of thought had gone into this, and it certainly made us think how necessary a feature this would be in any future retreat centre of our own.

One aspect of our activities - talks in schools - is going from strength to strength. So far we've not had to turn down any requests, and the response in most cases has been good. One class from Northcote College visited the Centre and Priyananda gave a talk and showed them round.

In conclusion - there are many interesting adventures to embark on here in New Zealand, so those who would like to 'adventure' with us will be gladly welcomed.



# Germany

Springtime - the first Spring Retreat in Germany: nine days of sunshine and meditation in beautiful hills near the western border. The programme was that of most general retreats in the FWBO: as well as meditation there were pujas, Yoga, communication exercises, and study, BUT no taped lectures. In contrast to the Scandinavians or Dutch, the Germans in general do not have a good enough command of English to understand the Venerable Sangharakshita's talks. To alleviate this severe difficulty, several Friends have been translating material from *Mitrata*, and on the Spring Retreat, Dhammaloka was able to unveil the first FWBO periodical in German: *Kanthaka*, named after the horse on which Gautama the Buddha-to-be left home to Go Forth into the homeless life. So far the first three lectures in the series, 'The Noble Eight-fold Path' have appeared, all translated by Ruth Hartlein, a German mitra in London. And a friend in Karlsruhe, Walter Schonthal, prepared the translation of 'Who is the Buddha?' which has also appeared. We hope soon to have the whole section on the Buddha from the 'Mitrata Omnibus' available in

German!

The other 'first' was the first mitra ceremony to be held in Germany. On the full-moon evening of Wesak, a Friend, Luise Holtbernd, became a mitra in the context of the puja celebrated in Essen. On that occasion, Friends came from out-of-town to join in the festivities. Visitors are a regular feature of the community in Essen: German Friends coming to experience a few days of community life, and Order members, usually coming to help with retreats or passing through. In both cases guests enrich the life of the community!

At the same time, the two 'resident' Order members, Dhammaloka and Dharmapriya, travel frequently to other towns to lead events or just visit Friends. By the time you are reading this Newsletter the first working retreat in Germany - also the first men's retreat - should have taken place two hundred kilometres east of Essen. We will be holding ten-day retreats, one each for men and women: the latter is a general Continental retreat, with women expected from at least four countries.

# Sydney

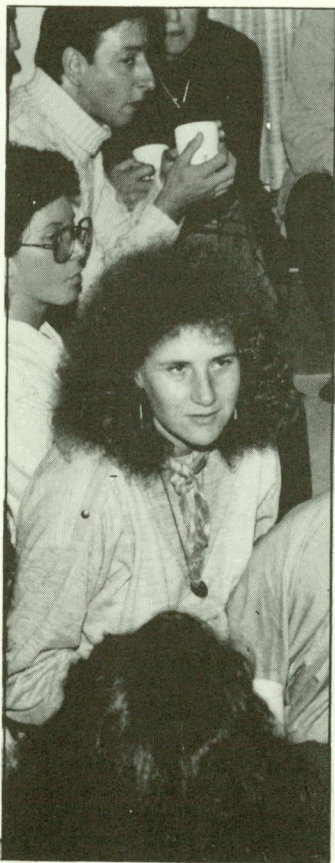
Classes have now been held for three years at the Rocklands Road Community Centre. Now this facility is becoming far from adequate, so our major rush over the next six months is to raise funds for a new Centre which we hope to open in the first half of 1985.

Two recent highlights have been the Easter Intensive Retreat and Buddha Day. The Retreat was the longest yet held in Australia. Led by Dharmamati, and attended by 10 Friends, it demonstrated the necessity for more longer retreats.

The Buddha Day festival was held at the Centre. It began with a meal which was followed by a talk on the Buddha's life by Dipankara. The festive atmosphere was enhanced by colourful banners which symbolised the three Yanas. With about twenty-five people packed into our little shrineroom, it further emphasised our need for a new Centre.

A recent and very welcome guest in Sydney has been Malini, an Order member from London. The presence of a senior Order member has been very helpful to us here, as she has provided a wider perspective on our situation.

By the time this article goes to print, Dipankara will be in Europe for a Chairman's event, and to attend the Tuscany retreat.



Malini in Sydney

# BOSTON USA

The Boston Buddhist Centre has been in Jamaica Plain for a little over a year and in that time we have seen a steady increase in the number of Friends associated with the Centre and a growing interest in our activities. As well as our three regular meetings each week we have held two weekend retreats and two special events over the last three months.

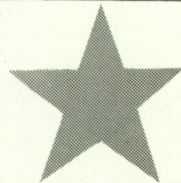
We have changed the programme of the retreats from a sort of FWBO 'sampler' made up of some meditation, some study, some lectures and so on, to a more leisurely pace, resulting in a deeper experience for those attending.

The first of our special events was a talk entitled 'Buddhism - A Radical Defence of Freedom' which Manjuvajra gave to an audience of about fifty at Harvard University. Most attending the talk were Friends, or friends of Friends and there was a convivial atmosphere as people got to know each other after the talk. The second event was a poetry reading organised by Vajradaka. It too was held at Harvard University and featured the work of three women poets. Judy Katz-Levine and Linda Meyer are old friends and have been coming to the Centre for some time. They read their poetry, sometimes accompanied by a flute or conga drums, and Linda added another dimension by acting some of her poems. Pamela Gordon also read her own work and contributed to a very successful evening. The poetry was of a high calibre and was appreciated by the fifty to sixty people present who contributed over two hundred dollars to the Centre's funds.

A meditation course offered by the 'Free University' of Boston University was not so successful. Thirty five students registered for the course but only four came to the first class and then the numbers fell to only one so that after five weeks the course was cancelled.

The first weekend of May was a historic occasion - the first mens' Order/mitra event on the East coast of the American continent. David Keefe a mitra from London, has been staying with us in the community for a few months, and Gordon Wills another mitra, also from London was on a short visit, so Vajradaka, Punya, Manjuvajra, David and Gordon spent the day on Plum Island, a beautiful nature reserve on the seashore some thirty miles north of Boston.

Manjuvajra



# Wellington

The Wellington Buddhist Centre is perhaps the only one in the Movement with just a single Order member in residence. Although relatively small and geographically isolated from the remainder of the Movement, things are certainly far from dormant. A host of activities is staged: yoga, retreats, basic Buddhism courses, meditation courses, lectures, pujas, and study. Obviously it would not be possible to do this much but for the hard work of a number of Mitras and Friends who take care of tasks such as cleaning the Centre, finances, publicity, secretarial work, etc.

Although operating within a small Centre perhaps has some limitations, it also has some

advantages. Everybody who is involved gets to know each other rapidly, and quickly develops an appreciation of how things are operating and what needs to be done. In addition, decisions can usually be taken and initiatives implemented, with a minimum of delay or difficulty.

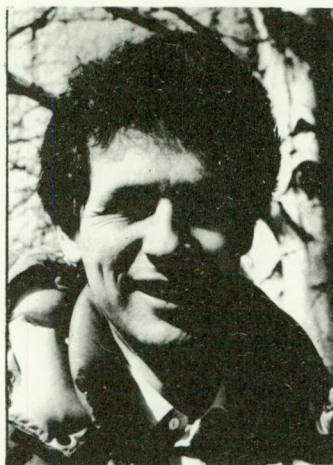
Any contact we have from visiting Order members, mitras or Friends is naturally most welcome, however brief. In the last week Buddhadasa has moved in for a three month sojourn, during which he intends to give a series of eight talks on 'The Noble Eight-fold Path'. Whilst he is here we are also expecting to have one or more mitra ceremonies.



This spring we had an opportunity to enjoy Devamitra's charming presence for three weeks, and to benefit from his extensive knowledge and experience of the Dharma. He led a most successful retreat at Ioimaa, which was attended by sixteen people; many old Friends and mitras enjoyed the warmth of this coming-together in the countryside.

After the retreat, Devamitra led a study group for women in Helsinki. On this occasion, fourteen enthusiastic women made acquaintance with the *Bhaddali Sutta*.

Devamitra also gave a public lecture, entitled, 'The Buddha of the North'. The talk was well received in a serious mood which well befits the worth of a Dharmic evening - though he did make us laugh with some of his references to characters from Finnish folk tales.



Devamitra

## Helsinki

Grateful for the time that he devoted to us, we are looking forward to seeing him again next year.

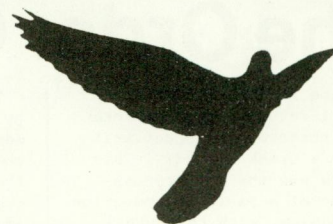
During Devamitra's visit we also held the opening celebrations for our new Centre in Helsinki, called 'Camaradvipa'. The Centre is situated on the street, Punavuorenkatu - in English, 'Red Mountain Street'. We thought it would therefore be a good idea to name it after Padmasambhava's Copper Coloured Mountain, so that the name of the Centre would connect

Padmasambhava with the area. Further research has however revealed that 'Camaradvipa' means Yak Island! But this is almost appropriate from another point of view - Finland being like a cultural island in Europe, and its inhabitants perhaps like yaks...

This new small, beautiful Centre of ours is having a rather quiet time during the summer, with only one or two classes a week, but our plans for the autumn are ambitious.

Punyaraja

# WOMEN'S RETREATS



After weeks of anticipation suddenly we were there-on a huge coach hired for the occasion-being driven through shopper-filled Crewe and out into the countryside to Dodington Hall, which had been hired for the event. The Hall was a large and solid Georgian mansion, whose spacious ballroom, flagstone corridors, marble staircases and stables are still dignified, if somewhat worse for wear since its adaptation to a girls' boarding school. It stands in landscaped gardens full of daffodils, with its own lake and a mysterious 16th century tower standing deserted in the grounds.

After a meditation and breakfast, where it seemed strange at first to be with over eighty others, the mornings were given over to study around the retreat's theme of Going for Refuge. The texts for study groups ranged from the *Bodhicaryavatara* to Plato, to *The Jewel Ornament of Liberation*. In the afternoon there was space for more meditation, walks, Yoga, and time to catch up with friends from the other end of the country.

Each night we focussed on one particular section of the puja. First an Order member would give a talk on or around the theme of Going for Refuge. Each talk seemed to stretch our vision further, and invited us once again to make, at least in imagination, the leap from personal to the collective, to the cosmic dimension of the subject. After the theory, then on to the practice. For the puja itself, the colour of the

shrine was changed each night, and readings were selected to accord with the appropriate section.

Each puja was a unique event, a celebration. Elaborate offerings were painstakingly made and given, to heighten our awareness of 'Salutation'. The Rejoicing in Merit section was celebrated, most appropriately, by five mitra ceremonies - and I'm sure that the five mitras concerned will never forget the warmth and joy with which they were showered. Then we each gave a present to the person sitting next to us, and they in turn gave to the person sitting next to them - creating a snake-like movement of giving and receiving. On the penultimate night, the 'Transference of Merit and Self Surrender' section was marked by an offering of the universe itself, as seen by Indian cosmology.

By this time the retreat had

gathered such momentum that even the construction and surrender of the universe seemed possible. So on the night, bit by bit, with goddesses, continents, kings and queens, cows of plenty, and wishing trees all in their correct place, it took shape under a towering Mount Meru, only to disappear the next morning as miraculously as it had appeared.

Through this process, not only was our individual practice intensified and strengthened, but we also reached a new level of collective practice. We were given a foretaste of what will be possible when we have our own retreat centre. After a few days, being with eighty other women seemed completely natural. It certainly felt like an historic event, and all credit must go to the Order members who faithfully kept up the challenge for us to go further, and indeed made

that process as exciting and joyful as it should be. And especially to Dhammadinna, who drew all the strings together and always seemed to point in the right direction at the right moment.

Kate Brady

## Scotland

In March a second weekend retreat was organised jointly by women from the Glasgow Centre and from Manchester, with Parami and Ratnadakini coming up from the LBC.

Seventeen women spent the weekend studying, meditating, walking and talking in the grounds of a castle. On the Sunday afternoon we made up all the offerings from the *Bodhicaryavatara*, and in the final puja the shrine was bedecked with jewel mountains, forests, lotus lakes, and a magnificent perfumed bathing house! Another of those special offerings - the endlessly fascinating cry of wild geese - was heard every evening, haunting the nearby estuary and marshes, as geese flew in from the sea.

The next flight of women back to Dumfriesshire will be in September, this time for four days.

Marlene Haliday



Dhammadinna, who led the retreat



# SANGHARAKSHITA IN SEMINAR

30

Over the course of the last ten years Bhante has given approximately eighty seminars ranging from short study groups to ten day epics.

These have covered many different approaches to the Dharma ranging from 'basic' Pali texts such as the *Dhammapada* and *Sutta Nipata* to Mahayana and Vajrayana works such as *The Jewel Ornament of Liberation*, *The Tibetan Book of the Dead*, and many of the *Songs of Milarepa*, as well as texts by contemporary authors such as *The Buddha* by Trevor Ling. Bhante has also led study on sections from his own works

such as *The Three Jewels A Survey of Buddhism*.

In addition to this he has also investigated some non-Buddhist material, notably the 'Ode on Friendship' by Doctor Johnson and an Islamic text, *The Duties of Brotherhood*, bringing out their relevance where applicable to Western Buddhism.

In these seminars a critical questioning approach is encouraged, and those studying with Bhante are taken back - at least in imagination - to the nature of 'emptiness' as was the case in the recent *Diamond Sutra* seminar, or becoming immersed in the mythology

and beauty of Mahayana Sutras such as the *Sutra of Golden Light*.

All of these seminars have been tape-recorded and are gradually, methodically being transcribed with the help of Friends all over the Movement. They are then put into a form which makes them easily accessible to anybody wishing to study them. These are, for example, currently being used extensively in the preparation of the current series of *Mitrata*s on the noble Eightfold Path, and are continually referred to by Order members leading study groups.

The FWBO transcriptions team led by Cittapala and Silbhadrā is now firmly established at the London Buddhist Centre where it is allowing more of these seminars to be made widely available. Both Cittapala and Silbhadrā hope that having these seminars on hand will enable more and more people to experience the wonders of being with 'Sangharakshita in Seminar'.

Cittapala and Silbhadrā can be contacted on 01-980-1843. If you can help them in any way or would like to know any more just give them a call!

Silabhadrā

## The Order Office

At the beginning of May, Subhuti returned to Padmaloka after three months spent writing on a Greek Island. In his luggage was the weighty manuscript of a basic introduction to Buddhism, with the 'Wheel of Life' as its framework. The work is now looking for a publisher.

In May, Ratnaprabha and Vessantara were in Leicester, renewing their link with the Leicester Buddhist Society. They received a hospitable welcome from David and Barbara Russell, and led a day retreat for the Society's members, focusing on the Refugees and Precepts. The Leicester group are very friendly, and are particularly lively in study groups. Two periods of study were included in the day's programme. We very much hope that these visits to Leicester will continue regularly.

The Milton Keynes Group, run by Stephen Hall, has several members who have had previous contact with the FWBO, and they use many of the FWBO's practices and teaching materials. In the course of a week-end visit Vessantara and Ratnaprabha met with members of the group, and Vessantara gave a talk on the significance of Puja and the devotional element in Buddhism, followed by questions. The Order members also visited the Milton Keynes Peace Pagoda, and renewed acquaintance with the Venerable Terasawa, a Nichiren Buddhist monk. He showed them his plans to build a hundred-foot high peace pagoda in Battersea Park by the Thames in London.

Before his ordination Ratnaprabha used to live in Milton Keynes, working for the Open University. On this visit he spent some time in Spenser

Street, where he used to live. The entire street belongs to a Housing Co-op., and a number of the residents had heard of the FWBO at Co-op Fairs where Order members have given talks on Right Livelihood Co-ops.

At the end of April Vessantara was invited to Cambridge, to talk to the Cambridge Buddhist Society. He discussed Buddhist ethics, going into the deeper significance of the five precepts in a talk called 'Five Roads to Freedom'. This was well received by an audience of about thirty-five people, who asked some interesting and practical questions afterwards. Vessantara and Ratnaprabha enjoyed their visit, and the hospitality of Olly Cooper, who organised the talk. Vessantara, who is a Cambridge graduate, is keen to make further contacts with Buddhists in the city.

Sangharakshita was thoroughly engaged during much of March in preparing his definitive

paper on the Ten Precepts, which he delivered in London on 7th April (see separate article). After this, he was able to return to his work on the study periodicals *Mitrata* and *Dharmamegha*, and to putting the finishing touches to his book *The Word of the Buddha*. In July, Sangharakshita plans to give his first public talk in Europe since 'The Taste of Freedom', in 1980. He will speak at the Croydon Buddhist Centre as part of their non-violence season. Having no outside sources of funding, the Order Office is particularly precarious financially, and a serious financial crisis is threatening for later this year. Lack of funds may leave Sangharakshita without adequate secretarial support and the FWBO without an effective central means of communication with the rest of the Buddhist and non-Buddhist world. All reasonable economies have been made, extra income is now being sought urgently.

## AFI

An air of expectancy hangs over the Cherry Orchard store room. It wafts and drifts through the window of the small white room above, and about the AFI corridors. Marion Monas and Ratnadakini sit plotting.

They've booked his air ticket; they've booked the venues all around the country; they've worked out the budget and they've got the loan, they've applied for flag days.

So what next? The publicity of course-the publicity for the biggest and best ever slide show and talk tour in the whole world!

Biggest and best ever, that is, if they can persuade people in the UK to come and listen to Vajraketu talk about the spiritual and social aspirations of the ex-untouchable Buddhists living in

Maharashtra.

In India, or more particularly in Maharashtra, thousands of people are sincerely interested in the Dharma, in spite of the meagre opportunities they have to hear about it. To these people the Dharma is a way of freeing themselves from the effects of an appalling and damaging way of life. For generations they have been forced to live in the worst and unhealthiest areas of the cities; maybe if they were lucky in tiny airless shacks on the banks of open drains. Perhaps more significantly, this world, to which the ex-untouchables have been relegated is one that teaches them that they are unfit and incapable of anything else.

The Dharma teaches the opposite in that it uncompromisingly states that every human being carries the seed of Enlightenment, and is capable of fulfilling his or her potential as a compassionate, wise and spiritual being.

In Maharashtra there are thousands of ex-untouchable Buddhists who have had some measure of education. Unfortunately, many of them fail to complete basic schooling. This may happen, not because of any innate inability, but because their families cannot afford to send them any longer; or maybe they fail simply because they lack confidence to participate fully in the classroom. On a social level then, with a new found sense of self-respect and a belief in themselves, people are more able to take advantage of what is already available.

On a spiritual level, the heartfelt belief that change is possible opens up unlimited possibilities for self-development and compassionate, effective action within society.

If society can be transformed from the perspective of compassion and competence, rather than from the limited viewpoint of self-interest, it is vital that people be actively encouraged to par-

ticipate in this.

So far, the FWBO and AFI have successfully raised over £1 million worth of covenants for medical and educational facilities. The problem is that most of this money, under the conditions it has been raised, cannot be used for Dharma work. There is therefore very little money for teaching the Dharma, or for building a meditation room, or for supporting those people best qualified to encourage this transformation to a healthier society.

Vajraketu, who for the last two years has been living in Bombay, following in the tradition of Dr. Ambedkar and Sangharakshita in teaching the Dharma to the ex-untouchable Buddhists, will be giving a series of public talks slides shows to raise funds for this other arm of the FWBO's work in India. At the same time, Lokamitra will leave Pune for a month and travel to the Far East with the same end in mind.



## Friends Gardening



## Landscape Contractors

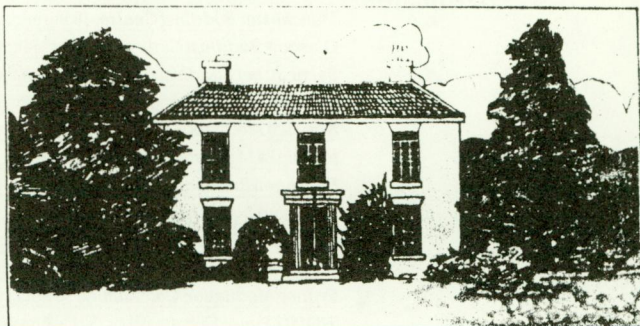
### Right Livelihood

West London Buddhist Centre  
(Baker Street)  
01-727 9382

# PADMALOKA

MEN'S

Buddhist Retreat Centre



### For more information

Phone 050 88 8112 or contact  
The Retreat Organiser  
Padmaloka  
Lesingham House  
Surlingham  
Norwich  
Norfolk  
NR14 7AL

## Vajraloka

### The Buddhist Meditation Centre of North Wales



is a year-round meditation retreat in ideal conditions. Visitors with a regular meditation practice — or with enough experience — can join the retreat at any weekend. Most of the time it is for men; some months are open to women.

Occasional periods of more intense practice, in supportive conditions, provide a very good opportunity for taking your meditation a bit deeper. If your meditation is important to you, why not consider spending a week or more here?

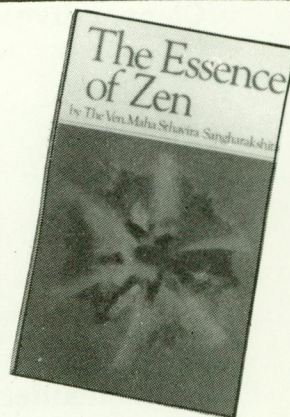
More details on request from:

**Vajraloka, The Buddhist Meditation Centre of North Wales, Tyn-y-Ddol, Corwen, Clwyd. LL21 0EN.**

Tel. Maerdy (0490 81)406.



A Centre of the Friends of the Western Buddhist Order



### THE ESSENCE OF ZEN

*By the Venerable Sangharakshita*

The third edition of this excellent book is now available from

Windhorse Publications

It can be ordered from your nearest Centre or from:

Element Books  
The Old Brewery  
Tisbury  
Salisbury  
Wilts

— and from all good bookshops.

It costs £1.95



## Friends of the Western Buddhist Order

### Centres and Branches

<i>London Buddhist Centre</i> , 51 Roman Road, Bethnal Green, London E2 OHU. 01-981 1225
<i>Brighton Buddhist Centre</i> , 15 Park Crescent Place, Brighton, Sussex. 0273-698420
<i>Croydon Buddhist Centre</i> , 96-98 High Street, Croydon, Surrey CRO 1ND. 01-688 8624
<i>Manchester Buddhist Centre</i> , 18 Burlington Road, Withington, Manchester M20 9PY. 061-445 3805
<i>Glasgow Buddhist Centre</i> , 329 Sauchiehall Street, Glasgow. 041-333 0524
<i>Baker Street Buddhist Centre</i> , 24 Baker Street, London W1. 01-258 3706
<i>FWBO Bristol</i> , 120 Long Ashton Road, Long Ashton, Bristol, Avon. 027580 2463
<i>Norwich Meditation Centre</i> , 41A All Saints Green, Norwich, Norfolk. 0603 27034
<i>Vajraloka Meditation Centre</i> , Tyn-y-ddol, Tre'rddol, Nr Corwen. N.Wales. (Visitors by appointment). 0490-81406
<i>Helsingen Buddhainen Keskus</i> , PL 288, SF-00121, Helsinki 12, Finland
<i>Auckland Buddhist Centre</i> , PO Box 68-453, Newton, Auckland, New Zealand
<i>Wellington Buddhist Centre</i> , PO Box 12311, Wellington North, New Zealand
<i>Boston Buddhist Centre</i> , 470 Centre Street, Boston, MA 02130, USA. (617) 522-0336
<i>Sydney Meditation Community</i> , 13 Rocklands Road, Wollstonecraft, NSW 2D65, Australia
<i>TBMSG Pune</i> : 'Dhammavijay', 32 Dr Ambedkar Society, Pune 411006, India
<i>TBMSG Aurangabad</i> : c/o Bungalow No 2, Cantonment, Aurangabad, India
<i>TBMSG Bombay</i> : 25 Bhim Prerana, Tapodhan Nagar, Bandra (E), Bombay 400051, India
<i>TBMSG Ahmedabad</i> : c/o Bakul Bhavan. Behind Gujerat Vaishya Sabha, Jamalpur Rd, Ahmedabad 380003, India
<i>FWBO Stockholm</i> , Hillbersvagen 5, S-126 54 Hagersten, Sweden. Stockholm 97 59 92
<i>FWBO Germany</i> , Rechtstr. 9. 43 Essen 11. W.Germany

### Representatives

<i>Aryavamsa</i> , Elleholmsvagen 11, S-352 43 Vaxjo, Sweden
<i>Indrajala</i> , PO Box 22-657, Christchurch, New Zealand
<i>FWBO Netherlands</i> , Vrijenbansestraat 25b, 3037 VV Rotterdam, Netherlands
<i>Jayapushpa</i> , Lot 7, Taman Ria, JLN Salleh, Nujar, Johore, Malaysia

### Co-operatives

<i>The Blue Lotus Co-operative Ltd</i> , 34 Daventry Street, London NW1. 01-258 3706
<i>Golden Light Co-operative</i> , PO Box 68-453, Newton, Auckland, New Zealand
<i>The Padmaloka Co-operative</i> , Lesingham House, Surlingham, Norfolk NR14 7AL. 050-88 8112
<i>The Pure Land Co-operative</i> , 51 Roman Road, London E2 OHU 01-981 1960
<i>Windhorse Associates</i> , 119 Roman Road, London E2 OQN. 01-981 5157
<i>Windhorse Enterprises Ltd</i> , 15 Park Crescent Place, Brighton, Sussex. 0273-698420
<i>Windhorse Wholefoods Co-operative Ltd</i> , 13 Kelvinside Terrace South, Glasgow G20. 041-946 2035
<i>Phoenix Community Housing Co-operative Ltd</i> , 119 Roman Road, London E2 OHU. 01-980 1069
<i>Rainbow Co-operative Ltd</i> , 96-98 High Street, Croydon, Surrey CRO 1ND. 01-688 2899
<i>Windhorse Trading Ltd</i> , 29-31 Old Ford Road, London E2 9PJ. 01-980 7826

### Communities

(Visitors by  
arrangement only)

<i>Amitayus</i> , 15 Park Crescent Place, Brighton, Sussex. 0273-698420
<i>Aryatara</i> , 3 Plough Lane, Purley, Surrey. 01-660 2542
<i>Grdhrakuta</i> , 18 Burlington Road, Withington, Manchester M20 9PY. 061-445 3805
<i>Heruka</i> , 13 Kelvinside Terrace South, Glasgow G20. 041-946 2035
<i>Kalpadruma</i> , 43 Gleneldon Road, Streatham, London SW16. 01-677 7381
<i>Khadiravani</i> , 42 Hillhouse Road, London SW 16. 01-677 1592
<i>Padmaloka</i> , Lesingham House, Surlingham, Norfolk NR14 7AL. 050-88 8112
<i>Sarvasiddhi</i> , 34 Daventry Street, London NW1. 01-258 3706
<i>Samayataka</i> , 18 Approach Road, London E2
<i>Sukhavati</i> , 51 Roman Road, London E2 OHU. 01-980 5972
<i>Suvarnabhasha</i> , 3 Ickburgh Road, London E5. 01-806 5222
<i>Vajracchedika</i> , 95 Bishops Way, London E2 8HL. 01 980 4151
<i>Vajrakula</i> , 41B All Saints Green, Norwich, Norfolk. 0603 27034
329 Sauchiehall Street (top right), Glasgow. 041-333 0524
24 Birchfield House, Birchfield Street, Limehouse, London E14 8EY. 01-515 2226
<i>Udyana</i> , 16 North Road, Brighton, Sussex BN1 1YA. 0273-603188

#### The Office of the Friends of the Western Buddhist Order

*London Buddhist Centre*, 51 Roman Road, London E2 OHU. Tel: 01-981 1225

#### The Office of the Western Buddhist Order

*Padmaloka*, Lesingham House, Surlingham, Norwich, Norfolk NR14 7AL. Tel: (050 88) 8112