

The

Friends of the Western Buddhist Order

NEWSLETTER

Number 63

Price 80p



The Practice of Non-Violence

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

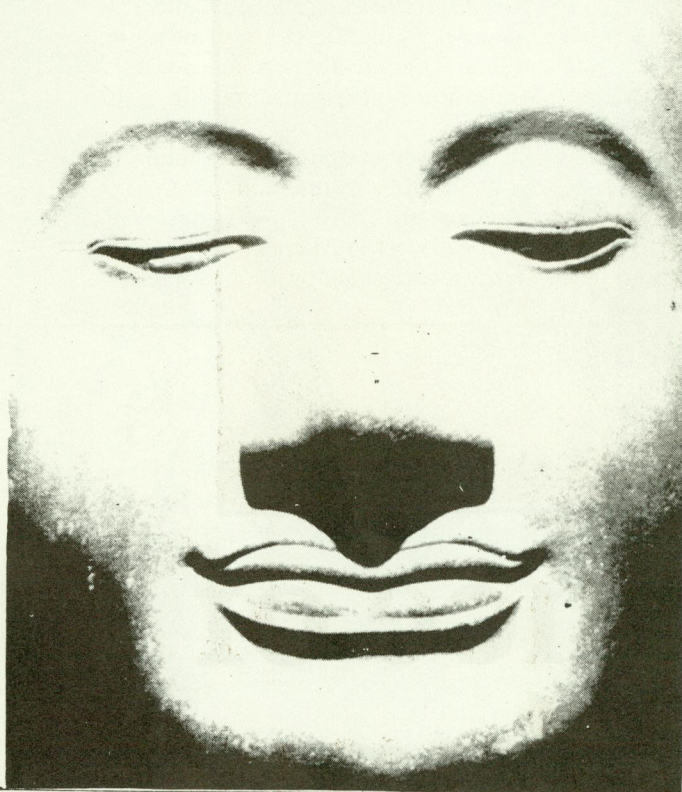
together in businesses which financially support the workers and which fund the further expansion of this New Society. Present businesses either running or being set up in the Movement include a printing press, wholefood shops, a silkscreen press, a hardware store, cafes, a second-hand shop, bookshop, 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.

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The NEWSLETTER

**Autumn
1984**

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Nagabodhi

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

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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
Judy Child and Hugh Mendes

Cover photo
Judy Child

Subscription address:
136, Renfield St.,
Glasgow G2 2AU.

Editorial

By the time I had reached the age of eight, I rarely went out without a gun. I had already killed more men than I could remember, and had led a hundred bombing missions over Germany: I had engineered elaborate ambushes, and had watched the destruction of rival gangs with professional satisfaction.

I'm not talking about former lives; I'm talking, of course, about the games we played in the school playground — games that every child plays. During the cease-fires, we sat in classrooms and heard the history of the world related as a pageant of wars, battles and murders.

Man is a violent animal. From the history even of his religions — the tentative manifestations of his higher aspirations — down to the way he fills his belly, man is steeped in violence. Violence is natural to him, if not always in its grossest physical forms, then at least in words, thoughts and strategies, in the ease with which he exploits and appropriates, in the determination with which he furthers and protects his interests. Violence comes as naturally to him as his tendency, whether individual or collective, to put himself first: to refuse to acknowledge the rights and, in fact, the reality of others.

This is how man has lived and organised his world, establishing his dominion over all else on earth, defining his territories and boundaries. And until now he has managed to get away with it. But now he has got to change.

He must change before he has plundered the earth of its vital resources, or choked it to death with pollution. He must change before the terrible inequalities that divide nations, classes and castes erupt into a kind of final showdown, and change before he completely destroys himself with the technological expertise which could otherwise grant him freedom from want, and time to explore the fuller possibilities of the human adventure.

Man must change. Even a child can see that — and see that time is running out. And yet, man does not. Instead he establishes institutional instruments such as the U.N. or the S.T.A.R.T talks: moderating devices serving at best to dampen the worst excesses of his violent nature, and at worst as complex weapons in an intricate diplomatic war.

Speaking bluntly: it does not look as if 'man' will change. Only men and women can, and might, change. Only individual human beings can do the real work of eradicating that fateful tendency to violence in their own hearts. In other words, only you and I can take up the *practice* of non-violence.

Non-violence is not just an absence of violent acts: it is an attitude of the mind, the heart, the whole being. It has to be founded on love, imagination and above all, effort. It can be no less, for our tendency towards violence is so deeply ingrained. It will not merely drop away with a bit of reflection, or a dose of sentiment. The ideal of non-violence is a challenge, a summons to leave nature behind, to transform our entire relationship with everything that is not ourselves.

If enough people genuinely practise non-violence, and become non-violent, then perhaps the world will be changed — by their acts, their words, by their influence. Perhaps if there is time, the world will be saved: who can tell?

Does that sound adequate? Does that sound as if it will work? Is there a better, faster solution to the world's predicament? Above all are you making your own contribution?

Nagabodhi

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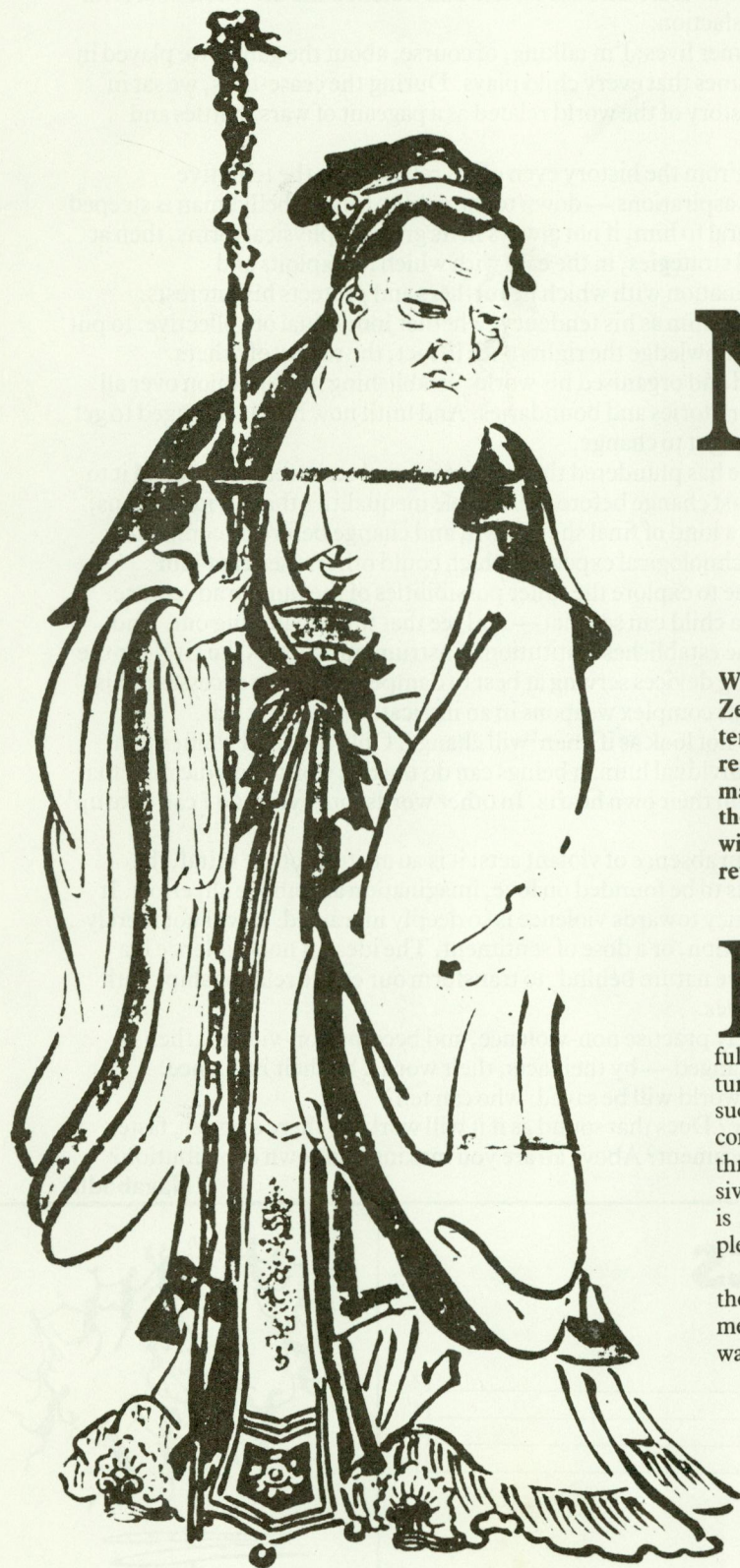
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BUDD AN NON-VIO

When a rebel army swept into a town in Korea, all the monks of the Zen temple fled except for the Abbot. The general came into the temple and was annoyed that the Abbot did not receive him with respect. 'Don't you know,' he shouted, 'that you are looking at a man who can run you through without blinking?' 'And you,' replied the Abbot strongly, 'are looking at a man who can be run through without blinking!' The general stared at him, then made a bow and retired.

From 'The Tiger's Cave' by Trevor Leggett. (RKP 1977)

I still remember the first time I read this story. It stopped me in my tracks. I was struck by the Abbot's forceful and unexpected reply, which turns people's usual responses in such situations upside down. In contrast to the general's deadly threat the Abbot is neither aggressive nor submissive. His response is strong and decisive, but completely peaceful.

Later, I became fascinated by the contrast between the two men. Even physically I would always imagine them as opposites. I

saw the rebel general in my mind's eye: tall, heavily-built, dressed in armour, with death gleaming at his side. Facing him, a sword's length away, the Zen Buddhist abbot: short, sturdy, lean, simply-dressed in a plain monk's robe, and shaven-headed. They confront each other eye to eye, with the electric tension of sudden death between them. And as I watched they became like two statues, taking on a timeless quality, as if they had faced one another for centuries.

And so they have. Only the

BHISM ND OLENCE

By Vessantara

names and the clothes change. Since the dawn of history, two great tendencies in Man have tried to stare each other down, to outface one another. On one side are the forces of violence, fuelled by pride, fear, and hatred; on the other is the whole tradition of non-violence, based on love and wisdom, of which Buddhism is an outstanding example.

Considering these two figures, and the contrast between them, suggests many ideas. For instance, the general gains confidence not only from his sword but also from the massed forces of his army; the Abbot stands alone. This contrast recurs through the centuries. If you read the history of almost any age, your overwhelming impression will be of a melée of different groups — families, social classes, races, religious sects, and nations — clawing at one another in the fight for power

and wealth. History is, largely, the story of the competition between different groups, fired by craving, hatred, and ignorance.

Against this the Buddhist tradition sets the ideal of the individual who is freed from the pulls and demands of the group. It has always encouraged men and women to think and feel for themselves, not to get swept away by the tides of hatred and fear which carry off those around them. More than this, it has urged those individuals to work on their own minds through awareness and effort, to practice the subtle alchemy of turning violence into peace, and hatred into love. It has not just exhorted people to transform themselves in this way, it has equipped them with effective ways of setting about it, by working on the mind through meditation.

Buddhism has always held out



the white lotus of peace to the world. The life of its founder, Gotama the Buddha, who lived 2,500 years ago in northern India, is rich in examples for people down the centuries to follow.

At the time of his Enlightenment the Buddha-to-be is symbolically represented as coming under attack from Mara — a figure who personifies Delusion in the Buddhist texts. Mara marshals against the Buddha an army of misshapen creatures, who attack him with demented ferocity. They hurl rocks and boulders, fire flaming arrows, and launch other deadly weapons against him.

The Buddha meanwhile sits quietly in meditation. As the weapons fly towards him they are transformed into flowers, and fall gently in a petalled shower at his feet. This incident symbolically indicates the defeat of even the subtlest traces of violence in the Buddha's own mind, and the sublimation of the energies which fired it.

After his Enlightenment, the Buddha's simple lifestyle was completely rooted in non-violence. We see him threatened with assassination by jealous rivals, but sending away the followers who had gathered to defend him; mediating between two warring clans in a border dispute; or stopping a wild elephant in its tracks by the force of his concentrated loving-kindness.

His loving and non-violent approach to every situation is based on an unimaginable depth of empathy with all that lives. His approach to violence is often to persuade the aggressor to empathise with his victim. When he sees some boys throwing stones at a crow he asks them, 'Do you feel pain when you are struck?' and then helps them to imagine themselves on the receiving end of their own 'game'. (It is worth noting that the Buddha's empathy extended beyond human beings to all life. He would never permit any animal to be killed for him to eat).

His teaching gave no justification for violence in any form, not even 'righteous indignation'. He once told his monks: "When men speak ill of you, thus must you train yourselves: 'Our heart shall

be unwavering, no evil word will we send forth, but compassionate to others' welfare we will abide, of kindly heart without resentment: and that man who thus speaks will we suffuse with thoughts accompanied by love, and so abide: and making that our standpoint, we will suffuse the whole world with loving thoughts, far-reaching, wide-spreading, boundless, free from hate, free from ill-will and so abide'. Thus brothers, must you



train yourselves."

He even went on to make the following startling statement: "Though robbers, who are highwaymen, should with a two-handed saw carve you in pieces limb by limb, yet if the mind of any of you be affected thereby, such a one is not a follower of my teaching!"

Even being sawn limb from limb is no excuse for abandoning loving-kindness.

Down through the centuries, Buddhism has taken its founder's example to heart, in theory and practice. In theory, for example, we find that Buddhist psychology gives a list of eleven 'ingredients' which are always present in any positive mental state. One of these is non-violence. If at any time the mind becomes tinged with a desire for violence — bodily, verbal, or mental — then that mental state cannot be regarded

advocated vegetarianism. The Buddha even instructed his monks to strain their drinking water, to avoid inadvertently killing any small creatures.

On a wider scale, Buddhism has always been tolerant of other beliefs. There has been no major war fought in the name of Buddhism, and no Crusades. Buddhism believes that,

'A man convinced against his will

Stays of the same opinion still.'

Buddhist history provides many fine examples of people who understood that to try to force people to change is counter-productive. There is the Emperor Ashoka, who started his reign by soaking a large part of the Indian sub-continent in blood to expand his empire. Then, sickened by what he had done, he turned to Buddhism, and thenceforth ruled his vast territory by entirely peaceful means.

Then there is the Tibetan Buddhist Phagspa, who was teacher to one of the Moghul emperors. The emperor offered to force everyone throughout his empire to follow the Sakya sect to which Phagspa belonged. Far from being flattered and excited by this offer, and the chance to bring the entire Moghul empire under his sway, Phagspa saw that violent means could not lead to a peaceful end. So he politely declined.

At this point it is worth asking what it is that has given Buddhism the strength to preserve its non-violent principles in so many difficult situations. When your life is on the line it takes more than a sentimental feeling for peace, more than just thinking it is a good idea, to remain non-violent. The abbot in our story could not command the respect of a hardened soldier with mere ideas about non-violence. He would be cut down without a second thought.

What makes the difference is the Buddhist practice of meditation, which leads to insight into the nature of Reality. The Abbot has spent years in meditation, soaking himself in this insight, and it is as a living embodiment of this higher Reality that he wins the maddened general's respect.

From the Buddha onwards all

as good or desirable under any circumstances. Buddhism places crucial importance on the mind and its states. If your mental state is peaceful, then the actions which flow from it will promote peace.

In individual practice, the first of the precepts, or ethical principles, followed by all Buddhists is 'to abstain from harming living beings'. This includes animals, so Buddhism has always strongly

those who have sincerely followed the Path to Enlightenment have come to the same understanding — an experience which soars far beyond the realm of our usual thinking. With this insight, one sees the world shorn of the conflicting opposites with which we habitually categorise our experience. The most fundamental of these habitual modes of thought is the division we make between 'self' and 'other' — the idea that we are each a separate 'self' (which in some sense stays constant despite our physical and mental changes).

This 'self' which each of us has stands separate and cut off from everything 'other'. We experience a barrier between 'us' and our environment: flowers, trees, animals, and the over four billion people who share our world.

It is the frustration caused by this view of the world which leads to violence. When 'we' are threatened by 'other' people, we attack — even if only in 'self-defence! When 'we' need something from the 'outside' world (such as food, money, or acclaim) we reach out and wrench it to us.

As the world is 'other' it does not have the same reality for us as our 'self'. So we tend to treat it as relatively unimportant compared to our needs. Sometimes we may even treat our 'self' as the only reality, and turn everything and everyone else into objects to satisfy us.

Buddhism's non-violence comes from the insight that the whole distinction we make between 'self' and 'other' is an illusion. The barriers we feel between ourselves and the world are created by our own minds. When they are taken down, through prolonged effort in meditation and outside, then we are left with what can only be described as 'panoramic awareness'. Consciousness soars to a level where it is no longer identified with a physical body located at one point in time and space. The Buddhist meditator who reaches this stage experiences consciousness as coterminous with the entire Universe.

The Abbot has had this insight. He has seen through the delusion that his consciousness is limited to his physical body, so he can face im-

pending death without blinking an eye. He has healed the split in his own mind, and regards the general, his sword, the monastery and the surrounding hills as being as much his own self as his shaven-headed body. Identified with everything, he has nothing to gain, nothing to lose, and nothing to defend. And with nothing to gain, lose or defend, how can any violent thought cloud his mind?

The Abbot sees that violence runs contrary to the real nature of things. You can only attack another living being if you think it is separate from you. When the barriers come down, and the separation vanishes, you see that to harm anything is to harm yourself.

Moreover, if we still have a deeply-ingrained sense of separation, we will not understand that to harm others will have consequences for ourselves. If the Universe is in reality a total unit, then everything is involved with, and affected by, everything else. The Universe acts as a kind of giant 'feedback machine'. To cause suffering to the world of which we are an integral part can only bring suffering to ourselves. (Scientists are beginning to discover this in a limited way through the study of ecology).

The final lesson of the Buddhist insight into reality is that force can never solve anything. Violence is based on the frustration engendered by our own sense of separateness and limitation. But each violent act alienates us further from the world, and deepens the split in our own minds between 'self' and 'other'. This increases our frustration, which in turn leads to worse violence. The reader can find endless examples of this in modern life, from personal disputes to political clashes. This vicious circle has no end. It is for this reason that one of the oldest Buddhist texts, the *Dhammapada*, says:

'Hatred does not cease by hatred; hatred ceases only by love.'

If we understand this insight, it should become clear to us how the Abbot can meet the general's threat with absolute calm and conviction. We shall see too that to talk of the 'confrontation' between the general and the Abbot is only half true. The general

'confronts' the Abbot. He is threatened and offended by this impudent monk, who shows no fear, and who treats him like everyone else. He experiences the abbot as totally separate from him so he could kill him 'without blinking an eye' — like swatting a fly.

But although the general 'confronts' the Abbot, the Abbot does not confront the general. His consciousness embraces him. He sees no division between them, no seam in the pattern of life to distinguish where 'abbot' stops and 'general' begins. So he feels for him more than the general has ever felt for himself. He is in complete harmony with him.

When the general produces his blustering threat, the Abbot produces an answer which shocks him out of his notions of how things are. With a few words the Abbot 'runs through' the general with the sword of wisdom. Some of the general's deluded and violent thinking is cut off, and he can only bow with respect.



The two figures, general and Abbot, are perfect representatives of what in the FWBO we have come to call the 'power mode' and the 'metta mode' of action. The 'power mode' is the normal way of getting things done in the world. When using it you deny the autonomy of other people. In various ways, from gross force to subtle pressure, you attempt to deprive others of their freedom to choose, so they do what you want.

'Metta' is one of the most beautiful conceptions of Buddhism. It means 'universal loving-kindness' or 'universal friendliness'. One of the most important Buddhist methods of meditation works to develop this feeling until all your actions spring from it. When this point is reached — where kindness and love for everything that lives have overcome fear and self-concern — then there is no longer any desire to coerce or bend others to your will. Instead there is a harmony with others which comes from making their welfare as important as your own. Freed from fear and hatred yourself, you can allow others their freedom. It is in this transition from the 'power mode' to the 'metta mode' that individual development essentially consists.

It should be clear from watching the Abbot dealing with the general that there is nothing weak about metta. The world needs 'love and peace', but not in the starry-eyed, vague way that characterised the Hippy movement of the '60s. Metta is a flame. It is active and decisive; it is stronger than violence. The general bursts out with his threat, and meets a response which stops him in his tracks. Metta prevails.

However, one victory cannot settle the issue. The trial of strength between metta and violence has gone on down the centuries. Buddhism has kept recruiting for metta, saying 'Violence deepens the gulf between people. It solves nothing, and is never justified. The world's sufferings can only be ended by loving-kindness'. All through history men and women have taken this message to heart, and forged themselves anew in the flames of love, transforming themselves into individuals prepared to stand up and be counted against the forces of hatred and violence.

Today the stakes in the struggle between general and Abbot are higher than ever. The general now stands armed with weapons which will not just kill the Abbot, but will destroy himself and everything which walks on the Earth. So the flame of love in the Abbot's eyes must burn even brighter, and we must all do what we can to stand at the Abbot's shoulder, and add our strength to his.

Living a Non-Vio

To live a non-violent life we start with ourselves. Our first obligation is to promote a non-violent mind within ourselves. If we can achieve this then it will follow that our interaction with other living beings and with society at large will be non-violent. The first principle is to treat ourselves with love.

In the Metta Bhavana meditation practise one develops feelings of loving kindness to oneself before developing them for others. Love is the antithesis of violence, where there is love there is no violence. If we secretly loathe ourselves we will detest others. If we distrust our passions we shall distrust the passions of others. Formal moralists seek in others what they most dislike about themselves. The antidote to this neurotic view of the world is to cultivate a loving, kind regard for oneself. To empty the cupboard of any proverbial skeletons. We start by accepting ourselves as we are, without guilt or shame. We avoid any violent reaction to any part of our own being. We are able to accept ourselves as we are because we can transform ourselves into something better. We develop patience towards ourselves allowing the necessary time for change to take place. We give ourselves the benefit of the doubt, and focus upon our warmth, gentility and kindness. We learn to rejoice in our own merits; to celebrate our own qualities. We see our creative potential, and like ourselves enough to assume that the consequence of our spontaneity will be constructive. We learn that generosity towards oneself is the pre-requisite for the development of a non-violent attitude to the world. We learn to be kind to our bodies by taking regular and relaxed exercise. We give our body the rest it needs, not drive it relentlessly suspecting it of laziness or inertia. We speak well of ourselves resisting any tendency to focus on our supposed inadequacies. We treasure our positive mental states, and do not subject ourselves to pressure; becoming tired and

subject to negative thinking, we take appropriate steps to cultivate happy, loving and harmonious thoughts.

By developing a loving caring attitude to oneself one can establish a *one man alternative to a violent world*; a living embodiment of the principle of peace. We each live in the world that we choose. To live in a non-violent world we must build one for ourselves. We must transform our subjective world into one of peace and love. Every action of non-violence in one's life has significance. By refraining from eating meat one has declared a principle upon which one's life will be conducted.

Practising non-violence is active rather than passive. It is not enough to abstain from violent thoughts, words and deeds. The practice of non-violence affects the way we relate to other people. To live non-violently means that we have made a shift in our mode of being. It means that we eschew the use of power in our interaction with others and replace it with love. The power mode of operating is to relate to others in terms of violence.

By experiencing power over another being one seeks to influence and control them. They are no longer able to do what they themselves wish to do. People are manipulated, coerced, terrified or flattered into acting in ways which are contrary to their wishes. To treat others in this way is an act of violence. The other person's being is violated, their individual will is infringed and their capacity to be responsible for themselves is dishonoured. It is violent to oblige anyone to act in accordance with one's own wishes. One must be careful, therefore, never to present another person with a *fait accompli*.

The love-mode is the antithesis of the power-mode. Here the principle is one of consideration and care for the well-being of the other person. The love-mode is based on a feeling of empathy between one human being and another. One goes beyond oneself

and identifies with the feelings and needs of another being. We overcome the idea that we are a separate, isolated phenomenon distinct from all other forms of life and instead realise that we are a part of an ever-changing life force which takes expression in the myriad forms of beings that we encounter. It is our ability to identify with others that produces in us the response of love, care and compassion. It is through the imagination that we are able to make this leap beyond our own self-hood. Through this identity with another being we are able to realise that if we damage or hurt them we are hurting ourselves. To act violently towards another being we have to promote violence within ourselves. What we do to others we also do to ourselves! Therefore by loving others we are able to love ourselves. Thus the Buddha taught that the positive counterpoint to violence is the development of love. By consciously cultivating a loving, caring, and kindly attitude to others we create the conditions which deny violence.

Violence can also be committed against another's property in that we treat this in a way that conflicts with the wishes of the owner. To oblige someone to suffer any action that is contrary to his wishes is to perpetrate violence against him. Thus to take or appropriate that which belongs to somebody else is an act of violence. We insist that our own ego-identity is serviced by the acquisition of the property, at the expense of the ego-identity of the other person. We force ourselves upon that person by taking his possessions. The same principle can be applied to taking someone's time or energy. By obliging someone to listen to a tirade of anger, or demanding a person's attention when we feel incomplete in ourselves; we violate that person's privacy and insinuate our demands upon them. Again the root cause for these acts of violence is the insistence on our own separate identity; seeing our needs in isolation

from those around us. The antidote to this form of violence is to be generous. Not to take but to give! The more we give the less we need!

Sex is a strong urge and if not properly practised can lead to extreme forms of violence. The majority of murders are crimes of passion whereby a lover has been thwarted and has sought revenge through violence. We must not exploit another person by seeing them as a means of satisfying our own needs. The cause of sexual violence is a polarisation within our own sexuality. We can over-identify with one aspect of ourselves, either masculine or feminine and then seek to regain a sexual balance by seeking the missing element in another person. Thus the overly developed masculine male will 'hunt' out the most obvious form of femininity and seek to 'mate' with that form in an attempt to replace the missing femininity within himself. The person embodying the desired feminine qualities will be expected to provide those attributes and will not be needed for any other qualities that she might possess. In this way exploitation of one being by another is practised. The antidote to this form of violence is to develop a balanced sexuality within oneself, to develop one's masculine and feminine qualities equally and to be content with this balance once achieved. Then one can relate sexually to another being from the basis of generosity and kindness, and sexual relations will cease to be exploitative and violent.

The most common form of violence between people is to be found in the area of speech. Speech is the most common form of contact, and therefore requires particular attention. To lie is violent because it denies the other person; it withholds or misrepresents truth to the disadvantage of another being. When we lie we edit the truth so that it reflects our use or interpretation of it. We distort the truth for reasons that suit ourselves. We appropriate truth for our own ends in much the same way as when we steal for our own gain.

lent Life

By Jayamati

Violent speech in the form of lies and abuse is damaging. We should be careful not to damage another person by the way we speak either to them or about them. People have the right to disagree with us and we must not seek to coerce or force them to agree with our line of argument. It is possible to agree to differ! Harsh or abusive language can injure. Swearing and cursing are forms of verbal violence and have no place in a non-violent vocabulary. It is wise to be mindful of one's speech and not allow it to become sloppy. Frivolous speech can waste people's time and energy and can lead to confusion. We must make sure

accordance with these principles we will be making a significant contribution to world peace. The Buddha transformed himself two and a half thousand years ago and is still having an impact today. What politician can claim to have contributed as much as he to the well being of society? Consciousness is the forerunner of action, thus to enlarge the consciousness of mankind is to further the evolution of the species. Great social and political changes in history have always been preceded by a vision. One man, or sometimes a collection of men, have had a vision of how society could be, and have brought about change in the light of that vision.



People can transform themselves

that our speech promotes harmony, not disharmony, love and not hatred. It is important not to slander another person or to initiate ill-feeling for another person by the way we talk to them.

In relating to other people we have continually to be aware of what we are doing. We must dwell in a non-violent state of mind and maintain that state in each encounter. We must be watchful that we don't allow immediate reactions to shape our interaction with others. To react is to let the immediate circumstances dictate our responses then violence can be incited. The mind must be kept alert and free from violent tendencies.

By transforming ourselves into a 'one man alternative to violence' and relating to others in

By developing a non-violent consciousness in oneself one is fashioning a non-violent society.

Truth makes lies impossible! If truthful communication is the norm then lies will be exposed. It is when truth is not pursued by enough people that lies become persuasive. Artists have a responsibility to society to pursue the truth. If artists infuse the culture with a pursuit of truth they will expose the shallowness of lies. Truth is beyond personal or sectarian interest and calls for a response from the most elevated parts of the human psyche. If these parts are called upon regularly we become familiar to responding to truth, to something higher. We are able to identify falsehood by means of contrast. Politicians would not be able to

get away with cant and half-truths if our culture were sufficiently infused with a pursuit of truth. Artists must take their share of responsibility for the sad demise of truth in the world today. We have seen that lies are a form of violence and if a society communicates with lies and half-truths then violence must be the consequence. To identify truth we need a vision of something higher than our own identity. The idea of servicing the identity of self is the root cause of violence. The antidote to a violent world is a vision that goes beyond self; a vision that loves.

Society will change when its values have changed. One should not feel obliged to subscribe to the status quo because values will be left unchallenged. In all manner of ways one can operate outside the existing terms of reference. One can object to the needless slaughter of animals by refusing to eat them. Vegetarianism is a direct means of expressing one's non-violence. One can protest about the production and use of weapons, and object to one's taxes being used for these ends. Every opportunity to voice one's disapproval can be used. It is important in this respect not to be drawn into adversarial politics, whereby those who produce and believe in weapons become one's enemy. It is crucial that one employs the principle of non-violence towards those with whom one disagrees. It is sad to see demonstrators for peace involved in *violent* disagreement with those considered to be their adversaries.

Conservation of the environment is another way of directly expressing one's principle of non-violence. The earth is being violated because of man's greed. This plunder cannot last forever and the reasoned voice of non-violence is desperately needed. One can contribute to this lobby by refraining from greed; by consuming only that which one needs and giving what one can. The economy is likewise based on greed and so must lead to violence and exploitation. An alternative to an

exploitative economy is essential in a non-violent world. In Buddhism the concept of Right Livelihood provides this radical alternative. It is a means of livelihood that does not exploit and which recognises the needs of those engaged in it. Right Livelihood does not seek to make gain from the efforts of others. The principle of servicing oneself at the expense of another gives way to the principle of serving others, whilst at the same time being realistic about one's own needs.

The most radical and effective way of spreading the principle of non-violence to the world at large is to teach meditation. People can be given the means to transform themselves and to appreciate on a personal level the importance of non-violence. If the practice of the metta bhavana was spread throughout the world then violence would decline rapidly. One must not underestimate the radical transforming power of meditation.

A violent world has no answer to beauty. Violence is ugly and beauty is therefore outside its terms of reference. Anything that contributes to beauty is an assault on violence. I remember when I was a school teacher in East London, a fight broke out among some boys in the music room. The music teacher was a gentle man and had no experience in dealing with scenes of this sort. As the fighting developed he sat down and played the opening bars of Tchaikovsky's Piano Concerto No 1. The boys were so surprised they immediately stopped fighting! I mention this as an illustration that violence cannot countenance beauty in whatever form it takes. In creating a non-violent culture we seek to operate outside the terms of reference of violence. This is why Dr B.K. Ambedkar had to lead his following of Untouchable Caste Hindus out of Hinduism altogether. He sought a radical alternative to the violent idea that decreed that one man is born inferior to another. He found the alternative in the non-violent teaching of the Buddha.

It is not usually possible to pinpoint the exact moment when any of mankind's great ages began. Who can say exactly when the Renaissance started, or the 'Classical Age' of Greece, or the Mediaeval era? We look for trends, symptoms, tributary forces, characteristic lives and achievements — without expecting to isolate that one moment when the human race, or a significant portion of it, entered a new and major phase of development.

Our present age is therefore exceptional, for we can locate its genesis to the minute — if not the second. It began at 8.16 am on August 6th, 1945, when the Japanese town of Hiroshima was destroyed — with the immediate and subsequent loss of some 140,000 lives — by a single bomb. At that moment, mankind entered the 'Nuclear Age'.

Of course, our present era goes by many names: the post-industrial, or post-capitalist age, the age of technology, the age of pluralism, the secular age, the age of space exploration, of mass communication, and so on. But in pure evolutionary terms, no single element of human experience can compete for significance with the fact that mankind has now devised the means whereby he can reliably annihilate himself — along with most other life-forms on this planet.

Certainly, decades of theorising, experiment and technological research gradually led to that awful flash of light in the sky above Hiroshima; so is it fair to suggest, then, that the new age began so abruptly? It is, because until that moment, very few people knew much about the developments that were taking place — and still less about the direction in which they were flowing. The people of Hiroshima, we are told, quite literally did not know what had hit them. But with the explosion of that bomb, the information entered the public domain, and from that day forward no one would ever again live in ignorance of the monstrous threat posed by nuclear weapons; no one would be free from the fear that the next major war might be the last, and that humanity might not have much of a future left. The Hiroshima bombing was a

traumatic experience for the whole human race, the impact of which — like that of an atomic bomb — came not as a single, hard slap, but as a prolonged, savage, crushing blast.

The facts about nuclear warfare and nuclear strategy are quite staggering. The mind recoils from them with a mixture of horror, disbelief, and sheer imaginative impotence. Today there are individual thermo-nuclear warheads whose destructive power equals — and even exceeds — the total explosive force employed throughout

1,100 feet across, and 100 feet deep; exploded in the air it would burn people to death and seriously damage buildings — including hospitals — ten miles away. It would cause fire-storms, whirlwinds, and 'black-rain' — a soup of carbonised debris and water, all lethally radioactive. It would send a plume of irradiated dust miles into the sky which would gradually bring death and disease to people living hundreds of miles away.

It has been seriously proposed with sound scientific and statistical backing that in the event of a

destructive on such a vast scale that they have in fact rendered war obsolete as a means of settling the differences between nations. A nuclear war cannot be won; it can only be lost — by all sides in the conflict — as well as by those hitherto uninvolved.

Yet the weapons exist; the stockpiles continue, absurdly, to mount, the technology is constantly being refined, and the 'war-games' are played with ever greater earnestness. While this is the case there is a very real possibility that the weapons will be deliberately used, or that some kind of accident, whether diplomatic, tactical, or technical, will send them on their way.

All this is a dominant feature, the dominant feature of the world we are living in. This is the modern apocalyptic background to our daily lives, and has been for almost forty years. It is impossible to calculate or gauge the psychological havoc that such a threat is wreaking on us all. A couple of years ago, a London-based magazine commissioned a survey which revealed that over 50% of English people under the age of 30 believe that a nuclear war is likely to occur in their lifetime. How, we can only wonder, is such an attitude undermining the moral, philosophical and social fabric of our world? Simply by existing, nuclear weapons are already doing enormous damage.

And yet, when we look about us, life seems to be going on as usual. As they work, play, and stroll about, very few people would seem to be carrying any kind of conscious fear or sense of terrible urgency, or rising to the responsibility that our nuclear age thrusts upon us all. Despite an increasing number of rallies, marches, and demonstrations, most people, most of the time seem content to forget or ignore the danger that presents itself to us.

Perhaps it is all too terrible to contemplate, too depressing a line of thought to follow. It is very difficult indeed to immerse oneself in the literature and statistics of this subject without falling prey either to depressed lethargy on the one hand, or hysterical panic on the other — before shutting the whole matter away into the unconscious.

CLARITY IN THE NUCLEAR AGE

By Nagabodhi

the Second World War. There are presently more than 50,000 (fifty thousand) nuclear warheads in the world's arsenals, very few of which have less destructive power than the bomb which destroyed Hiroshima. (Such a weapon, of 12½ 'Kilotons', would in fact be classified as a minor 'tactical' weapon these days.) Single submarines are capable of launching 160 and more independently targeted warheads, each one powerful enough to destroy a major city. An 'average' size warhead, of one 'megaton', detonated at ground-level, will make a crater

major conflict the UK would in all probability receive a level of attack sufficient to kill 80% of its population *immediately**. It is also currently believed that any major exchange of nuclear weapons between the superpowers would considerably erode the earth's ozone layer, thus exposing all life-forms to fatal overdoses of ultraviolet radiation from the sun, — but only once the total darkness, caused by the amount of dust thrown into the atmosphere, had abated, after a period of some months.

Nuclear weapons are so des-

Then again, nuclear weapons are so strategically important, so dangerous, and veiled with such urgent secrecy, that information about their deployment — not to speak of control over them, resides in very few hands at the uttermost summit of political and military power. Can we not be forgiven for concluding that the whole business is entirely out of our hands? Do we really feel that we have — or even could have — any say in the matter? Most people probably feel that the best thing they can profitably do is try to get on with living in the hope that the men and women whose fingers are on the proverbial buttons are as sensible and as fond of life as they are.

There is also a deeper factor. It has to be admitted that while the nuclear threat is a recent phenomenon, there is nothing really new about the almost wilful apathy that we see around us. After all, how many of us live our lives as if we had any awareness that one day we will die? How many generations have lived on earth in a way that suggest they appreciated the fact that not one of their number would be left after a hundred years at most?

'Humankind cannot stand very much reality'. We tend to prefer the hazy optimism afforded by vagueness to the hard-edged inevitability of facts. Perhaps it is that very vagueness that has led us into our present predicament.

Vagueness, whether individual or collective, is a refusal to face facts — whether of the world, the mind, the heart or the spirit — and therefore to act responsibly and in accordance with those facts. While we remain vague we are unable to see things in their proper perspective, unable to see what really matters, unable to think clearly or to act effectively. Vagueness arises out of, while further reinforcing, a dull animal-like preoccupation with day to day experience, short-lived gratification — with no thought of the morrow.

Yet the morrow always comes, and humanity's collective morrow has dawned — brighter, in fact, than a thousand suns! The day has arrived when there is actually no time left for any more vagueness, no room for any more errors, whether innocent or

otherwise. By some fluke of destiny mankind's ever-developing technological proficiency, in combination with his undented vagueness of purpose, have awarded our present generation the responsibility for the survival of life on our planet. President Harry Truman who gave the order for the first atomic bombings thought that the 'buck' ended with him. It did not. It stops here, now, with us.

But how do we rise to such a responsibility? How do we face such a terrifying and enormous challenge?

a very large extent, in this instance, the medium is the message, the entire work being an appeal for clarity and perspective. The nuclear issue is such an emotive one that we must be very careful as we approach it, able to call forth all the clarity that we can muster.

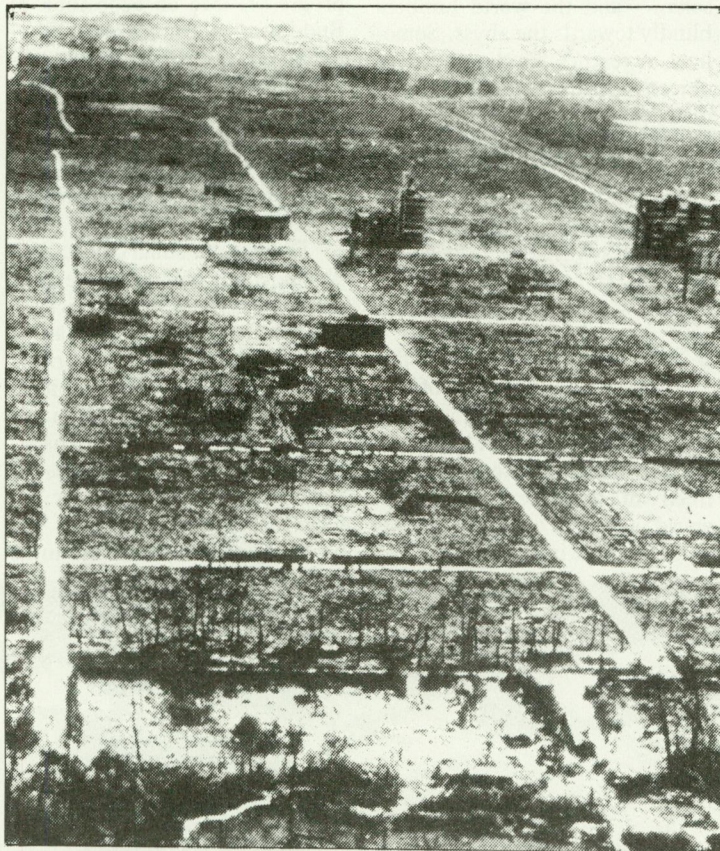
The paper begins with a story, and with an unambiguous statement from the very heart and core of Buddhism. Intervening in a dispute between His own ancestral tribes over the irrigation of the river Rohini, the Buddha prevents a war by reminding the

still, at least in the hearts of a few sane people, and will persist, since its roots reach into the deepest recesses of human nature — nobody wants to suffer or die — and it is nourished by the Wisdom and Compassion of ultimate Reality.

It is a cliché of our time that those who drop bombs from high altitudes, who wait for orders in underground missile silos, or who patiently research micro-chips for weapon systems, do not see the faces of those whom they are working to destroy. But wars are about killing, about death and destruction. The most advanced technological weapon yet devised has only one final, validating function: to break bodies and burn human flesh, to batter people against hard objects, to leave them homeless, defenceless, maimed, and dead. In the brain-numbing world of nuclear statistics we have to remember again and again that the whole business is all about ending lives — and yet lives are beyond price. When this is forgotten, then we hear talk of "winnable nuclear wars", "acceptable casualties", "mutually assured destruction", and "clean bombs".

Painful though it might be, we have to realise what, in human terms, a nuclear war will actually mean. The perspective awarded by such a realisation can have only one effect, to bring about a complete revulsion against even the notion of nuclear war — and a wholehearted determination to see the threat of it — indeed the threat of all war — finally eradicated. All else must follow from this. Wars are affairs of the heart; they engage deep seated and powerful passions. So, peace too must be an affair of the heart, and the passions deployed in the cause of peace must be at least as formidable as those unleashed in the cause of war.

Turning again and again to the account of the Rohini incident, Sangharakshita explores aspects and details of the story that could so easily be overlooked. He trades the similarities and contrasts that exist between the Buddha's world and the modern world of nuclear weapons, outlining the traits and characteristics latent in man that work towards his doom — and those



Hiroshima

If the form as well as the content of the Venerable Sangharakshita's new paper, *Buddhism, World Peace, and Nuclear War* are to be taken as a guide then the answer must surely be, *with clarity of thought*. Sangharakshita delivered this paper on 30th July at the Croydon Arts Centre, and on 31st at the Conway Hall in central London. The paper is already available in booklet form. I hope you will buy it and read it — several times. It is a model of thorough, conscientious thinking set in a straightforward, economic and above all lucid exposition. To

poised forces that water is really worth very little, while warriors are "beyond price". Warriors: people, are beyond price; life is beyond price. Life cannot ever be quantified or weighed against even the 'vital interests' of a group, because it is beyond price. Here is the crucial value judgement — a fact of the heart and of the spirit, the seed from which has developed an entire philosophy of non-violence. It is a simple shoot of insight, and while it has been blasted and torn by wars, skirmishes and feuds since the dawn of history, yet it persists

which could lead towards his redemption.

The booklet is not a long one; it would be foolish of me to attempt to recapitulate here the comments and arguments that Sangharakshita marshals. Rather I would encourage you — again — to buy the booklet, which after all, costs just 20p more than this Newsletter!

However, I will whet your appetite by highlighting just a couple more of the many themes that are engaged in the paper.

Sangharakshita declares himself to be completely and wholeheartedly opposed to the existence of nuclear weapons — indeed to warfare of any kind. Some readers may be surprised by the force with which he expresses himself, and by the degree of detail into which he goes while making his practical suggestions. (The) “pressure should be massive, unanimous and unmistakable, and we should keep it up until we see governments in general, and the governments of the nuclear powers in particular, making the total abolition of nuclear weapons their top priority.” He suggests, among other things, that we who live in democracies can bring pressure to bear on governments “simply by refusing to vote for any party, or any candidate, not unambiguously committed to working for the total abolition of nuclear weapons.” Some readers may find this a little extreme — or even simplistic. For are there not other immediate and important issues to vote on? Perhaps it’s a matter of perspective. Whether or not the Romans devalued their currency in 85BC, or whether they extended their empire by a few hundred miles more, or liberated their slaves, is of little if any practical significance to us today. But suppose the Romans had had the power to destroy mankind — and had used it; where would that leave us? Surely the nuclear issue is one of “transcendent importance”. Sangharakshita maintains that it is more important than nationalism, patriotism or any sectional interest. The abolition of nuclear weapons must be sought he says with real acts rather than with empty gestures, with utter integrity, and with an ever-strengthening feeling of love for

all beings on earth.

Sangharakshita devotes a large part of his paper to the present failure of communication between large sections of the human race. The superpowers, he maintains, do not speak a common language, they fail to agree even about basic terms. This, he argues, is due to “a breakdown of the notion of objective truth... and a substitution of the notion of objective truth by the notion of subjective truth.” While this is the case, communication is impossible, facts are regarded as non-facts, and persons as unpersons — and the world lumbers blindly towards the abyss. Somehow, reverence for the notion of objective truth must be rekindled, otherwise all our efforts in other spheres could be to no avail. And as with the development of loving kindness, and with the development of non-violence itself, our efforts will have to begin at home — in our own hearts and minds, with our own speech and acts.

Sangharakshita heralds the final major section of his paper by holding aloft a brief glimpse of a world freed of nuclear weapons, freed of war, freed of violence: a Utopian world, a heaven on earth. But no sooner has the image been evoked

than it is almost snatched from us, with the bare reminder that we still have to learn how to live truly human lives. Much of human life is given over to “trivial interests and worthless pursuits” — to the extent that one is driven to wonder whether it is a thing worthy of preservation!

From here Sangharakshita skilfully guides us into a meditation on the theme of death: death as something, war or no, that we all have to face, death as the “one thing on which we can rely absolutely”.

This meditation on death progresses into an exposition of Buddhism in a mode not so frequently heard from Sangharakshita: an exposition of Buddhism as the path to Nirvana, the deathless state, which is to be achieved by the overcoming of birth — by way of the overcoming of craving for (re)birth.

There is one small clue to Sangharakshita’s perhaps more typically Mahayanistic approach in his definition of Nirvana as “a state of irreversible spiritual creativity”, but the overall tone of the exposition is quite solemn and even rhetorically negativistic. Stylistically at least this seems fitting. After all that has gone before, the announcement of the ultimate *spiritual* challenge to us

all, say in the form of the Bodhisattva ideal in all its glory, could at least *sound* over idealistic. We are therefore presented with the challenge in another, more sober, but perfectly appropriate form.

If we, frail beings that we are, are going to have any significant impact on the current world situation, then we will have to become far more than frail, or merely idealistic. We will have to become very considerable indeed. We will need the Buddha’s strength of character and presence. We will have to speak with voices that are as firm and mighty as the earth on which we walk; we will have to be able to call the Earth to witness. This we will not be able to do until we have honestly dealt with and even transcended issues as deep and as basic as birth and death.

There are already many people waving the warning flags, raising the alarms and trying to stir the world out of its sleep. But who is going to utter the Lions Roar? Who is going to stand between the armies and speak to them convincingly in a common language? To be sure, it will not be anyone who is afraid of death, or who still fosters feelings of hatred in his breast, or who is able to forget that this might be the last opportunity; and paradoxically, not someone who is merely afraid of nuclear war.

At an early point in his paper, Sangharakshita admits that everything he has to say rests upon a single assumption. The assumption is that nuclear war is *not* inevitable. Despite the brevity of the paper Sangharakshita manages to communicate a prolific number of insights and suggestions, — and succeeds in taking the discussion to a depth hitherto, in all probability, unplumbed. It would perhaps be trite to suggest that this paper makes the world a safer place and war less inevitable. But if at least 50,000 people read it — as many people as there are nuclear warheads in the stockpiles; if they take both its form and its contents seriously, and put into practice its many guidelines, then at least the presently divided, confused, and still ultimately feeble voice of the peace movement might begin to give forth a stronger, more unified, and more commanding roar. It may even have an effect.



Wars are about killing, about death and destruction.

A Season of Non-Violence

By Barry Goddard

In some of the later paintings of the 20th Century painter Georges Braques, a mysterious white bird appears, for no apparent reason. Towards the end of his life, Picasso produced lithographs of doves, maybe soaring with outstretched wings, carrying flowers. For both of these artists, the bird was a symbol of peace, of non-violence. This theme of non-violence can be found in all fields of the arts. In past centuries, we find it, for example, in the works of Goya, Blake and Tolstoy. With the escalation of violence this century into World Wars and the threat of nuclear holocaust, the issue of non-violence has become much more important, and there has been a proliferation of works on this theme in the arts. Thus, for example, there are anti-war films such as Michael Cimino's *The Deer Hunter*, Lewis Milestone's *All Quiet on the Western Front*, and Sir Richard Attenborough's *Oh, What a Lovely War*; there is the poetry of Wilfred Owen, Siegfried Sassoon and the other war poets; there are the writings of John Middleton Murry, Max Plowman, Lytton Strachey and D.H. Lawrence; and there is the music of Sir Michael Tippett and Benjamin Britten.

Many of these artists and their works were featured in a season on the theme of non-violence held recently at the Arts Centre, Croydon, a season which included several lectures, a drama presentation, and films. This article will explore non-violence in the arts, with particular reference to some of the lectures delivered during the season. The lectures were: 'Lytton Strachey and the Victorians', given by the biographer Michael Holroyd; 'Tippett's Pacifist Ideals', given by Tippett's friend and biographer Meirion Bowen; 'Tolstoy and the Discovery of Peace', given by Dr R.V. Sampson, ex-Professor of Politics at Bristol University and a writer on Tolstoy; 'D.H. Lawrence and the Great War', given by Mark Kinkead-Weekes, Professor of English at Canterbury; and 'Buddhism, World Peace & Nuclear War', which was delivered by the Venerable Sangharakshita.

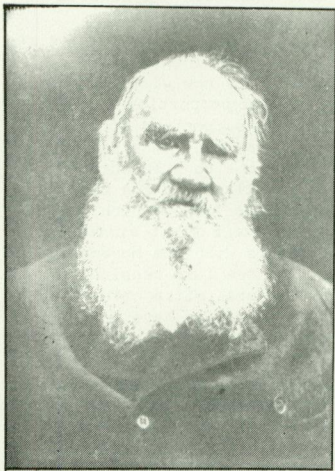
Throughout these lectures we can see the individuals concerned producing works in response to the violence in the societies in which they lived, works which, each in their own way, attempt to explain how war and violence come about, and which suggest alternative values leading to a non-violent society.

Thus in 'Tolstoy and the Discovery of Peace', Dr Sampson said that Tolstoy always hated and opposed war, and in later life even maintained that a soldier is nothing more than a murderer. Tolstoy's earliest works included two sketches written when fighting in the Crimean War, in which he realistically portrays some of the

horror and confusion of war.

In *War and Peace*, and a later work, *The Kingdom of God is Within You*, Tolstoy analyses the structure of society and shows how it inherently gives rise to war. The central message of *War and Peace* is that, contrary to what most people believe, a king is history's slave, and his every action is predestined and inevitable. Men believe that they must submit to the king, to power, whereas the opposite is true. It is time for men to grow up and cease to be duped, says Tolstoy. The king's power is an illusion caused by people's fear and their liability to be gulled. And violence is central to power. In considering the question of disarmament, Tolstoy says that it is an illusion to believe that all we need is a conference between governments. To suggest to a government that it does not have recourse to violence is to tell it to abolish itself. It is in the nature of a government not to submit to others, but to exact submission from them. It will never abandon its power, and since the army is power to a government, it will never abandon the army.

In another work, Tolstoy demonstrates how soldiers are stupefied by the deceptions of orthodox Christianity and the army authorities into believing that it is not a sin to kill people, indeed that it is a



Tolstoy

sin not to kill if one has been ordered to do so.

Tolstoy maintained that war could be overcome if the majority of people were to become aware of who they are, aware that in every man there dwells a free, omnipotent spirit which manifests as love, and that if people acted according to this awareness, all the difficulties of mankind would be overcome.

Turning to 'D.H. Lawrence and the Great War', Professor Kinkead-Weekes said that Lawrence's response to the First

World War was one of horror. He tried to discover the causes of war, not, however, in political, historical or economic terms, but within human beings themselves. Lawrence gradually evolved a theory that saw all aspects of life in terms of a creative conflict between impersonal and universal opposing forces. One force is the impulse to togetherness and stability, the other is the impulse to movement, the impulse from being to knowing. From the conflict between these forces are born new dimensions of personal life, religion and art. When this creative conflict is interrupted, destruction, and hence violence, occur. 'Enclose the self or society within existing forms, or repress either of the opposed forces in the dialectic, and there will be destruction.'

Lawrence embodied this theory in his novel *The Rainbow*, one theme of which is the destructiveness released in people by the social changes that occurred between the mid 19th and early 20th centuries. In his later novel, *Women in Love*, Lawrence elaborates on his theory, and 'insistently exposes the impulses to violence and destruction that lurk beneath the surface in what seem the most civilised of people.' Peace can only come about, said Lawrence, when men recognize their own impulses to violence and hatred.

The writer Lytton Strachey saw the causes of war and violence in the values held by society, and what he wished to do, in the words of Michael Holroyd, was 'to infiltrate his humanitarian principles, subtly, through literature, into the bloodstream of the people, and in such a way that they accepted it all quite naturally, if need be, without at first realizing what it was to which they were agreeing... He sought to write in a way that would contribute to an eventual change in our ethical and sexual mores — a change that would unobtrusively bend the more flexible minds of young people'.

Strachey aimed 'to replace in the minds of his readers the ambitions of public life with the civilized values of private life', and partly for this reason is still a controversial figure in our present age of 'violence and publicity.'

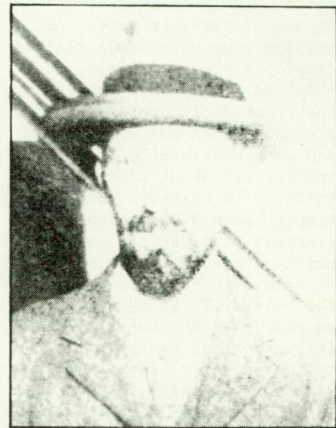
Strachey's most influential work was his book *Eminent Victorians*, in which he exposes the two false moral systems of the Victorian age that had merged together — ecclesiastical Christianity and the religion of worldly success. The book contains biographies of four 'eminent' Victorians, including Florence Nightingale and General Gordon. Strachey's desire was 'to lay bare the facts ... as I understand them, dispassionately, impartially, and without ulterior intention.' and in so doing, he exposed these Victorians for what they really were.

'We see General Gordon,' said Mr Holroyd, 'indulging his secret passion for

fame and becoming a willing instrument, not of God, but of the extreme imperialist faction of the British Government. The messianic religiosity that motivated General Gordon was all too well recognized by a weary generation just back from the trenches of the First World War.'

Eminent Victorians, which was published just after the First World War and quickly became very popular was, in the words of the novelist David Garnett, 'designed to undermine the foundation on which the age that brought war about had been built.'

In his lecture on Sir Michael Tippett, Meirion Bowen discussed three of Tippett's works. The first was a play called *War Ramp*, which was performed in the 1930's at political rallies, and contained Tippett's ideas, as they then were, on war and violence in society. In particular, Tippett was trying to show 'the moral degeneracy of a system whereby war could be based on the availability of bank credit.' He shows the suffering caused by industrial competition, and says that 'as capitalism becomes frantic in its efforts to survive, only the armaments industry



D.H. Lawrence

flourishes.' Though written in the 1930's Tippett feels that there is a repetition of the situation in contemporary society.

The oratorio *A Child of Our Time* was produced a few years later in response to the rise of totalitarian régimes in Germany and Russia which, Tippett felt, would lead to war. In this work he attacked the intolerance and ideological self-righteousness of all such régimes, régimes which are found universally, in other cultures and at different times.

Since *A Child of Our Time* said Mr Bowen, Tippett's main objective as a composer has been to suggest spiritual values which are not currently regarded as important because of the split in knowledge that has come about with the tremendous advances in science. In Tippett's own words 'The great price paid for the necessary advance in empirical science is the severance of the spiritual union with the anima, — hence the accumulation of dark, destructive powers that burst up in man as disease, war, revolution and so forth.' We need to learn to balance our intellectual awareness with other values, said Mr Bowen. In *The Mask of Time*, which is his most recent large-scale composition, Tippett's aim has been to expand musically upon these ideas and show them in their widest possible context.

Sangharakshita's lecture 'Buddhism, World Peace and Nuclear War', a review of which appears in this *Newsletter*, covered the issue of violence in the modern world, and brought home the urgency of our present predicament, in which man-

kind could be completely destroyed by nuclear war. He took the problem of war onto a deeper level with his discussions both of the universal principles of violence and of non-violence, and of the even more fundamental problem of death, in which he concluded that mankind is now faced with not only its greatest ever threat, but also its greatest ever opportunity; the possibility of nuclear holocaust means that we must all dwell in peace, all learn to live in accordance with non-violence, all become more aware of the fundamental problem of death, or perish. In fact, we must transcend both birth and death and attain Nirvana, or the Unconditioned.

Sangharakshita concluded the lecture by saying that time is running out and we do not know whether or not we shall be able to avert nuclear war. But if we can solve the problem of death, then we shall be able to live in the world as the Buddha and his disciples lived, and work together

for the achievement of world peace and the avoidance of nuclear war.

Much of the material presented in these lectures was produced by individuals in response to violence in societies existing at different times and, in the case of Tolstoy, of a different culture, to our own. But at the same time, much of what these people have to say is of relevance to us today, and this is mainly because their statements go beyond the confines of their own societies and are applicable to mankind as a whole.

Thus we have Lawrence's theory of the creative conflict between opposing forces which, he maintained, is found in all forms of life; there is Tolstoy's analysis of the nature of power and governments and his appeal to the 'free, omnipotent spirit' in man; and there is Tippet's universal attack on totalitarian régimes, and the setting of his later ideas in their widest possible context in *The Mask of Time*.

Sangharakshita's lecture also has this universal applicability; the threat of nuclear war and the achievement of peace are global issues, and his accounts both of the principles of violence and non-violence, and of the solving of the problem of death, apply to all societies at all times.

Overall, it is perhaps Sangharakshita's lecture which is most relevant to us today. This is partly because our present situation is unique; violence nowadays could bring about the total destruction of mankind, and individuals in the past have not had to deal with violence on such a large scale. And his lecture was also very practical. He suggested ways in which we can bring about the abolition of nuclear weapons and, beyond that, achieve a completely non-violent world. His vision goes even beyond this to the solving of the problem of death, an issue that is, as we saw, even more fundamental than those of nuclear war, and

of violence and non-violence.

We are thus afforded a glimpse of the difference between the vision of the artist and the vision of the Bodhisattva. The artist envisages a truly human, non-violent, society. The Bodhisattva envisages a Pure Land, a world in which all beings are practising the Buddha's teachings through living non-violently and solving the problem of death. This difference between the artist and the Bodhisattva is also revealed in their influence on society. The works of an artist may go a long way towards the creation of a truly human society; the poetry of Wilfred Owen, for instance, did much to change people's attitudes towards war. The Bodhisattva's creativity, however, extends beyond this to the formation of a Sangha, a body of people practising together the Buddha's Teaching and so actually transforming the world into a Pure Land.

LBC

To catalogue the simple facts; some people who come to our classes, retreats, or perhaps yoga or massage classes develop a strong interest in Buddhism. They may then leave their job, join one of our co-ops and one of our communities, and with continually rising spirits set about practising Buddhism in earnest. Such simple facts disguise the greatest of miracles: conscious human evolution, a miracle which happens to be the only criteria by which we can judge the success or failure of our Centre.

The Venerable Sangharakshita generously offered to read his paper 'Buddhism, World Peace and Nuclear War' for us if we could find a venue and organise the event. Happily the Conway Hall in Holborn was filled by around 500 people on the night, and in terms of making new contacts, with the peace movement in general as well as with those who attended, the event was undoubtedly our most successful of recent times. (See report in front section).

The Summer Retreat at Battle is currently under way,

and is reportedly going very well. This retreat provides for some people their first significant contact with the Movement, and is often a turning point towards deepening commitment for those who attend.

Within the Pure Land Co-op, the gift shop Jambala has just been well re-fitted and can justly claim to be the 'East End's West End shop'; Friends Foods trading is above average this Summer, Windhorse Photo-setters are gaining confidence in their new technology (and business with it), and the evening opening of the Cherry Orchard is well established.

For those not so familiar with the LBC, it will be worth listing the other businesses and organisations which come within our orbit, - namely the men's newly-formed Globe Building Services, and Octagon Building Design, the charities, Aid for India and Women's Retreat Centre Fund, Phoenix Housing Co-operative, the design studio Windhorse Associates, Dharmachakra Tapes and Transcriptions, and of course Nagabodhi's operations for Windhorse Publications, - all of which add up to opportunities for right livelihood as yet unparalleled within the Movement.

Phoenix Housing Co-operative is in the process of registering with the Housing Corporation,

and the prospects look good. Success here will mean that Phoenix will be able to provide long-term housing for an increasing number of people involved in and around the LBC. Phoenix has had to adopt more business-like attitudes and procedures in order to be considered for registration, and this reflects the trend here as we strive to be more successful both in our commercial ventures and in our attempts to communicate the Dharma to an increasing number of people.

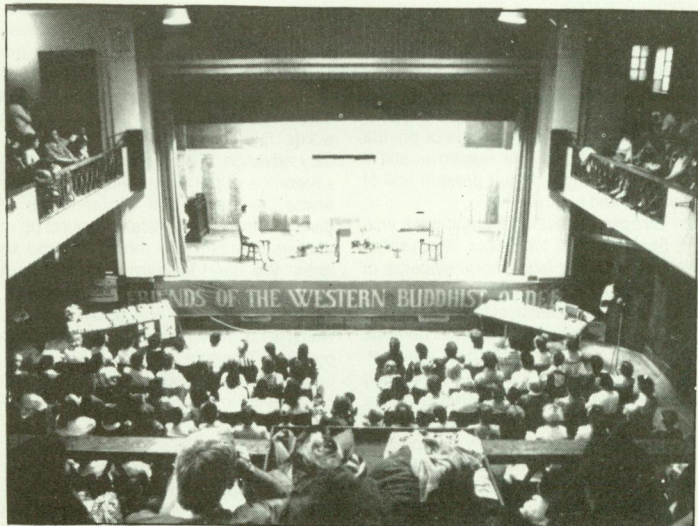
At the Centre itself regulars attending the Tuesday class have been treated to an excellent series of talks on the Six Perfections, these being given by guest speakers, including some of the very best in the Movement. For the coming session class leader Nagabodhi is arranging a similar series on the topic of the Seven Fold Puja. If Jayamati takes over leadership of our Wednesday Open Night, which currently seems likely, our two most well-attended classes will then have the benefit of first-rate leaders.

Among the people who have recently come into contact with us and are now giving a substantial proportion of their time to supporting activities here, one went to a Battle retreat, one to a lunchtime meditation class and one read 'Buddhism for Today' which constituted their first significant contacts with the Movement. During the last session we have had several mitra ceremonies, several mitras have asked for Ordination, three of our young men have set off to Tuscany with high hopes of Ordination, and we are very pleased to welcome back from her recent Ordination retreat Varabhadri. There is never room for complacency, but taken together these facts are enough to confirm that beyond our structures and organisations the real business, the miraculous business, is under way.

Centre during the last two weeks of July, you would have been duly disappointed. The building where the Centre is located is older than most of the buildings in Baker St. Its stairs, which, on the day, must have supported millions of footsteps, were slowly becoming more and more unstable, until they became unsafe. So now new stairs have been put in, but with the drawback of the Centre having to be closed for two weeks. Apart from those two weeks of non-activity, classes, courses, and weekend events have been going fairly well in West London, particularly the two five-week courses giving a thorough introduction to meditation and Buddhism. Since the Centre had to close, Dharma Day was celebrated on Thursday 12th July, rather than Sunday 15th. That change did not impede the festive mood: the Centre was beautifully decorated; the shrineroom was strung with red, yellow, and blue silk flags and a silk banner hung above the shrine. The shrine itself was decked with delicate flower arrangements, candles, Dharma books, and various other precious things. During the afternoon, about fourteen people meditated together and listened to the *Diamond Sutra*. The evening's festivities began with a meal, the gathering grew in numbers, it grew in gaiety, there were even a few women dressed in colourful saris, and the atmosphere was joyful and uplifting. Sudhana gave a talk and the celebrations culminated in the seven-fold puja.

West London also welcomes a new woman Order Member, Sarvabhadri which translates as 'a good friend to all'. She has been living in West London since she came from Norwich two years ago. She was ordained on August 7th, on the women's retreat at Battle.

Summer has hit the Right Livelihood business: with it has come work for Friends Gardening, but summer brings a slump to the wholefood business, Friends Foods. A number of ideas have been



Bhante delivers his paper at the Conway Hall

W. London

Had you been intending to visit the Baker Street Buddhist

thought about to counteract this. The shop has replaced the attractive but not very profitable herb counter with a juice bar. It sells cool, refreshing juices, and for those with more exotic tastes, non-alcoholic white and red wine. Although the team works well together, they are in need of more workers, so that changes can take place to make their working week shorter and less pressured.

The coming of autumn bodes well for the business and the Centre. Friends Gardening has secured some prestigious long term contracts. Friends Foods will pick up business, and the Centre will be holding a variety of special 'arts' events, as well as our regular classes.

Croydon

On Monday 30th July at our Arts Centre the Venerable Sangharakshita delivered to an audience of nearly 200 people his lecture 'Buddhism, World Peace, and Nuclear War'. The lecture hall itself was full, and many of the audience saw the lecture live on video either upstairs in the restaurant or in the Arts Centre bookshop. This was the first time that the Centre/Co-op complex had been used in such a way for so many people. Afterwards, Bhante signed copies of his books in the bookshop. Forty copies of recent publication 'The Ten Pillars of Buddhism' were sold over the course of his stay.

Bhante's lecture was a fitting conclusion to a very successful 'Non-Violence' season held at the Arts Centre, a season which included some excellent lectures and films. As a follow up to the lecture, there was a showing at the Centre of Bhante's interview for Harlech television, and a series of three introductory talks on Morality, Meditation and Wisdom, followed by a beginners' day retreat.

The Croydon Centre is in a period of expansion. Classes are very full at the moment, and it has been decided to continue them over the summer break in order to cater for the present influx of people. For the autumn, it is planned to hold a series of introductory public lectures given by Order members and there will also be a season of films at the Arts Centre entitled 'The Film of the Book'. The films have been chosen to partly coincide with the current schools' A-level literature syllabus, and local schools have responded encouragingly to this plan. Links have also been established with local newspapers, so that events such as these are being well-publicized.

The range of books available in the bookshop is being continually expanded. There is now a much wider selection of books on Buddhism, and areas such as Philosophy, Psychology, and Comparative Religion are now being covered. The biography, poetry, and literature sections have also been expanded.

The restaurant was closed for two weeks in August to enable mitras to attend the Padmaloka men's mitra event. There have recently been record takings in what is normally the low-point of the year. In the Centre itself, an air conditioning system is to be installed.

With more and more people coming into contact with the Croydon Centre, through the wholefood shop, restaurant and bookshop, through school visits and events for schools at the Centre, through arts events, yoga classes and meditation classes, the Dharma is acquiring an ever-widening sphere of influence in South London and beyond. In fact, with community members from as far afield as New Zealand, Malaysia and Venezuela, and with the recent ordinations of Punyaraja, who is Finnish, and Gunabhadri, who is Dutch, the Centre is acquiring an increasingly international flavour.

Manchester

Manchester has a reputation of being a place where it never rains but pours! This, at the time of writing (September), has not been true for this summer, for we have had no rain in four months. Consequently we have been working on outside maintenance and repair of the Centre, long overdue since its opening four years ago. The finished product of a painted centre, concreted paths and fresh garden should reflect our care for the environment in which we practise meditation. This has meant that our present fundraising activities have gone towards some of the more basic necessities such as paint, bricks and concrete.

Although this summer has seen some of our mitras taking up work in other FWBO Centres, and Dharmacari Subhadri moving on to the Croydon vegetarian restaurant, Hockney's, our FWBO Council still thought it high time to start a second community for men, so Dharmacari Ratnaguna has moved to a large house close to the Centre and is at present living with three other mitras.

The month of August saw an experiment in the form of cutting back on activities in order that the Order members and mitras could all go off on retreat and be refreshed



Uilleann pipes and Irish flute featured in an evening of Irish traditional music organised by Bija Arts in June.

More recent events included 'Local Poets' and a screening of 'Radiating the Fruit of Truth', a film from the Tibetan Trilogy.

Interest in our most recent 'Evening of Japanese Shakuhachi Flute Music' was more than could be adequately catered for, with nearly one hundred people squeezing into the Camerawork Gallery venue in Roman Road. Despite lack of

for the new session starting in September. It seems at present that far from having bad effects through losing people over that month the situation has been clearer for the break. The forthcoming season of activities looks to be as busy as ever,

space and ventilation it was a successful evening, and felt to be a quite special occasion. Besides the contemplative sounds of the Shakuhachi the audience could sample Japanese food and admire a beautiful display of wood block prints, Noh masks, lanterns and costumery.

Local awareness and interest in Bija's events is gathering momentum, and we are realising already the need for a permanent office and a venue or venues with more space and better facilities.

It added an extra intensity to the whole event.

Following the end of the Brighton Aid for India appeal undertaken by four women, the women's community here decided to part, thereby vacating their delightful four bedroom house in Rottingdean. Luckily, at the same time, Yashopala, Buddhapalita, Ian Cander and John Roser were looking for a house in which to form a new community. They hope to move into the Rottingdean house early in September. Yashomitra

Brighton

Whilst Brighton has been going through it's most hectic time of the year, the summer holiday season, those of us at the Brighton Buddhist Centre have been quietly working away maintaining some degree of sanity. Around fifty people from the Centre attended Sangharakshita's lecture 'Buddhism, World Peace, and Nuclear War' in London on July 31st., many travelling on a coach hired especially for the occasion.

A few days later, to add an extra edge to Padmasambhava Day celebrations, several men Order members and mitras participated in a more or less non-stop reading of the whole of the 'Life and Liberation of Pamasambhava' lasting from 10p.m. on the 6th. August through to 12.30 the following night, the readings having continued throughout the day retreat. I think that most of us found that having the reading going on continuously in the shrine-room had quite a profound effect on the whole atmosphere of the celebrations.

Bristol

Quite a number of changes have taken place in the community and Centre over the last six months. The men's community has recently acquired two new members, but is also about to lose two - one only temporarily we hope, while he is on the pre-ordination course in Italy.

Tejananda has taken over as acting Chairman from Sthiramati, who is about to embark on four years of full-time study, three of them in the Buddhist Studies department of Bristol University. The most encouraging feature of the last six months has been the consolidation of a much larger and more enthusiastic group of 'regulars' than we have ever had before - in fact we have had a positive 'rash' of mitra requests lately.

Germany

In Germany, Autumn 84 sees the end of a relatively quiet summer session, quiet because both Dhammaloka and Dharmapriya have been on solitary retreats during this period. Even so, there has still been a fairly full programme of retreats - most notably two ten-day single-sex retreats held during late July and early August in a converted farmhouse in the Eifel, a region of pine forests and farmland in central Germany.

Dhammaloka led the first of these which was specifically organised for more experienced male friends from Germany. The absence of beginners allowed the introduction of a concentrated programme which given the relatively small size of the retreat (ten persons) and the spacious surroundings, still seemed light and relaxed. The theme taken for the retreat was the *Vimalakirti Nirdeśa*, which was read aloud during the course of the ten days and was augmented by listening each morning to Bhante's taped lectures on this text. It must be remembered that this was an exceptional treat, only possible because all the retreatants, in this case, had a sufficiently sound grasp of spoken English - a question which never arises on retreats in the UK.

The women's retreat immediately following this was a continental rather than specifically German event, although it was organised by FWBO Germany and three of the twenty-two participants were

German. The order team of four was led by Vajragita and the theme pursued through the retreat, both in study and with talks, was the Three Jewels.

Apart from these major events there have also been four day-retreats, held in three different parts of Germany, continuing our policy of casting as wide a net as possible over the country. The summer has also seen the mitra ceremony of another German friend, Anton Gaellings, who lives in Essen with Dharmapriya and Dhammaloka.

And while Dhammaloka has continued his translation work, concentrating especially on building up a good selection of Mahayana material. Although Buddhist texts have been translated into German in the past, the emphasis has been almost exclusively upon Theravadin scripture which in turn have overtones. Perhaps the dearth of Mahayana texts in German is best illustrated by the version of the *Vimalakirti Nirdeśa* used on the men's retreat which, although in German, had been published in Tokyo.

As more and more people become involved through the German retreats the necessity for them to experience the movement more deeply means that most of them either move to, or at least visit the UK. Summer '84 has witnessed a fair number of such visitors, and the numbers will only increase as the German Order members continue their work.

Sydney

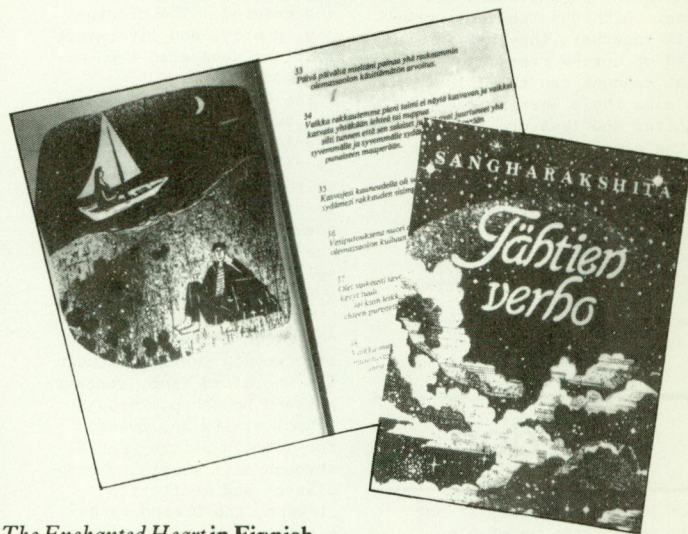
One of the features of our operation here in Sydney is the regular country retreat events we organize at Yerrinbool. Yerrinbool is about 80 kilometres south of Sydney, up on the Southern Tablelands, which makes it geographically very different from Sydney. The land is high in altitude, away from the bustle of the big city and on the edge of a vast national park. These conditions are invariably more conducive to meditation.

We use as a venue the facilities of the 'Bahai' seminar school. This consists of a

series of chalets dotted around the grounds and a large kitchen/dining/sitting area with a great big old-fashioned fireplace. The shrine room is in another separate hall, with a large window looking out into trees and bush in front of which we build our shrine.

Some events are especially to introduce Buddhism and instruct on our meditation practices. Others are longer, more intensive and mainly for Order members, mitras and invited regulars, to deepen their practice.

Helsinki



The Enchanted Heart in Finnish

The summer up here in the North is something very special and much looked forward to during the cold part of the year. So when the warmth of the sun arrives, we all just turn our faces towards it and let everything go.

We usually drop some of our classes, but this year has been exceptional: only the women's class was left out in July because of retreats, and the regulars' class, which usually contains a talk and discussion, was reduced to a session of meditation and puja only. But otherwise we have had a full programme, or even more of a programme than before.

In July we have had some very welcome visits from two Order members: Sridevi and Vajrapuspa. And in August Subhuti was here, as well as Dhiraananda and Dharmavira too.

At a 'Women's Padmasambhava Day' on 15th August, there was a talk by Bodhisri and a slideshow of pictures from recent women's retreats.

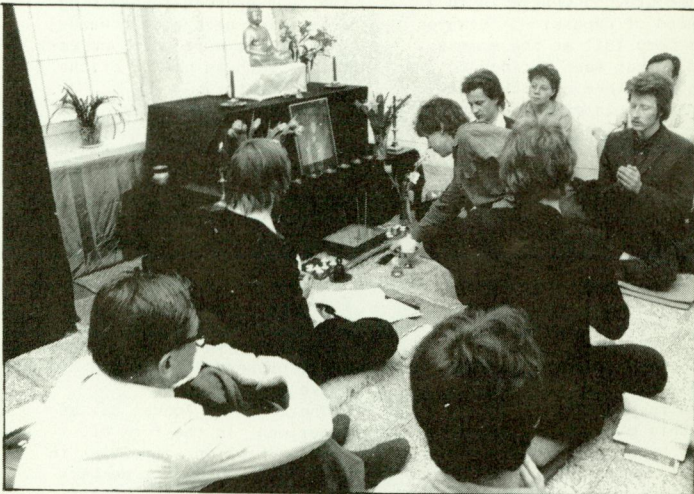
Subhuti gave a one-day seminar on the 'The Nature of

Existence'. He also gave a talk on 'The Quality of Life' at a local vegetarian restaurant. We have held a number of retreats: a men's retreat in August; a women's Order/mitra retreat and a women's meditation and yoga retreat in July.

During the men's Order/mitra retreat came the celebration of Padmasambhava Day, when Subhuti gave a talk on the Vajrayana in a context of readings and mantra chanting.

Since last winter we have had two of Sangharakshita's books printed in Finnish: *The Ideal of Human Enlightenment* and *The Enchanted Heart*. We are very happy to be the first to have Bhante's poems in book form. A mitra, Ida Sohlman both published the book and did the translation. Another mitra, Taru Koshinen designed the book with lots of imaginative illustrations.

Finally the name of our new Centre is in fact Tamradripa and not Cumaradvipa as we reported in the last issue.



The shrineroom at the new Centre

Auckland

The period from May to mid-August has been very busy with many and varied activities, both ongoing and occasional, July being the most eventful.

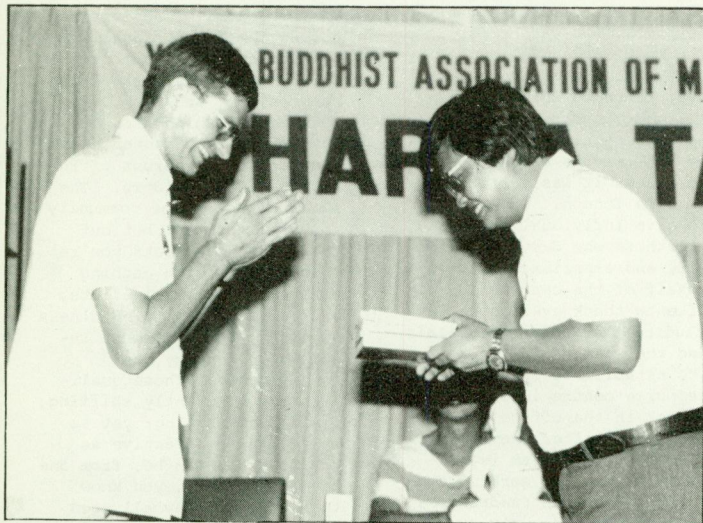
We have celebrated two festivals-Dharma Day and Padmasambhava Day-and held a very successful meditation course in June, where Jayasri introduced a system of teams working with small discussion groups of five to six people, after the talk and meditation session. This was adapted to the two Saturday meditation workshops at Auckland University, led by Priyananda and Sue Storey, with a team of sixteen (Order members, mitras and regulars) teaching to sixty-nine people. We've also had a 'Progressive' Dinner to raise money for Aid for India (\$300.00 approximately) as well as reinstituting the Order/mitra days on a more regular basis.

On Open Night there have

been six talks on the historical development of Buddhism, the first by Purna and the rest by Ratnaketu, ending with a brilliant resume and exposition of the place of the FWBO in the practice of the Buddha's essential teaching - the Middle Way to Enlightenment.

Running through all these events and activities like a thread of glistening gold, is the growing awareness and conscious development of ever more open communication and co-operation on all levels of the working Movement, especially in the spreading and teaching of meditation and the Dharma. There are areas still to be developed, and with the return of five more Order members - Anjali and Vidyavati in October - November this year, and Silaratna, Gunapala and Khempala in mid 1985 - the sky could be the limit for the Movement here in New Zealand.

Malaysia



Lokamitra presents FWBO publications to the General Secretary of YBAM

Lokamitra is currently on a tour of West Malaysia, organised by the Young Buddhist Association of Malaysia. He is giving twenty-six talks all in different places, informing people about the revival of Buddhism in India and the work that we are doing there.

After Malaysia he is visiting Singapore before returning to his work in Poona.

Jayapushpa was able to do some advance publicity work for Lokamitra's tour when she attended a three-day 'Symposium and Exhibition on Human Values for the Far-East'. She too gave two talks in Pahang and led a meditation retreat in Penang during August, as well as accompanying Lokamitra as he moved about the Southern States.

POONA



Order members on retreat at Bhaja

At the time of writing the last report for Facets, we were in the middle of our annual May mitra retreat. This was as successful as one could wish a retreat to be. At the end we had a cultural programme including playing of the mouth organ and singing, and found that some of our mitras are extremely talented. We also had a 'kalapatak' performance. This is a short play much of it 'ad-lib' communicating a very definite and usually social, message. During our study of the *Sigalavada Sutta* we discussed different ways of communicating the Dharma in Maharashtra. Kalapatak has a very important place in Maharashtrian cultural tradition, and is still very much alive. It turned out that some of our Order members and mitras had considerable experience in this, and so we decided to try it out to see whether or not it could be of use to us as a means of communicating more widely. Under the able direction of Dharmachari Sanghesen and mitra Professor Sardar, we were entertained to a performance which brought out the self-destructive nature of many of the un-Buddhist practices still prevalent among the Buddhist community here in Maharashtra, culminating in the discovery of the Trailokya Bauddha Mahasangha, and guidance on how to practice the Dharma. This is not the place to go into detail, suffice it to say that we found it a very rich art form, communicating on several different levels. It has an obvious appeal to villagers, in that its speech and themes are taken from everyday life. We hope it is not long before we have a Kalapatak troupe

in TBMSG going round from village to village spreading the Dharma.

The mitra retreat was followed immediately by the annual Order retreat. It was our most successful Order retreat, being enhanced by our eight new Order members, and the fact that for the first time we were able to hold this annual retreat in our own centre, without the problems that have beset us in previous years.

We came back from the Order retreat to find that our first hostel (at Lohagaon, a village just outside Pune) had opened. Although the building isn't finished, we decided to take a room in the village on a temporary basis as the school year starts in June, and we didn't want to waste a year. We have twenty-five boys between the ages of ten and fifteen from all over Maharashtra. Only one seems to have suffered from home-sickness. The rest all seem very bright, although most need some medical treatment or other. The hazards of village life in India were brought home to us rather unfortunately, when one boy was gored in the neck by a passing cow. Happily he has now recovered. The hostel warden is Pravenbhai Thakur from Surat, where he used to have a very successful sweet-meat business (Surat is known throughout India for its sweets.) He gave this up to work full-time for the Dharma, and was only too happy to help. Two days ago he supervised the transfer of the boys from the room we were using to the first complete part of our hostel.

The search is now on for

land for a second hostel. Recently Vimalakirti, Bodhi-dhamma and Lokamitra visited Shelapur and Hyderabad, where we would like to start hostels. A vigorous search by our local Sahayaks (Friends) is going on in Shelapur, while in Hyderabad, we are in the process of being given some land, already with a Vihara on it. Others are looking in Aurangabad, Nagpur, and Ulhasnagar (part of lower Bombay), we hope that it won't be long before we have a place for our next hostel.

At Dapodi, we are in a position to make a very important step forward. We have just been granted planning permission for the first stage of

the medical centre, a building of about 3200 square feet. Tenders have been received for the building contract, a contractor chosen, and building work has now started.

Meanwhile our classes are bursting at the seams with the new one-year course we have started in our general classes. In 'Dhammavijay' we have been getting between seventy and eighty people crowded into a ridiculously small shrine room (120 square feet), a hall and office which together come to about the same size. We hope it won't be too long before we have proper facilities in which to teach the Dhamma in Pune.



AIE's first student hostel — almost complete

AURANGABAD

While Aurangabad roasted in the summer heat, Jyotipala took a long solitary retreat for the whole of May and half of June. During this time no classes were being held.

Now that the rains have come the popular garden parties will have to wait, but in the meantime Vimalakirti has begun a course on 'Dr. Ambedkar's Dhamma Revolution' at the Law College, on Friday nights.

A day retreat has been held

in Mr. Dongres bungalow, as was the celebration of Dhamma Day. In the regular mitra study class Jyotipala is taking people through the Eight-fold Path.

Although Jyotipala has become quite expert at leading 'baby-naming' ceremonies, he has felt the need to do some homework with regard to weddings. He is consequently observing the local bhikkus from Thailand and picking up a few hints.

AID FOR INDIA

The 1984 Action in Education fundraising appeal was held from April to July to raise funds towards educational resource centres for ex-Untouchable children (many of them Buddhist) in Maharashtra. The appeal consisted of four teams. Two men's teams were based in special fundraisers' communities in East London, and there was a women's team based in Brighton. Every day, after a retreat-style programme of meditation plus communication exercises, karate, drama, study, life-stories, or reporting-in, each team set off in the evening to leave leaflets with interested householders and to arrange covenanted banker's orders. The teams were supported 'in the field' by Simon Wiggins, Robin Coombs, and Rachel Goody - all veterans of the '83 Appeal. A significant feature of this appeal was the number of fundraisers involved who had come back for more; about half of them had worked on the '83 appeal as well. The Appeal Support Team was the fourth team, and was made up of regular AFI workers; it was the ball which racketed between the other three. Special thanks to Darryl Cowley who managed the complex administration. It was by far the most successful appeal ever. We found enough new supporters to bring in £500,000, over seven years. We were particularly pleased by the results of the women's appeal as it was our first outside London. No space to give individual thanks to all those who devoted their time and experience, but on behalf of the charity I would like to thank everyone - including the donors in Britain and the workers in India - who established our first resource centre in July.

Back in the office, several weeks after the Appeal has ended, the team is getting on with the work of continuing what the fundraisers began: fulfilling the trust of the regular donors which a fundraiser first inspired. To cut costs our new computer is now installed and while keeping in close touch with India, we are planning a series of slide shows for our British donors to be held towards the end of the year. Meanwhile, Vajraketu's Dharma-fundraising lecture tour is due to begin in September. Next year a small appeal is projected to raise funds for Dharido Rimpoché's school for Tibetan refugees.

We are of course always keen to hear from anyone interested in working on future appeals and occasionally we have a vacancy in the office itself. Book now for 1986!

A fundraiser reports...

"As a fundraiser, the most striking thing about an Aid for India appeal is that everything you do is set in such high relief. Once you have realized that the Appeal is costing over £10,000, to put on and that every pound raised in Britain is worth so much more in India, that is significant enough. Then later you come to realize that it is quite possible to swing from personally raising £500-worth of regular support one week to £9,000 the next. And then eventually you discover just how much those results depend on yourself, on your sheer effectiveness as fundraiser, as a person. It is a sobering thought. But it is an inspiring one! It gives meaning to every single moment that you spend in the programme of activities during the day, gradually working up to those four precious hours of door-knocking between 6pm. and 10pm., when so much hinges on the subtleties of personal encounter and the trust of individual householders. The camaraderie of the community is very important but out there on the streets you're on your own, with nothing but yourself, the leaflets, and your honesty, mindfulness strength, friendliness, inspiration, energy, and intelligence. Those qualities are constantly shifting, rising and falling; yet to be really as effective as you possibly can be, from one day to the next, you know that somehow they all need to be there at once. All this comes down to your various practices and the self-awareness which guides them. This was my second AFI appeal and what I learned from it is worth gold. Six weeks afterwards I am still using it as a reference point and casting about for a lifestyle that can be as powerful as that one was."

RETREATS



A puja on the open retreat

Open Retreat

After a short team retreat, highlighted by a 'reporting in' session that brought us all very much together and a positive feedback session that charged us with a very positive collective energy, the team of Order members and mitras set off for Glen-gorse and Hydneys School in Battle, Sussex for this year's open summer retreat. The next day the retreatants began to arrive. They came from London, they came from Croydon, from Brighton, from Bristol and from north of Watford! For some it was their first contact with the FWBO. Many had never meditated before and although people continued to arrive as others started to leave there was a strong sense of continuity and build up through the ten days of the retreat during which about a hundred people participated.

Dhammadinna led the retreat very skillfully and beautifully. As she sat next to the shrine appealing to our higher sensibilities, as the meditations intensified and the pujas became more elaborate, everyone responded and made the effort even when, for some, this meant coming to terms with some rather difficult

areas and covering a lot of unfamiliar ground. People also co-operated enthusiastically in the work periods, especially in the kitchen where Hilary and Kate masterminded the operations. Happy hands made light work of the huge task of filling up to eighty stomachs three times a day; and very well filled they were too!

On some days there were communication exercises. For many these proved a rather shocking experience but, through entertaining guidance and perseverance a very rewarding one. People were making some very strong connections. On other days there were study sessions, mainly concentrating on meditation and puja, which provided an invaluable back-up for the actual practices and a chance for people to air their views, their questions and themselves.

In the afternoon, physical activities: Anadajoti led the yoga gently but firmly as he articulated up to thirty bodies at once, stretched out on the lawn in the sunshine. In the dojo/gym Jinapriya got the sweat rolling and taught Karate to a wide range of participants. Karola taught intuitive massage with skilful

hands and a warm heart. Many splashed about in the pool, set beside beds of roses and sparkling in the sunshine.

In the evenings we listened to talks on the Buddha's Noble Eightfold Path. Most of these were given live by the Order members, after we had heard Sangharakshita's taped lecture on 'Perfect Vision'. It became

apparent that we were all engaged in a very practical situation whereby we could explore for ourselves the possibilities of transforming our lives in accordance with this vision.

'Inspired by the Dharma
May we soon meet again
In prosperity and boon.'

Hugh Mendes

Women's Retreat

'Living in the Love Mode' has become a familiar expression within the FWBO, yet it may still at times seem a utopian ideal. However over ten days in August, fifty-six women discovered that living in the love mode can be a vibrant everyday reality!

These women were on the Summer Retreat at Battle. Occupying the spacious house and grounds of a boarding school, the setting itself suggested expansion and harmony. Cares and concerns were rapidly dispelled by a mounting atmosphere of positivity. And with a changeover of twelve people half way through, there was a conscious desire to make the most of our time together.

This we did with a programme of puja morning and evening, four daily meditation sessions taped lectures, discussion groups, work periods, and of course time to relax together in the sunshine, practise karate, Tai Chi, Yoga, or take a dip in the pool. However it was the evening talks by Order members enlivening our understanding of the Brahma Viharas and faith and devotion which enriched the 'Love Mode' theme: the memory of Anjali guiding us through the qualities of a being experiencing metta from the Karaniya-metta sutta; Anoma describing the three kinds of compassion (karuna); Parami entreating us to look for and affirm the best in others and ourselves in her talk on sympathetic joy (mudita); Vimala's entertaining simile of the oxherding picture as she spoke on equanimity (upeksha); and Sanghadevi's inspiring practical approach to faith and devotion (sraddha).

Under the growing fullness of the moon, the evening puja further invoked these parti-

cular positive emotions. Avalokitesvara figured prominently on the shrine as we focussed on metta, while the eight traditional offerings reminded us of karuna. Mudita was expressed in the giving and receiving of gifts, and the shrine was alive with Buddhas and Bodhisattvas to celebrate upeksha. In our final, fullmoon puja, faith and devotion were celebrated with offerings representing the four Brahma Viharas - from flowing fountains of the love life-force (metta), to a most splendid five foot high jewel tree to symbolize mudita.

It was with much rejoicing that on 7th August, as three white paper doves took flight above a flower-decked shrine, that Jenny Roche, Noel Lehan, and Els Witschge went for Refuge, emerging as Sarvabhadri Varabhadri, and Gunabhadri. To the now customary shower of rose petals and three-fold shout of 'sadhu' we wished these three 'special friends' well in this step on the spiritual path. Bhante's presence to perform the ordinations, heightened the growing atmosphere of harmony and co-operation.

Leading the retreat, Anjali imbued it with a lightness of spirit and warmth while her selection of pithy yet humorous Zen readings was always apt. She left us with the image of a kite flying high in outer space, the tail-end flashing with lightning as we tugged the strip held in our hands - a vivid reminder that we had perhaps touched and lit up parts of ourselves in experiencing the possibility of communicating through love.

Vidyavati

Women's Retreat Centre Fund

WRCF now has a spacious office in the basement of Vajracchedika Community. Separate access to the street means that business can proceed without disrupting the community. Our team will be expanding to four full-time workers in November, and we hope that an Office 'Open Day' in September will encourage more part-time help

from women who live near the London Buddhist Centre. Sally Long is now the LBC co-ordinator of fundraising events in aid of WRCF; until now this job had fallen to the office team.

In May we produced our first publicity brochure which has been distributed to all FWBO centres and other Buddhist groups around the world.

We have reviewed the project and decided to purchase a property by Spring 1985, with a view to the retreat community moving in by September or October, 1985 and holding our first retreats at the end of that year. An early purchase gives the best investment for the money we have accumulated so far. We anticipate other benefits from this decision; having a building to fundraise on will give us the opportunity to approach

manufacturers for donations in kind, as well as encouraging other donations to roll in more rapidly as people see more clearly where their money is going.

We envisage spending the winter months driving around central England looking at properties, so by the Spring issue of the Newsletter we should have our prospective Retreat Centre!

Sanghadevi

Vajraloka

The warm dry weather which began in early Spring has continued through the summer months bringing parched fields and, as we learnt on a visit to town, a ban on the use of water sprinklers on garden lawns and vegetable plots. The Afon Alwen a quarter of a mile away on the valley floor has deceptively continued to flow as fast and as full as in the traditionally wetter winter months - the river supplies the locality with water for household use and its volume is regulated normally from a point close to its mountain source. The hot weather, most welcome to community and visitors alike, has demanded a greater effort to get into the shrine room and to get on with the practice of meditation. Nevertheless the retreat programme has been maintained with meditations in the morning, mid-day, late afternoon and the evening, concluding each day with the Sevenfold Puja.

At the end of May there was a Padmasambhava Visualisation Retreat led by Sona followed by a month's retreat

for women, and on returning at the beginning of July the community welcomed Anoghavira from the Glasgow Centre on a three month stay. The on-going retreat steadily increased in numbers throughout the month to its present capacity of fourteen and particularly welcome were the regular Vajraloka visitors - some returning for their sixth time. The direct 'Vajra' aspect of Spiritual life was celebrated with special pujas dedicated to members of this particular Buddha family leading up to the Vajrasattva Retreat led boldly and heroically by Kamalasila.

As Vajraloka enters its fifth year as a Retreat Centre its influence spreads far and wide - this summer has seen visitors from Australia, New Zealand, India, Scandinavia, Germany, Holland, the United States of America as well as an enquiry from Brazil.

May the power of meditation continue to bring a thorough change in both the individual and in the world.

Sumana

the retreat, starting on Padmasambhava Day. On most evenings we listened to various taped lectures by the Venerable Sangharakshita on subjects related to the theme. There was a question and answer session with the team of Order members on retreat, which was very stimulating and entertaining; in fact it had to be continued on another day. Many people on the retreat were men who had been going to FWBO centres for a while, but who had not been on a longer retreat before. Everyone appeared to benefit from the experience, a lot of people especially responding to the pujas. Towards the end of the retreat everyone got together to show their appreciation to the Order members by sprinkling them with petals and garlanding them with flowers.

The Summer Retreat was immediately followed by the National Men's Mitra Retreat. About fifty mitras and Order members from all round the country attended this fortnight long retreat. They took part

in a balanced programme similar to the summer retreat, but including study periods in the mornings for one week. Surata from Brighton led the retreat, with a team of Order members that included Mitra Convenors from various centres. As on the summer retreat they held question and answer sessions which were very well received.

Padmaloka 'Phase Three'

Anyone who has visited Padmaloka during August will have seen the beginnings of our next building project. They will have seen work starting on the shower block, which is on the site of the old garage. We hope to have this completed by the winter retreat, which will be a great upgrading of our facilities. Accompanying this has been work on our drainage system, as we are being converted to mains sewage. No more smells from the septic tank! Also as part of 'Phase Three', we will be re-roofing the open barn in preparation for its conversion into additional accommodation.

In Search of Solitude

If we meditate, a regular solitary retreat will give an important boost to our practice. Daily practice eventually gets dry: slowly it is transforming us, but often unawares. We need retreats to assimilate changes. Recently the Venerable Sangharakshita recommended that all members of the Western Buddhist Order spend a month of each year whether on an intensive Dharmic retreat with one or two others, on an intensive meditation retreat (say Vajraloka), or on a solitary retreat.

Of the various retreat structures, a solitary is the most intensive. Our activities, our responsibilities, and

most of all, the people around us, all affect us very strongly indeed. For the period of the retreat, we have the rare opportunity of an uninterrupted experience of ourselves - a chance to discover what we really think, what we really want to do; a chance to look back over our life and assess our present spiritual needs.

As well as self-examination we have the opportunity for uninterrupted meditation in very good conditions - a chance to experience our practice at its best and most intense. Thus a solitary will augment our daily practice when we return.

I have heard of people from

Padmaloka

The Community

It is a time of change for the retreat community. Four community members are going on the Tuscany Pre-ordination course this year, and we are expecting five people to come back here from the course. If they all come back as Order members this will be a great boost to the community in December. Mike Dawyer, a New Zealander, has recently joined the community, and will shortly be joined by another of his countrymen. This will make the fourth new community member in the last few months. Although it is very good to have the community growing in this way, it is starting to create a bit of a problem with living space. We are having to expand the sleeping space for the community and retreat centre simultaneously!

The Retreat Centre

In July we held our first weekend seshin. This consisted of a very strong programme of meditation and we kept silence from Friday night to Sunday lunchtime. Although there was a great deal of meditation, it seemed fairly effortless. There was nothing to do but sit down and get on with it! The weekend seemed particularly suitable for people who like to get away for a period of intense meditation, but who do not have the time to spend a week at Vajraloka. Many of the people who came were in the position of being occupied in full-time work outside the Movement.

Padmasambhava, who firmly established Tibetan Buddhism, was the theme of our Summer Retreat. Suvajra, chairman of the Manchester Centre, led



the 'Friends' doing solitary retreats in tents, caves, ruins; more commonly, and perhaps more recommended, in caravans and cottages. Whichever we choose, it is important that the place is reasonably isolated. It is also important not to waste, but to really utilise, the special conditions we have set up in a way which will help our meditation. We are recommended to regulate our food, sleep, exercise, reading, etc., quite carefully. We will need to balance our chosen activities to maintain a harmonious combination of concentration, positivity, and energy.

With over a dozen thriving centres in Europe alone, there is a growing need for places to be used for solitary retreats. We need cottages and caravans, in parts of the country as isolated as possible. As well as the 150 or so members of the Order in Europe, there are hundreds, possibly thousands who might use a retreat cottage. Yet such places are hard to find. Of the handful of places that are known around the European centres, even fewer are very suitable, and none that I know of is completely isolated.

I think that those of us who are involved in the FWBO could help. Some people may be thinking of buying something for occasional family weekends and holidays. Why not make it available for solitaries at other times?

For others, purchasing a property for retreat use combines a good form of investment with helping the FWBO's objectives. This could simply be land, a cottage, or even a caravan. Friends could combine to part-own properties. Renting is another possibility.

Of course, straightforward donations could also be put to this purpose - even small sums can be used. (For example, a second-hand caravan can be bought for around £250). If larger amounts become available, there is the possibility of buying a large acreage to be used for a number of solitary retreat dwellings, for example a small forest or moorland valley, or even an island.

There is probably an opening here for one or two people - perhaps an Order member or mitra - to research, coordinate information, and generally get things going. Looking for suitable places will take a certain amount of time, which prospective investors, donors, or purchasers may not have. If it were gathered together, current information about available places could easily be made available for anyone who wanted it. If any of this interests you-if you would like to help in any way-let us know at Vajraloka by the end of 1984. In January we will look at the responses we have received and take things further.

The Order Office

In the early part of the summer, the conversation over the Order Office Community's dining table often veered to the sobering subject of the threat of global war. The matter was in the air because Sangharakshita was giving very careful thought to Buddhism, World Peace, and Nuclear War, as he prepared a paper with that title to be delivered as part of the Croydon Centre's 'Nonviolence' Season. As reported elsewhere, the paper was heard by getting on for 200 people in Croydon, and by a still larger audience when Sangharakshita repeated it the next evening in central London. However, the topic of how the human race can survive and what makes it worth surviving deserves, an even wider hearing. So, back at the Order Office, Subhuti was instrumental in enabling Windhorse Publications to have the printed version of the paper ready for sale during the second reading of the paper. Since then, the Order Office has distributed several hundred copies of 'Buddhism, World Peace, and Nuclear War' free of charge to people and organisations who are likely to be interested. So far, the response has been favourable.

As soon as the booklet was safely off the press, Subhuti was off to Finland for three weeks to lead a retreat for

the Helsinki FWBO. While there, he gave a seminar, delivered a public talk entitled 'The Quality of Life' and renewed his connections with a number of our friends in Finland.

Meanwhile, Vessantara has also been busy with retreats - four weeks of preparatory retreats in June and July for the fifteen men who have been invited to attend this year's Pre-ordination Intensive Course in Tuscany, which Vessantara will lead again this year. He also finds time to play an active role in the development of the charity 'Aid for India' of which he is Chairman, and he has recently given several talks.

In order to economise, the Order Office has decided to do without its own vehicle, and share with Sangharakshita (and the annual Pre-ordination Intensive Course) the use of his car. So, using money raised last year for a new car for Sangharakshita, and adding the proceeds of the sale of his old car and the Order Office car, we have purchased a four-year old blue Volvo Estate. This smart, safe, comfortable car with plenty of space for books, taping equipment and such like will be a great boon. Many thanks to everyone who contributed last year. Ratnaprabha

21

Clergymen in Search of Peace

Whenever Buddhist monks from differing traditions meet, the preliminary conversation generally touches on those rules and observations that they variously observe. From this kind of basis the conversation may lead on to topics of a more doctrinal nature, and then if interest develops, a more personal communication can blossom.

Perhaps such a pattern extends beyond the Buddhist world, for when the Venerable Sangharakshita met some Anglican clergymen at Sukhavati in July, the initial topic of conversation concerned rules and precepts.

Asked about the obligations that Buddhist monks observe, Bhante said that the backbone of traditional Buddhist monastic life is the Pratimoksa, a list of some 150 obligations that a monk undertakes to observe. He added that there is also the 'Bodhisattva-samvarasila' - a list developed by the Mahayana which is observed by

monks and lay people alike. In some Mahayana quarters this list has been added to the Pratimoksa, while in others it has replaced it.

Bhante went on to try and convey the position adopted by the Western Buddhist Order in this respect. He pointed out that we are a modern development. We are simply trying to be Buddhists, trying to develop a thoroughly traditional Buddhist movement, yet without identifying ourselves with any one particular school or sect of Buddhism. He said that while we have great veneration for the tradition as it has come to us, we have to recognise that not all of its aspects necessarily speak directly to us in our present condition. So we are trying to take from the entire tradition those elements which we find helpful and relevant to our present needs as spiritually developing beings.

These needs, he said, impose

a certain unity on the choice that we make, and the outcome of this is our own unique movement, the FWBO. So while we may appear "new", and are outwardly a lay rather than a technically monastic Order (in that celibacy is not absolutely required as a formal obligation) we do in fact 'go back' to the roots of the Buddhist tradition. Pointing out that in the Buddha's day there was no hard and fast distinction between monks and lay followers, Bhante wondered whether the whole question of 'monk' versus 'lay' has not become too much of an issue in itself.

Asked why he thought that Buddhism was making its breakthrough in the West, Bhante said that when he started the Movement, 16 years ago, there was at that time a wave of interest in meditation. At that time, few people who came along to classes were especially interested in Buddhism. But since the practices taught came from the Buddhist tradition, he was able to witness a gradual transition of interest from meditation to Buddhism itself. Today, he felt, the situation has changed, with more people coming along in search of a philosophy that will give meaning to life, so there seems to be more interest directly in Buddhism.

As the conversation shifted eastwards, Bhante was asked whether he had ever experienced difficulty in being accepted

as a Buddhist teacher in India.

In reply, Bhante said that he had in fact experienced more difficulty of this sort in the West, where to have been oriental might have been a distinct advantage! In India, he said, where the spiritual tradition runs deep, a person's nationality is secondary to his spiritual commitment.

He went on to say that he has felt more at home in India than in England, since, being committed to a spiritual tradition, he feels more at home in a traditional society. Coming to the conclusion that he has a 'thoroughly mediaeval mind', he realises that he does not really like the modern world at all. Ideally, he said, he would love to be occupied with a thoroughly traditional life: giving lectures, meditating, celebrating rites, etc., and not having to be occupied with such things as economics and politics and the like, - subjects for which he has no real interest. But as he is living in the 20th century he finds that he has no choice but to be concerned with such things. In fact, he said, it would be spiritually culpable not to be interested in them. For Buddhism to flourish in this modern age, a new and adaptable form of movement is necessary. He said that in this day and age there are issues and questions never before faced by any of the major religions. Of particular urgency,

he believed, is the question of inspiration for world peace. This was the issue that the clergymen ostensibly wished to discuss.

Bhante suggested that the whole aspect of things has been altered by the phenomenon of possible world destruction through nuclear war, and as yet none of the major religions have developed a systematic and thought out approach to this issue. Some might say that if everyone followed Buddhist principles, then there would be world peace. But a Christian or a Moslem could say the same thing. Such platitudes do not help. However, Bhante mentioned two major areas where Buddhism might be able to offer some practical help. The first concerns the question of language: language as a

medium of communication. He said that when people come to talk about peace these days, they are often all talking about different things. So although it is good that people come together to talk about this, how can any meaningful communication take place? Buddhism has always been a very 'semantically aware' religion, and could give some general guidance here.

Secondly, Buddhists have always upheld the sanctity and underlying unity of life as being of primary importance, as against such artificial divisions as nationality, religious beliefs, ideologies, etc. It is therefore essential that we re-establish human contact across these barriers, especially where the tension is greatest. Human contact between governments is more important than whatever particular lines the governments are taking. If people keep arguing about politics, he said, then governments will never get down to the really important issues.

Asked what had happened in the past when Buddhist societies found themselves in conflict with non-Buddhist societies, Bhante said that the general pattern had reflected the division between monks and lay-followers. Ideally, every Buddhist would be observing the same moral code, but in practice it had been the monks who had been expected to observe a very high standard of ethical conduct, while the lay follower was not. This had not been a happy development since it had tended to let the lay-follower off the hook of true ethical responsibility, leaving the monk as the only serious practitioner of the Dharma. So the monk was expected to be completely non-violent, while the lay follower was not. Historically, Buddhism has side-stepped this problem, leaving the lay-follower free to commit at least some measure of violence - at least in self-defense.

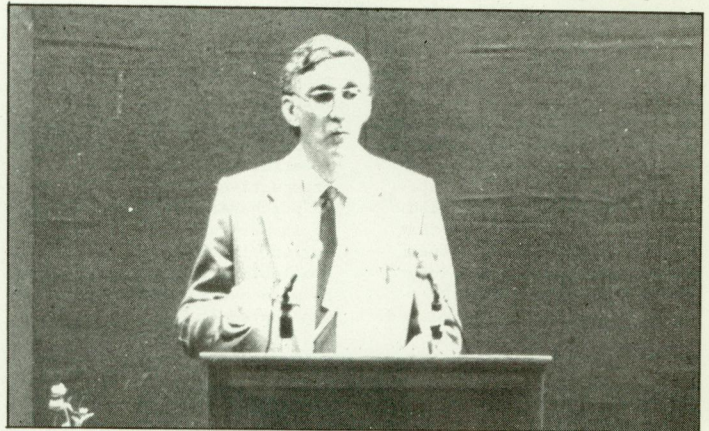
From here arose a question about vegetarianism, and its place in a non-violent life. Bhante commented that there are differences throughout the Buddhist world in this regard. The Buddhists of South East Asia are not usually vegetarian, even in the case of monks. But monks aren't supposed to accept meat which has been specifically killed for them; otherwise they do. In the Mahayana countries many monks are vegetarian. In our own Movement, he said, we decidedly lean towards vegetarianism, since with a little reflection it is obvious that the teachings of Buddhism logically require you to be a vegetarian. He pointed out that a link between non-violence and vegetarianism was seen long ago in the West by Pythagoras. He said that if you can kill and eat an animal, then you can kill and eat a human-being. The two are not completely unconnected; if you have a feeling for the sanctity of life then it must extend beyond human life. He added that as we make contact

with more Buddhists in S.E. Asia, then we may have some influence through our example.

Bhante was then asked whether our approach to spreading the Dharma was full-bloodedly evangelical, or whether we simply waited for people to turn up at our centres. In reply he said that obviously, being Buddhists ourselves, we would like to see as many Buddhists in England. However, although we are not against going out to people in an evangelical sort of way - using that word in a non-pejorative sense - we are not out to take people away from whatever faith they already possess. He said that there are so many people in the modern world without faith in any kind of spiritual

books on Buddhism that speak especially of Mahayana Buddhism as being theistic are really quite incorrect.

With reference to the suggestion that the Buddha was a kind of god - perhaps not a creator-god, but a god among gods - Bhante said that while there are repeated references in Buddhist canonical literature to a multitude of gods, the Buddha himself was a quite different kind of being. From the texts, he said, it is quite clear that all these various gods are regarded as essentially mundane beings - who are, spiritually speaking, dependent upon the Buddha as a teacher. The gods, despite their longevity and their radiant glory, do not understand the nature of Reality. They are



"we are not against going out to people..."

reality, and these are the people who are going to keep us busy over the next few hundred years or so. So we are not out to convert the convinced Christian; we would probably be wasting our time if we were, but we are looking towards those without any spiritual aspirations whatsoever.

From these remarks Bhante made it clear that he did not wish to be interpreted as suggesting that all religions are equally true. He felt that this whole question has to be seen in evolutionary terms. Most people are looking for some sort of explanation to human life - and some explanations are much clearer than others. It is not a question of some religions being 'absolutely right', and others wrong. Rather it has to do with clarity of understanding.

It would be difficult for a Buddhist to have a dialogue with Christians without one final topic creeping in. Bhante was asked to comment on the sometimes confusing range of statements that emanate from the various schools and sects of Buddhism with regard to the existence of God.

Bhante pointed out our own position which, he thought, is in common with traditional Buddhism in the East. That is that there is no such thing as 'theistic Buddhism'. He agreed that some schools of Buddhism do speak of Reality in 'personal' terms, but there is no form of Buddhism that would regard the Buddha, in any of his 'hypostases', as it were, as the creator of the universe. Those

therefore still subject to re-birth, disease, old-age, and death. A Buddha, however, does comprehend the true nature of reality and is thereby different: an Enlightened being

Some western Buddhists find all these gods in the canonical literature a bit of an embarrassment to their national conditioning; they would like to 'demythologise' Buddhism. But this mythology is embedded in the very structure of Buddhism, as it is with Christianity, and you cannot go back, historically speaking, to a pre-mythological Buddhism. It seems, therefore, Bhante concluded, that although the gods are still with us, Buddhism is very much a non-theistic faith.

The five clergymen were attending a mid-service training course,

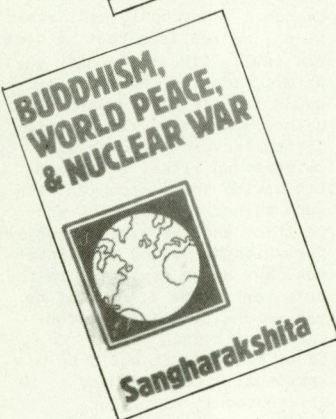
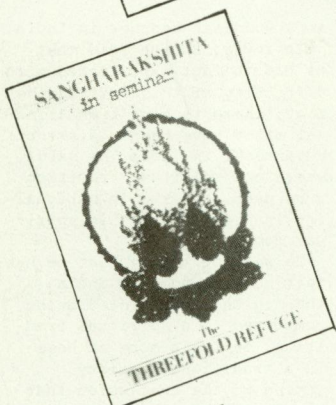
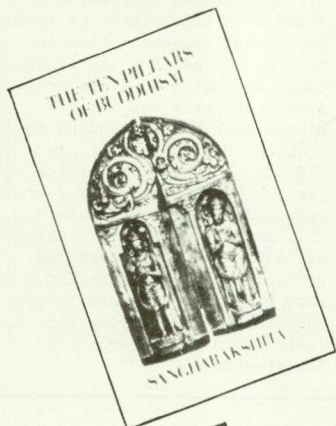
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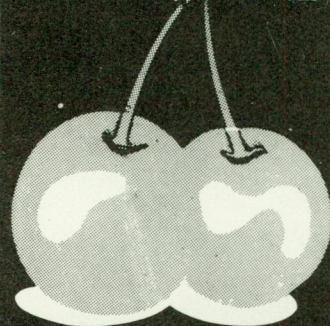


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<i>Windhorse Enterprises Ltd</i> , 15 Park Crescent Place, Brighton, Sussex. 0273-698420
<i>Windhorse Wholefoods Co-operative Ltd</i> , 13 Kelvinside Terrace South, Glasgow G20. 041-946 2035
<i>Phoenix Community Housing Co-operative Ltd</i> , 119 Roman Road, London E2 OQN. 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 4221
<i>Whitehall Housing Co-operative Ltd</i> , 7 Colville Houses, London W11. 01-727 9382

Communities

(Visitors by arrangement only)

<i>Amitayus</i> , 15 Park Crescent Place, Brighton, Sussex BN2 3HF. 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>Padmavyuha</i> , 7 Colville Houses, London W11. 01-727 9382
<i>Ratnadhatu</i> , 12 Vivian Road, London E3. 01-981 5120
<i>Sarvasiddhi</i> , 34 Daventry Street, London NW1. 01-258 3706
<i>Samayatara</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
34b Springwell Avenue, Harlesden, London NW10. 01-965 5752
<i>Udyana</i> , 16 North Road, Brighton, Sussex BN1 1YA. 0273-603188

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