

Friends of the Western Buddhist Order

The

NEWSLETTER

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Words and Images

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

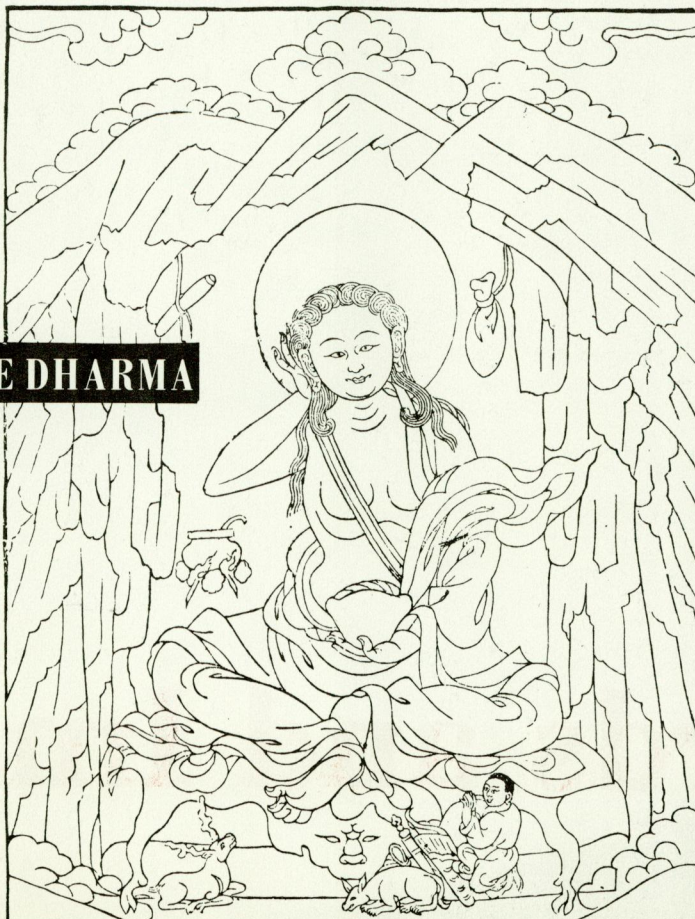
together in businesses which financially support the workers and which fund the further expansion of this New Society. Present businesses either running or being set up in the Movement include a printing press, wholefood shops, a silkscreen press, a hardware store, cafes, a second-hand shop, bookshop,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

WINTER
1985/86

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Nagabodhi

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Erratum

A 'paste-up' error on page 10 of the last issue may have caused some confusion. The meaning will become clear if the last eleven lines in column three are moved to their proper place at very the top of the column. Sincere apologies.

EDITORIAL

Words and images surround us: books, newspapers, pamphlets, advertising hoardings, radio and television programmes, films, window displays . . . even in the course of a single day we are subjected to an incalculable number of words and images. We take them in as momentary distractions, imagining that they will pass through us without trace. But they don't. Anyone who has tried to meditate knows how many of them remain stored in the mind, undigested, ready to come tumbling back into consciousness the moment we close our eyes. On a country retreat where the flow of external images is cut to a minimum, entire days are spent reliving films and books, or forming strategies to acquire some article with which, thanks to an advert — or even the design of the article itself — our minds have become obsessed. Many of the words and images that infest our western culture serve at best to clutter our minds with meaningless distraction, at worst to spark off complexes of conditioned reactions, robbing us of psychic freedom — and thus, in a sense, of our very lives. No wonder we have to guard the gates of the senses!

And yet there are other words and other images, those which stimulate creative thought, or feed the mind with visions of wholeness and perfection, which demand active co-operation in a process that can energise and inspire. They are not to be found everywhere, but one definite advantage of modern Western society is that they can be found quite easily — in some bookshops and art galleries, in museums, and even very occasionally in the theatre, on television or in the cinema. These are the communications, sent across space and time, by exceptional people who have discovered to varying degrees what it can mean to live a truly human life, and who have striven with intellect, emotion and imagination to shape their vision and share it with others. Like henro on the Shikoku pilgrimage, they form a community which transcends time, each contributing something new to the pilgrimage: a statue here, a book there, a painting, an insight, or even just an example of the effort and commitment required to make something of the 'human predicament'. If we wish to live fully, on a spiral of increasing clarity and meaning, then it is to their words and images that we can and must turn.

Sometimes an individual appears on the pilgrimage who makes a contribution so profound, so rich, that he becomes the focal point for a constellation of succeeding 'pilgrims'. In turn, they endeavour through their own words and images to unravel the layers of meaning and significance that his original contribution evinced. Thus, while developing their own experience and unique points of view, they contribute to a coherent, unified legacy — one from which succeeding pilgrims will draw fresh inspiration, and to which they will add.

The Buddha was such an individual, and the FWBO is a relatively new element in his legacy. Inspired by his example, heartened and instructed by the Buddhist tradition, we now find ourselves developing new words and new images — at once decidedly 'Buddhist' in essence, and yet uniquely our own — to describe and communicate a point of view based on our experience of practising his teachings in the modern world. For seventeen years The FWBO Newsletter has provided a forum and testing ground for some of those words and images. Soon, however, it is to be reborn — in new apparel, with new vigour, and a new name: Golden Drum. Look out for the next issue.

Nagabodhi

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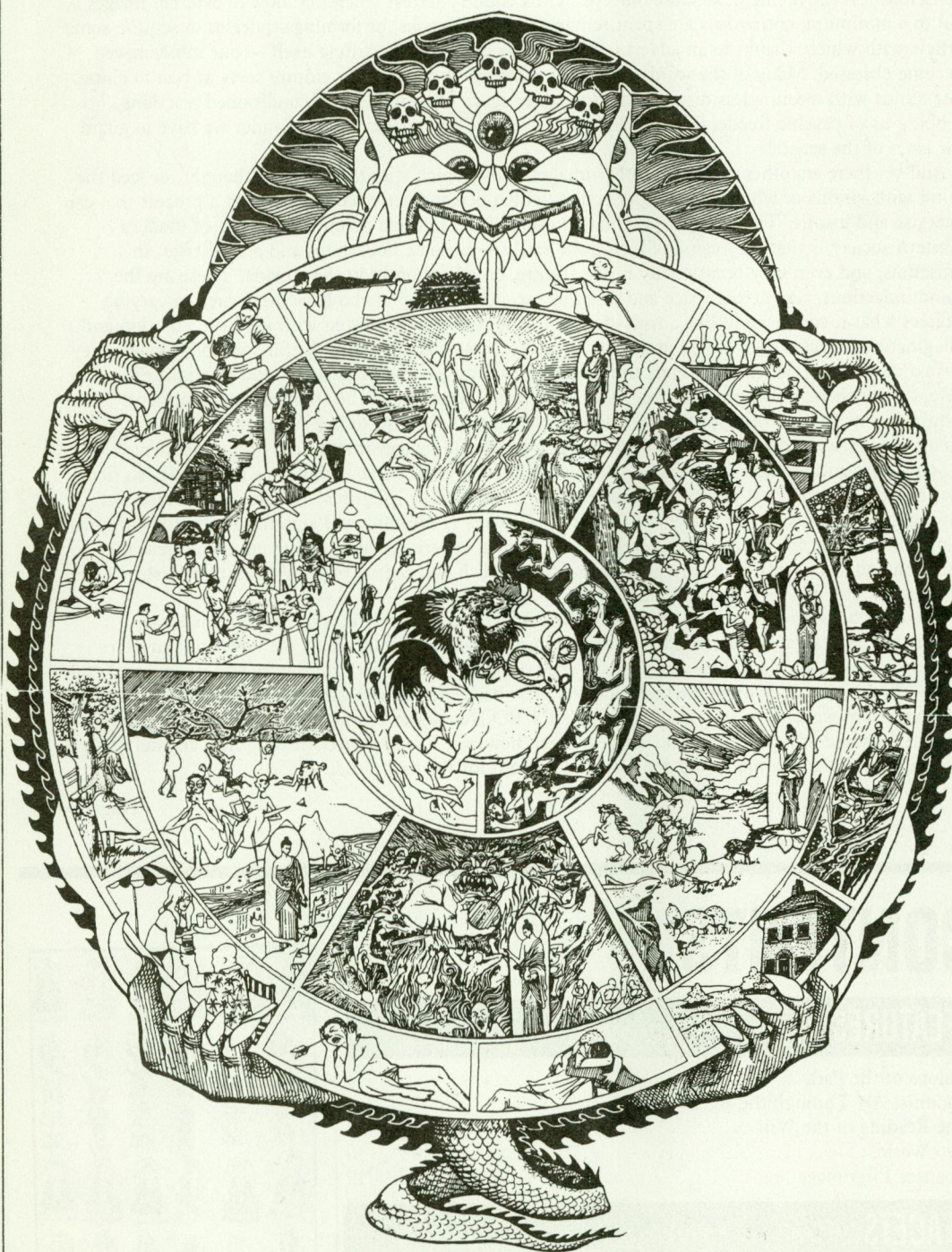
Visions of the Path

By Tejananda

The Buddhist Vision

An Introduction to the Theory and Practice

By Alex Kennedy (Dharmachari Subhuti). Rider, London. Pp. 211 + x. Price £7.95. Paperback



The Tibetan Wheel of Life — Dharmachari Aloka's illustration for the book.

A remarkably large number of introductory books on Buddhism are now available, ranging from the venerable, if not wholly reliable *Buddhism* by Christmas Humphreys, to this new book by Dharmachari Subhuti. *The Buddhist Vision* stands apart from the majority of introductory works, however, in approaching Buddhism from the viewpoint of a synthesis of all the main Buddhist traditions, rather than emphasising the approach of any particular traditional school, or taking an historical approach to doctrinal development. Subhuti's approach is essentially pragmatic; he seems to have asked, before writing about any particular Buddhist teaching, 'Is it relevant? What does it actually involve in practice? What will its effects be?' This approach leads him to view the spiritual path, as he says towards the end of the book, mainly 'in terms of psychological states and of worlds' (ie., the objective effects of those psychological states).

As such, the book gives not so much an overview of the Buddhist tradition, as a vision of the nature and the dynamic of the Buddhist path — as a way of systematic self-transformation or 'evolution' of consciousness and being that any human can undertake. There are three fundamental elements to this 'path' (to be seen underlining any particular system of Buddhism), and these provide the structure of the book. They are the Wheel of Life, the Spiral Path, and the Mandala.

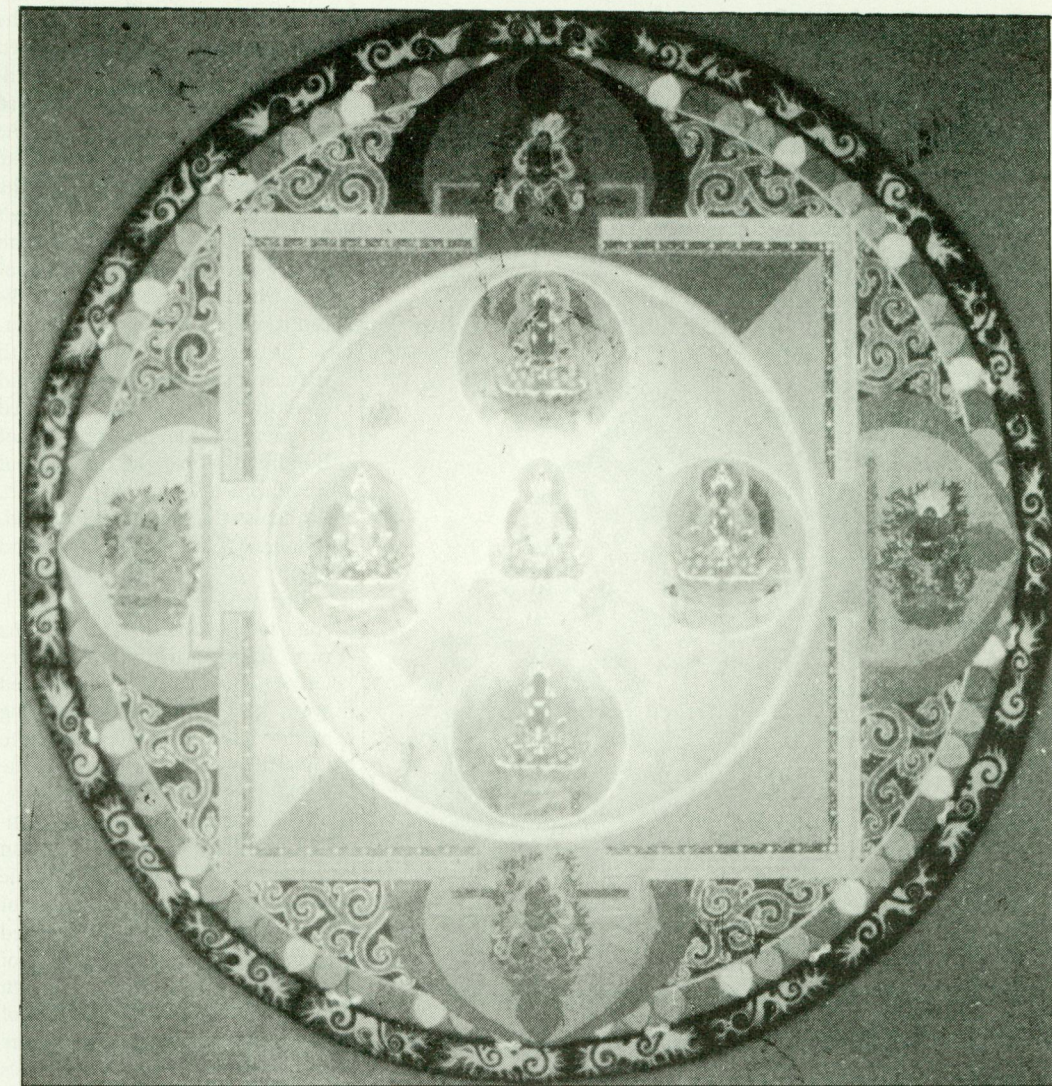
By far the largest part of the book is devoted to a detailed examination of the Wheel of Life, in its well-known Tibetan form. This could be said to represent our present predicament: what we are, why we are what we are, and what we can do to change. The use of this image gives Subhuti the opportunity to investigate many of the most important Buddhist teachings. After outlining the importance of Right View, he leaps straight to the heart of the matter with an examination of the principle of 'conditioned co-production'. He then proceeds to expound the concepts of 'lower and higher evolution', 'reason versus emotion', the roots of craving, aversion and delusion, the principle of Karma and the basis of ethical action, the 'links' of conditioned co-production, and the levels of consciousness —

healthy and unhealthy — which sentient beings can experience and develop.

To outline his subject matter so briefly cannot do justice to the lucidity and straightforwardness of his approach. He brings welcome clarity to points of Buddhist doctrine which are all too often confused in introductory books. For example, there is the distinction between healthy and unhealthy desire. Very often, books give the impression that the Buddha taught his followers to root out desire altogether. As a consequence, the question often arises, 'But if we're not supposed to desire anything, won't we die because we won't desire to eat or drink?' Subhuti pre-empts the possibility of such misunderstanding by clearly distinguishing between craving and 'healthy desire'. He defines craving as a neurotic quality: 'the longing to possess things so that one can make them part of oneself in the belief that they will help to secure one's identity' (p. 45). Healthy desire, such as hunger, is not neurotic craving: 'One can experience an empty stomach and the desire for food in a quite straightforward way . . . Food only becomes an object of neurotic craving when the healthy desire is entrapped in a neurotic personality. Craving is to be eradicated by spiritual practice, healthy desires are not.' (p. 46)

A clear understanding of the actual import of the Buddha's teaching is the only basis upon which practice of it is possible; such a clear understanding will certainly emerge from the study and assimilation of Subhuti's book. The preceding example shows a valuable element in his approach: he does not hesitate to use concepts and images from our own Western culture to elucidate the Buddhist teachings. As demonstrated by his definition of the word 'neurotic', he does not use language loosely or vaguely, but with precision, as a conceptual tool which leads the reader to a much more vivid understanding of what the Buddhist tradition is actually pointing to. Much of this clarification and restatement of the central teachings is based, as Subhuti acknowledges in the Preface, on the teachings of Sangharakshita. In fact, this is the first time that many elements of Sangharakshita's original approach have been systematically presented in book form.

Although the greater part of the book is concerned with the Wheel of Life, the emphasis throughout is on understanding the 'human pre-



The Mandala of the Five Buddhas — a painting by Dharmachari Yashopala.

dicament' as a basis for transcending it. Buddhism could not be accused of being pessimistic after reading this, nor could Enlightenment be misunderstood (as it still is with monotonous regularity in books about Buddhism) as annihilation, or as a sort of eternal sleep. Subhuti's emphasis on the Path as a 'spiral' of ever more sublime human and spiritual qualities, each arising out of the fullness of the preceding one, and his evocation of the goal of Enlightenment in terms of the qualities of the Buddhas and of the Bodhisattva Ideal, dispells utterly (and we hope finally) any such impression. Here is a vision of a spiritual path for all humanity — lucid and uplifting, a path requiring understanding and energy, but not blind faith.

Any reservations about the book are minor. Subhuti's exposition of his subject matter is clear and cogent throughout, and I found only one point which might be open to misinterpretation. This comes in the context of his discussion of hatred, on pp. 122-3. Here Subhuti makes the important point

that eliminating hatred should not be taken as the same thing as eliminating vitality: 'drive and energy, *even a kind of anger*, are essential to human growth' (My italics.) He continues to make it quite clear what he means by this 'positive anger'. However, perhaps it would have been better in this context to have altogether avoided the use of the word 'anger' in a positive sense. There is a positive experience which fits Subhuti's description, but perhaps terms such as 'fierce friendship', are somewhat less open to the possibility of misinterpretation and rationalisation than is 'positive anger'.

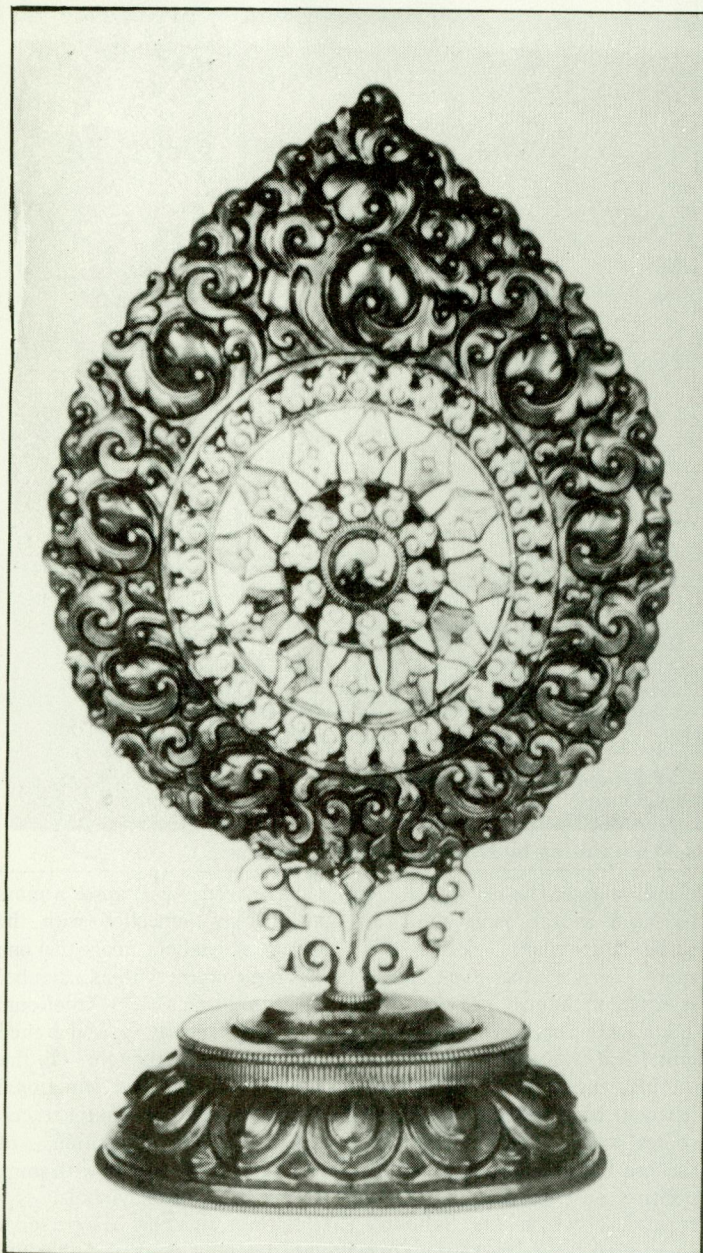
A more general point concerns Subhuti's use of images and symbols. In the Preface he expresses the hope that they will yield some insights of a more imaginative and poetic kind . . . Some feeling for what is, after all, the Buddhist *Vision* of reality. This, to some extent, they undoubtedly do. *The Buddhist Vision* could not conceivably be described as dry and academic. However, the use of images and symbols does not in itself guarantee

that the reader will make a more imaginative connection with the content. A symbolic image that one does not connect with as a symbol may produce a less emotional response than, say, a well-argued line of logical thought. To an extent, I felt a more emotional connection with Subhuti's excellent rational exposition of Buddhist teaching, than with some of his evocations of symbols.

However, this may be a personal bias; it cannot be denied that the multi-dimensional symbols of the Wheel of Life, Spiral path, and Mandala make an excellent basis for a vivid exposition of the Buddhist Vision. I doubt, in fact, whether the Buddhist Vision has ever been introduced more lucidly, clearly and comprehensibly, and at the same time, in all essentials, completely, in a western language. As such, this book is indispensable reading, both for those completely new to Buddhism, and for those more familiar with it who wish to refresh their vision and understanding as to what the essentials of Buddhism — for the practising Buddhist — actually are.

Buddhist Art Through the Ages

By Vajrapushpa



Buddhism: Art and Faith

An exhibition from the collections of the British Museum and the British Library. 25th July '85-5th January '86.

This article is illustrated with plates from 'Buddhism: Art and Faith', the book of the exhibition, edited by W. Zwalf. British Museum Publications. Price £12.50.

A major exhibition of Buddhist art opened at the British Museum at the end of July. By the end of November, the exhibition, entitled, 'Buddhism — Art and Faith', and drawn mainly from the exhibitions of the British Museum and the British Library, had attracted more than 180,000 visitors.

Buddhism as 'art and faith'? The

two can be separated, or they can be experienced together. Art, defined as 'the creation of works of beauty or other special significance', and faith, defined as 'a specific system of religious beliefs', can only meet when they are both alive: part of a living artistic tradition and part of a living spiritual tradition.

In his review of the exhibition,

Waldemar Januszczak, from the Guardian Newspaper, emphasised the quality of peace and tranquillity that seems to permeate so much of Buddhist art. Perhaps the Buddhist images can communicate a 'special significance' — the essence of something that one can have faith in — even to those who have no conceptual knowledge of the Dharma, and more significantly, no practical experience of it.

The exhibition is packed with statues, paintings, drawings and scriptures. It is a concentrated overview of the development of Buddhist art and the diffusion of Buddhism to Sri Lanka, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Burma, Thailand, Indonesia, Central Asia, China and Japan.

The first image, the first welcome to the exhibition, is a Buddha rupa from Sarnath (5th century CE): a Buddha with half-closed eyes, his hands in a teaching mudra: a figure reaching deep into himself, and reaching out to the world, communicating.

If Gautama the Buddha embodied all the qualities of an Enlightened man, all the thousands of representations of him, and of other Enlightened beings throughout the history of Buddhist art, should form a sum total of those qualities. One work of art is usually able to concentrate only on some of the characteristics that must have permeated the Enlightened mind and shone through the Buddha's whole being. And yet, just one image, one gesture, one smile, one graceful line of the body, can express all that we need. One detail can open up depths of experience and of understanding. It can say more than all the images together.

The early cult objects are particularly moving: small stupas, small reliquaries, sections of inscribed pillars. As well as conveying a feeling of respect and devotion to the Buddha, they touch upon, through their symbolic meaning, the essence of the Buddha's life and teaching. A common symbolism was soon established: the footprint stood for the Buddha himself, a tree for his Enlightenment, a wheel for the first sermon, and a stupa for his death.

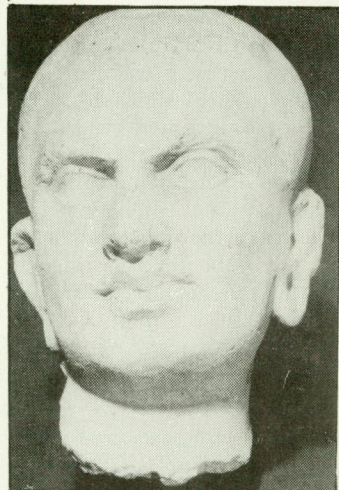
The first human representations of the Buddha were created in the first centuries BCE. In the same centuries, the Buddha's teaching, which until then had been transmitted orally, was committed to writing. With written words, and with human representations of the teacher, the Buddha's followers

had something more tangible, and perhaps more reassuring to focus on.

It was the region of Gandhara in North-West India that saw the first flowering of Buddhist art (2nd-4th century CE). The Greeks had learned how to depict their gods and heroes in beautiful form, and their example helped the Indians to create beautiful images of their own Ideal. The reliefs from the Gandhara period include several crowded and well-ordered scenes from the Buddha's life, both as a Bodhisattva, as an aspiring ascetic, and as an Enlightened teacher. The historical and the symbolic dimensions of the images create their own unique and vivid realism. Emotions are shown, vitality and self-confidence is asserted; the images are strong and yet refined.

From then on the variety and richness of the exhibition begins truly to unfold. There are many kinds of materials: stone, stucco, terracotta, ivory, wood, metal; there is a variety of ethnic features, of artistic styles and traditions. There is a variety of figures portrayed: Buddhas, Bodhisattvas, monks, arahants, and other teachers, and even a Japanese townsman and merchant. There is a movement towards simplification, and another movement towards elaboration. There is a constant movement towards the ideal, which the Buddhist artists have aspired, through the ages, to portray.

Emotions are an important substance of the Buddhist images: refined and transcended, potent. A Tibetan 19th century Mahakala, painted on cloth, and a Japanese Vidyaraja, or protector, carved out of one piece of wood, belong to the relatively few wrathful images in the exhibition. They are fierce and determined — their fierceness being a symbol of their power to protect. A much earlier Buddha



**Head of a monk.
(Gandhara, 4th-5th century)**

figure from Sarnath (6th-7th century), being attacked by Mara, shows a serenity and a sharpness, an awareness of the triumph over Mara. The introspective tranquillity of so many of the images is fused with strength and understanding: the artist's understanding of the power and importance of emotions.

Several movements and traditions came together and gathered momentum in Eastern India in the 7th-12th centuries. Enough of the Dharma had been recorded, studied and practised — and visually depicted — to form a basis for further diversification. The monastic universities attracted students from the whole of Buddhist Asia. The painting and sculpture influenced Tibet, Burma, and Indonesia. This period also saw the development of the Vajrayana and its art. There is the — sometimes icon-like — simplicity of the Buddha rupa, and a few centuries later, the new graceful beauty of the Bodhisattva figures.

A ninth century Green Tara from Orissa in laterite is both plain and delicate. The gentle features have only just emerged from the stone, and the bunch of blue lotuses looks a little bit clumsy, but the Tara qualities already shine through the material. Another Tara, an almost life-size gilt bronze from 9th-10th century Sri Lanka is both very feminine and very majestic. In comparison, a 17th-18th century Tara from Tibet in brass and silk is almost doll-like in her petiteness and delicateness. The face is painted; she wears a fringed apron and a cloud collar, each a patchwork of silk brocade.

Imagination and freedom of expression grow with the spread of Buddhism, and with the diversification of its art. A 12th-13th century Burmese Buddha figure in bronze is still strongly influenced by Eastern India; a crowned Buddha in painted wood (13th century) has already acquired a local appearance — and a 19th century reclining Buddha, depicted just before his death, is a celebration of the Buddha himself — the figure looks comfortable, elegant, alert — and a celebration of the materials used: copper ornamented with mirror glass. Vividly painted, colourful elephants and other wild animals from a Burmese illustration of Theravada cosmology tell perhaps just as much about the artist's fascination with his subject as about cosmology itself.

In Thailand arose an original,



Monk. (Burma, 19th century)

extremely graceful sculptural style. A walking Buddha is its most striking contribution to Buddhist imagery. The faces are smiling with long pointed ears, another Thai innovation.

Javanese Buddhas and Bodhisattvas look very solid compared with the Thai images. Two 9th century Bodhisattvas, Avalokitesvara and Vajrapani have their feet firmly on the lotus stand; the hands are alive too: holding a lotus and giving, holding a vajra and teaching. If, as is believed, they originally formed a group of three, flanking the Buddha, they constituted a triad which was held in Java to be an intermediate manifestation of ultimate reality. A sense of strength, harmony and balance is still conveyed, even through the separate Bodhisattvas.

In China, as elsewhere, Buddhism gave great artists new imaginative themes to work on. Painting and sculpture have again and again offered a vehicle through which the Dharma can be communicated — while the Dharma has in turn expanded the artists' vision and imagination.

According to E.H. Gombrich, the Chinese artists have always preferred the swerving curve. Chinese sculpture always seems to 'twist and turn without, however, losing its solidity and firmness.' Two Chinese Avalokitesvaras from the exhibition are sitting at the *rajalilasana* ('royal ease'), the right arm resting on the raised right knee. The older of the two, from the 11th-12th century, is an

enormous wooden sculpture. These images, life size or even bigger, with 'their naturalistic faces and voluminous yet relaxed bodies offer a compelling vision of the Bodhisattva ideal' — their bodies capturing the largeness of spirit.

Two Japanese Avalokitesvaras are striking in their own way. One of them, carved out of one piece of wood after a 7th century original, is both plain and sophisticated, with a very tall and thin body, a calm and happy face, and a smile which is almost shy. His compassion is no less convincing than that of a 14th century Avalokitesvara made of lacquered and gilt wood, enhanced with gilt, bronze, crystal and stones, with a golden halo and finely ornamented robes.

Chinese sculpture is also represented, among other things by a glazed statue of a Lohan, from about 1000 C.E. His features are individual and realistic, which in its own way reflect the fact that Buddhism was no longer foreign in China; the Dharma was now being practised by Chinese people.

The typically Chinese figures — rounded and tactile — are also depicted in paintings. The colour, the relaxed posture of the figures, the movement of the lines create their own unique beauty and harmony. In them, stillness and movement become almost inseparable.

A prominent section of the exhibition is devoted to Buddhist manuscripts. In itself the section gives an expansive view of the spread of Buddhism, of the meeting of cultures, traditions and languages. It is a celebration of Buddhist texts, their commentaries and translations. The words have often travelled a long way. The power of the written word, and the beauty of its representation are combined in the manuscripts, whether written on paper, precious metals, cloth, palm-leaf strips, baked clay or stone.

A Sanskrit translation of the Pali book of 'Kindred Sayings', dating from 4th-5th century China, has been written on birch bark — and all that is now left of the text are fragments of bark, fragments of words. *The Sutra of Dependent Origination*, again in Sanskrit from roughly the same period, has a rather more 'substantial' medium, inscribed as it is on baked clay.

An illustrated title page of a Tibetan 17th-18th century manuscript of *A Code of Monastic Discipline* is just one of the many examples — among the manuscripts and images — of continuity and expansion, of tradition and

innovation. The text is flanked on the left by the Buddha's disciple Kasyapa, his hands in teaching mudra, and on the right by Tsongkha-pa, founder of the Gelugpa School, who is holding a book and a sword of discriminative wisdom. There is even a hint of the Dharma reaching the West, in a miniature painted on the inside back cover of *The Lalitavistara* (a Sanskrit biography of the Buddha; the copy comes from Nepal): in the picture there is a Captain W.D. Knox, perched on a chair, receiving the manuscript from the scribe Amritananda.

The exhibition includes several 'Perfection of Wisdom' manuscripts, most of them in Chinese. The inexpressible has been beautifully expressed, thoughtfully copied and translated, and carefully preserved. The words, are full of meaning, yet unbound, free, showing the way to freedom.

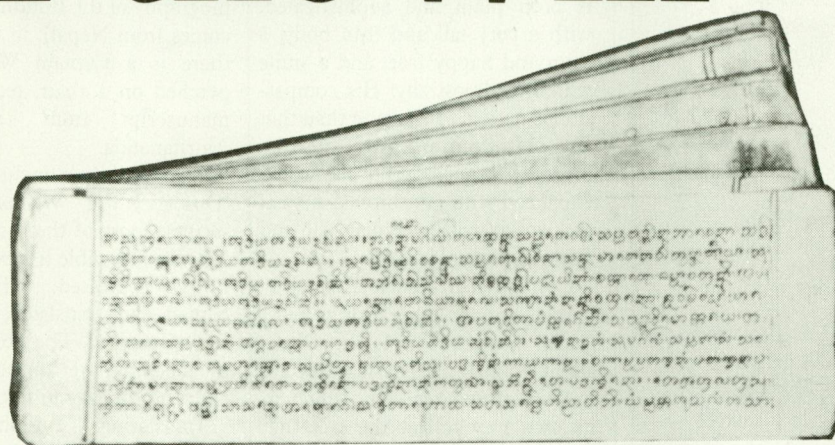
Translating Buddhist texts means more than changing the words into the words of another language; it means translating from one culture to another, from one era to another. It is an act of internal translation, a transmission across time and culture.

Buddhist texts and images are all part of the process of transmission. They are part of an unbroken tradition, and expressions of new discoveries. The words and the images can be stopped, caught, defined, labelled, and displayed, in a museum for instance. In the end, however, they have to find their way out.



Avalokitesvara (China, 17th century.)

The Reading of the Will



By Subhuti

The Eternal Legacy An Introduction to the Canonical Literature of Buddhism

By Sangharakshita. Tharpa Publications, London. Pp. 317 + xv. Price £7.50. Paperback

Since the collapse of Buddhism in India in the middle ages, it has not been possible, at one time, to have access to all the teachings of Buddhism, historical or contemporary. Within each territory a number of schools may have flourished, side by side, but so far flung was the Buddhist world at its height that these various groupings developed more or less in isolation from each other. Now Buddhism too is part of the Global Village and the modern reader can, if he wishes, find out at least something about most of its schools, for the vast wealth of the Buddhist tradition has suddenly become available to us. The sheer mass of Buddhism's accumulated scriptures, doctrines, meditation practices, ceremonies, life-styles, rituals, institutions, art, and culture varied and even apparently contradictory as it sometimes is, threatens to overwhelm us. What we need is some vantage point from which we can survey this superabundance of riches and see that it is all part of one principal Dharma.

We could say that it has been the Venerable Sangharakshita's life-work to show that Buddhism is

one, and that every school reflects in its own way a single spirit. By evoking this essential spirit, which is the Dharma, he has been able to bring Buddhism to life in the new circumstances of the West. In *A Survey of Buddhism*, using the framework of the Five Spiritual Faculties, he showed how the broad doctrinal basis of each of the more prominent Buddhist schools forms part of a single pattern, and in his two lecture series on 'The Higher Evolution of the Individual', he has created a reference point for all the many teachings that Buddhism has to offer. In his lecture 'The System of Meditation' he made it possible to fit all the traditional techniques of meditation into one structure. His systematising has not, however, been merely theoretical: he has taught meditation in such a way that it forms an orderly progression for those who practise it. In his emphasis on the act of Going for Refuge to the Three Jewels, he has made it possible to look beyond the rules, robes, and titles of the Buddhist Sangha in its many forms to the fundamental principle of commitment to the Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha which is its real basis. This understanding he has embodied in the Western Buddhist Order. Now he turns to the Buddhist canonical literature.

The Eternal Legacy: An Introduction to the Canonical Literature of Buddhism was in fact written some twenty years ago — beginning life as a series of articles for an Indian encyclopaedia. Like its predecessor, *The Three Jewels*, it outgrew its original purpose and became an independent work. It shares with *The Three Jewels* something of the conciseness of an encyclopaedia entry, which, here, is entirely appropriate to its subject. As 'The Word of the Buddha', the book has been circulating in manuscript form for some time within the FWBO and has proved invaluable as a source of information on the complex subject of the Buddhist scriptures. After repeated pleadings the author has been prevailed upon to publish, completely revising the text in the light of new translations and scholarship. It is also the first book from a new publishing house, Tharpa Publications, which is one of an important new breed — run by Buddhists to publish Buddhist books. If *The Eternal Legacy* sets the tone for Tharpa, we can look forward to some very valuable publications, produced with dignity and respect.

The Eternal Legacy is very much what it sets out to be: an introduction to the canonical literature of Buddhism. It guides

us systematically, corridor by corridor, through its vast labyrinth. Although it is not a beginner's book, since it presupposes a grasp of basic Dharmic terminology, both the academic and the practising Buddhist will find it useful. Having read this work one should be able to embark upon a study of Buddhist texts without fear of losing one's way.

Sangharakshita opens by resolving an extremely important question: what is to be considered as canonical in Buddhism — what is the word of the Buddha? Buddhism does not have one, handy, sized, definitive Bible, acknowledged by all schools. There are several different canons, no one of which can be considered more authentic than the rest — the conviction of some 'fundamentalist' Buddhists notwithstanding. Faced by this diversity, the modern Buddhist must recognise that 'the spirit of the Teaching is capable of expressing itself in a variety of forms, no one one of which, however authentic or however excellent, is perfect or final, or can possibly exhibit in full the infinite riches of its transcendental content' (p.5). Not only can the Teaching express itself through a variety of literary forms — it does not have to communicate through words at all. Thus we are, at the very outset, thrust back upon the spiritual experience out of which the scriptures sprang.

He next shows that the Buddha's teachings were handed down orally for several hundred years in several different languages and in several different versions. Circumstances determined to some extent which teachings were written down first, but there was 'a tendency, but perhaps no more than a tendency, for the readiness with which a work was given literary form to be in inverse ratio to the profundity of its content' (p.19). The chronological order in which they appeared, problematic as that may be, therefore 'broadly corresponds to their spiritual progression.' It is in this order that Sangharakshita examines them, and as the book unfolds one has an impression of an immense wave, gathering power as it sweeps across the ocean.

He deals first (chapter 3) with the Vinaya texts: 'The Monastic Code'. Here he confines himself to classifying and comparing the Vinayas of all the main traditions. He next deals with 'The Dialogues' (chapter 4) — the 'Middle Length' and 'Longer' Discourses, 'The Anthologies' (chapter 5) —

the 'Kindred', the 'Numerical' and the 'Shorter' Collections, and 'The Birth Stories and Glorious Deeds' (chapter 6) — the *Jatakas* and *Avadanas*. These chapters, which are concerned with the entire Sutta Pitaka of the Pali Canon and its equivalents in the Mahayana Canons, necessarily compress an enormous amount of material into a few pages. The contents of the various sections are briefly outlined, and some of the more important Suttas are explored in more detail. Those who are quite new to the material will possibly find these chapters a little bewildering, but they will get some general picture of the contents of this very rich body of texts. It will certainly be a useful reference for those trying to plunge more deeply into them. 'The Fundamental Abhidharma' (chapter 7) covers the literature of the scholastic trend in Buddhism — witnessed in all the early schools. We see the origins of this tendency in the later portions of the Sutta Pitaka and watch it develop through three phases: the pre-Asokan, Asokan, and post Asokan. We are given a glimpse of the principle contents of some of the most important works.

'The Transition to the Mahayana Sutras' (chapter 8) provides us with an essential preparation for the study of a very different class of literature. Instead of seeing the Buddha 'embodied in a particular historical moment' (p.95), the Mahayana sutras, 'emancipated from the historical context', proclaim the universal ideal of the Bodhisattva, and 'frequently have for their background a radiant and flower-adorned cosmos transcending the universe of space and time' (p.96). Some have chosen to dismiss the Mahayana sutras precisely because they depict scenes of an archetypal nature — just as they have dismissed those portions of the Pali canon which deal with miraculous events and spirit beings. This is the kind of materialistic literalism that Sangharakshita will not have. He points out that there are no a priori grounds for judging any particular collection of texts as later concoctions — among other things some of the Hinayana and Mahayana sutras were written down at approximately the same time. Besides, from the Mahayana point of view, 'Whatever is well said is the word of the Buddha' (p.2). His careful introduction enables us to enter this strange new world with the correct spirit, dropping our sceptical obsession with historical fact.

He divides the Mahayana sutras into an earlier and a later group. Those belonging to the earlier group are sub-divided into sutras which elucidate the true meaning of the Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha respectively. Since the Mahayana sutras are so vast and so numerous, he has not been able to look at them in so much detail as he has the Hinayana Canon. However, partly because of the much more imaginative nature of the material, and perhaps because of a stronger personal inspiration, the chapters on the Mahayana sutras have an extra sparkle to them. Sangharakshita has not only given a very clear account of the texts and placed them in their setting, both historical and spiritual, he has brought the sutras to life. This is particularly true of *The White Lotus of the True Dharma* (chapter 9), of which he gives a very full account. Further chapters deal with 'The Perfection of Wisdom Sutras' (chapter 10), 'The Exposition of Vimalakirti and the Happy Land Sutras' (chapter 11), 'The Jewel Heap Sutras and the Samadhi Sutras' (chapter 12), 'The Lankavatara Sutra' (chapter 13), 'The Flower Ornament Sutra' (chapter 14) and 'The Nirvana Sutras and the Sutra of Golden Light' (chapter 15).

'The Tantras' (chapter 16) are not treated in the same systematic way as the Hinayana and Mahayana scriptures. This is mainly because the material is much more heterogeneous and is often so cryptic that its meaning can only be unravelled with the aid of an oral explanation from an initiate. Sangharakshita therefore merely provides a broad introduction to this class of literature. 'Collected Editions' (chapter 17) surveys the three extant complete canons: the Pali Cannon, the Chinese *San Tsang*, and the Tibetan *Kangyur*. A final chapter, 'Continuing Revelation' (chapter 18), shows that the Buddhist canons should not be considered closed. They may be added to at any time, either by archaeological researchers digging out some lost text, by the coming to light of oral traditions which have not previously been generally known, by 'direct revelation from a higher plane of existence' (p.266), and by 'the fresh utterances of the Buddha's enlightened disciples from the earliest times down to the present day' (p.268).

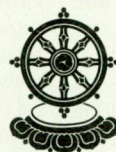
The Eternal Legacy concludes with an Afterword which explores the impact of the Buddhist scriptures on Western Buddhism.

The author points out that at present they are very little known or read among Western Buddhists, yet they are indispensable to the committed follower of the Dharma since 'Buddhist practice and observance is to be judged by whether it is in accordance with the Buddhist scriptures' (p. 274). The modern student of Buddhism must address himself to the entire Buddhist tradition and must have a comprehensive view of its canonical literature. In time those scriptures which meet the spiritual needs of Western people will become apparent, and will play a very significant part in the development of a truly Western form of Buddhism. There is no doubt that this book will itself make a very important contribution to this process since it offers the student an overview of this vast and exciting field.

Besides being a most useful survey of Buddhist canonical literature, there is no doubt that most Buddhists will want to possess a copy for reference purposes. There is a very extensive index which should make it easy to

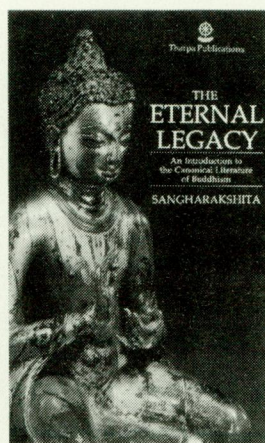
find out about most Buddhist canonical texts. There is also a full bibliography which gives first of all a list of anthologies of scriptures and of general books on Buddhism, and then gives titles which offer further reading on each chapter.

The Eternal Legacy is a very important book, one of the most important to appear on the subject of Buddhism for some time. The Buddhist scriptures have a vital role to play in the spiritual lives of committed Buddhists but, in our age, we are faced with a bewildering corpus of Buddhist literature, undigested and patchy. Here at last is the key which enables us to enter this wonderfully rich world of the Dharma. It is a very considerable achievement. *The Eternal Legacy* makes clear what the publishers of Buddhist books should be bringing to us. Let us hope that they will now concentrate on publishing the entire Buddhist canon, of all schools and ages, translated into English. Only then will we be able to come into our full inheritance as Buddhists.



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An Introduction to
the Canonical Literature
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Contrary Worlds

By Sthiramati

Witness

Paramount Pictures. Directed by Peter Weir. Screenplay by Earl W. Wallis & William Kelley.

***Witness*: yet another thriller movie, this time cashing in upon the curiosity value of an odd Christian sect? Such was my fear when I agreed to see it — my only motive being curiosity about the Amish sect of Pennsylvania. Yet I found myself unexpectedly stimulated as I left the cinema, with various issues raised by the film, intentionally or otherwise, filling my mind.**

Yes, *Witness* is a thriller — a familiar story of police corruption discovered by one man with integrity who, at risk of his own life, fights to expose his colleagues. Yes, it does cash in on the curiosity value of the Amish sect. A small Amish boy is key witness to a brutal

crime, and it is with his widowed mother, Rachel Lapp, and grandfather, that the hero, John Book, has to take refuge when seriously wounded and on the run from those who ostensibly protect law and order in society. The greater part of the action takes part within the Amish community.

I cannot pretend that my curiosity about the Amish was satisfied. We were inevitably treated to a somewhat superficial view of their lives, with virtually no elucidation of their beliefs beyond the most general points. A fundamentalist Protestant sect, originating from Germany, the Amish emigrated to America, transplanting their faith and culture wholesale, both of which

remain preserved, perhaps miraculously to the present day. Now they are something of an anachronism: a pious agricultural community, living by the word of the Bible, using techniques of cultivation that date back to the nineteenth century, and a German dialect which literally bespeaks their geographical and chronological origins. Much of this film's popular appeal lies in the purposeful juxtaposition of the two societies — that of the Amish with that of 20th century America, and hence, with due allowance for national variations, with our own.

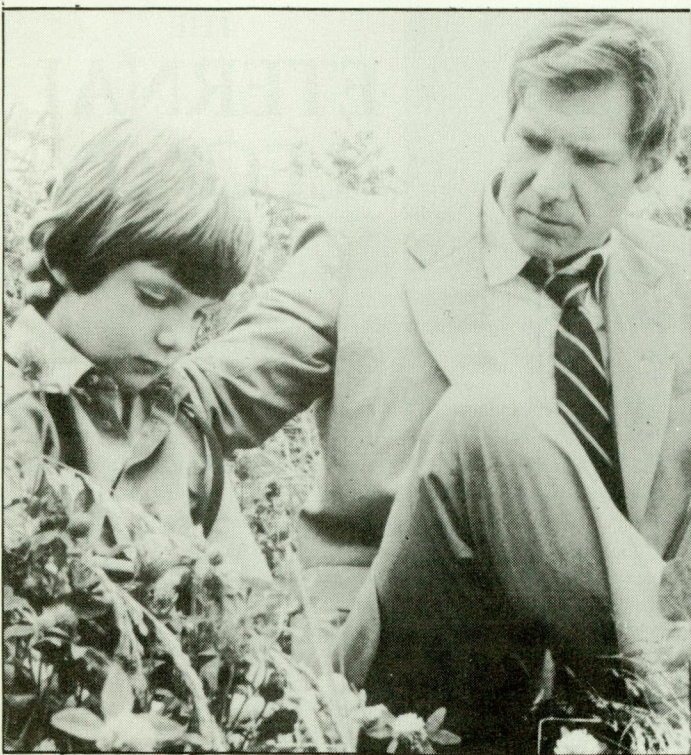
Undoubtedly the view presented of the Amish is an idealised one. The innocuously pleasant portrayal of their simple life leaves less acceptable aspects of their corporate existence untouched. One notable exception is the very brief mention made of their practice of 'shunning', in which anyone guilty of infringing their scrupulously observed moral code is shunned. The ostracism of this person is total — not just physical, but verbal and emotional — and expresses the belief that a person's sinfulness can be communicated to the morally pure even by physical contact. Such a practice can only reflect the intolerance and moral absolutism that characterises all monotheistic religions, in which the moral code is established not on any basis of natural morality, but upon the revealed — and ultimately arbitrary — orders of a supreme deity who is prepared to back up his preference with force. It epitomises the *ethnic* religion, that is, one which is not concerned with the growth of the individual human being — and therefore with the spiritual life as such — but with the preservation of a society or a

social grouping.

In looking for a motive for this omission we must surely recognise the influence of what one might call the American myth. *Witness* attempts to recreate, as a contrast to the present, a symbol of America's idealised past, embodying those values and ideals which moved the first settlers to colonise her shores, and which still inhabit the collective unconscious of her Caucasian peoples. All the ingredients of this formula, familiar from so many 'Westerns' and the like, are there: the approval of the home and family, a lyrical evocation of the simple life, the supremacy of moral righteousness, the ubiquitous glorification of work (another inheritance of Protestantism), all redolent of the 'little house on the prairie'. To the extent that this myth moves us we must recognise that we not only share a common root with our ex-colonies in the USA, but that we have also begun, under the influence of their culture, to share American ideals, and on a deeper level, to live the American myth.

Given that, in order to use one's psycho-physical energies to the fullest extent, one must in some way be living out an appropriate myth, it remains to be seen to what extent our present cultural myths can and will be usurped by those myths inherent in the Dharma as received from the East. Perhaps we can anticipate some form of amalgam or synthesis, in which the higher elements of the Western myth are conjoined with their counterparts from the East, to form an appropriate archetype or symbol for the higher truths and attainments which are the goal of Buddhist practice.

To claim that Western myth has



The two worlds meet

lower and higher elements, as I have done, is to assert that some ideals are higher or lower than others. The positive, loving family is no doubt more ideal than the broken and uncaring situations in which many find themselves in our modern society. Yet how much more ideal is the single-sex community, free from the 'dust' of the home life, for those who would attempt the integration of the masculine and feminine aspects of their psyche. However, my intention here is not to discuss the mythical aspect of this film. We can recognise much here that is helpful to our own practice.

Something that the film succeeds in communicating is that ethical practice is a vital constituent of the spiritual life. The wholesomeness of Amish life, at least as shown here, is not just the product of simplicity, but also of a dedicated attempt to live a genuinely moral existence. As already noted, the basis of such moral practice within a monotheistic framework must be suspect, but insofar as any moral code parallels the requirements of natural morality — as epitomised by the five ethical precepts of Buddhism — then despite their compromised motivation, those who follow such a moral code will experience beneficial effects.

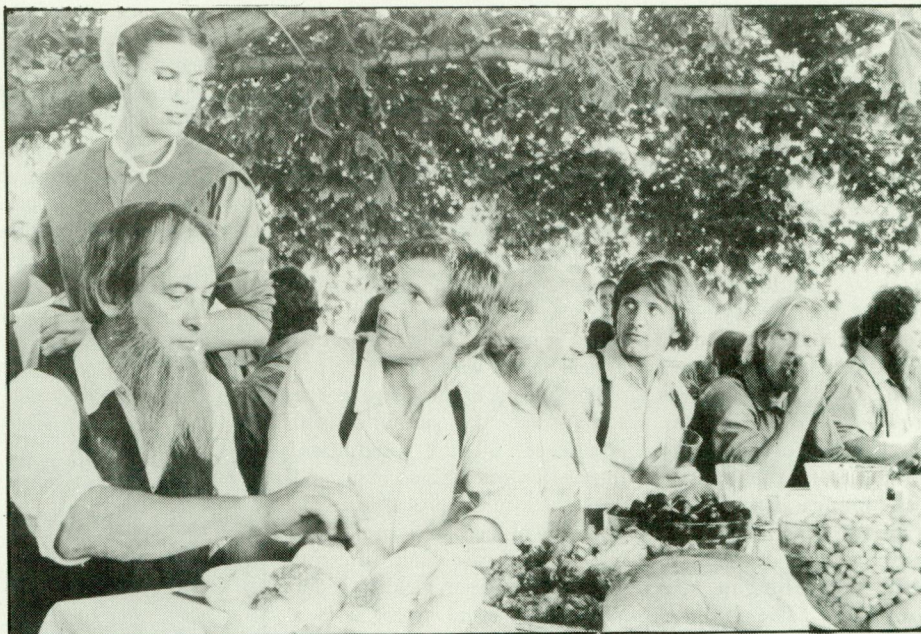
The Buddhist tradition recognises three bases for the practice of ethics. The lowest is the 'legalistic', as when someone refrains from an unskilful act for fear of being caught or punished. Obviously much ethical observance within the theistic framework falls into this category, spurred on as the believer will be by the combined threats of divine punishment and social ostracism. Higher than this is that level where the person concerned refrains from an act because he knows it is wrong and consciously overcomes what he recognises to be his immoral or unskilful desire to perform the act. The highest level is that at which the person does not even consider the immoral act because it is quite alien to his nature to behave in that way. The latter, for the Buddhist at least, is the goal of the spiritual life, though, necessarily, it has practically to be approached from the position of the intermediate level. Yet to observe an ethical code, even on the lowest level, legalistic level, will produce some positive effect — by contributing to a lessening of the desire to act unskilfully, and allowing for its replacement by a more skilful mental attitude. The practitioner will doubtless experience considerable guilt and

resentment towards the authority who imposes and enforces that code, but at least his grosser, unskilful tendencies will be inhibited. A positive group or society, such as the one depicted in this film, can only be formed upon the basis of commonly held higher or spiritual values, to which all other considerations are subordinate. A secular paradise is not possible.

The image of co-operative work, embodied in a sequence which shows the communal building of a barn, can only enhance our understanding of what right livelihood can be. That work can be shared and done freely for the benefit of others is an important principle which could admirably replace our society's present adulation of aggressive and selfish 'wage

tational pull' towards adopting group values in order to preserve the continuity of a community, thus transforming it into something which is less a spiritual community, and more an ethnic group. *Witness* presents us with a portrayal of two worlds. It will now be worth-while to examine on a more fundamental level in what this difference consists. The director of the film makes great play of the contrast between the attitudes of the two societies to violence. This is especially brought out by the Amish horror of the policeman's gun, and their heroic pacifism in the face of extreme provocation, as when they are stopped by a group of tourists in a local town. John Book's reaction to this provocation, to beat up the offending tourists, is explicitly

John Book, and the heroin, Rachel Lapp. These two worlds meet through their enforced contact, and ensuing romance. However, when even the great power of romantic love cannot force either of them to leave their respective worlds, and they finally part company, it implies that these worlds are not only mutually exclusive (as indeed they are) but also that no transition between them is possible. What I believe would lift this film to a degree of significance far above the ordinary would be if it showed this transition being made, and, of course, not by the woman — as seems likely at one point — but by the man: from the world of power to the world of love. If only John Book could learn a lesson from the Amish and not rise to provocation, we would have a very different film



Wholesome food — forbidden fruit

slavery'. It is interesting, and saddening, to note that at present 'community service' is used within our society as a form of punishment, whereas in spiritual terms it is really something of a privilege.

If, as I have suggested, the portrayal of the Amish community in *Witness* reflects spiritual as well as group values, then the very survival of the Amish today offers a dual message to those of us engaged not only in our own personal development but in the growth of a new spiritual Movement, the FWBO. The fact that the Amish have survived in modern-day America is a remarkable one and offers considerable encouragement by demonstrating that positive values can be upheld within the midst of a society with which they are totally at odds. Yet, on the other hand, it warns us to beware the ever-present 'gravi-

pointed, particularly by showing the bloodstained face of his victim. This is possibly the most important point in the film because here the contrast between the pacifism of the Amish and the violence of our own society is at its most acute.

Indeed, upon the deepest analysis, the difference between this film's portrayal of the Amish and our own society is the difference between the 'love mode' and the 'power mode'. The love mode is characterised by an overwhelming consideration for the well-being of other living beings, whereas the power mode is that which seeks to manipulate other beings, and inevitably involves the use of violence, be it gross or subtle.

Discussing this point in the film unfortunately brings us to its most serious flaw. *Witness* portrays two worlds epitomised by the hero,

indeed: one which illustrated the possibility of a transition from the power mode to the love mode, and presented that transition as an individual choice that could be made now by each of us in our everyday lives.

However, it is perhaps unfair to criticise a film for not doing what it probably never set out to do. In the face of increasing cynicism towards religious groups of all kinds, stimulated by the well-publicised exploits of spiritual charlatans from both East and West, a film which depicts a religious community in such a positive light, making its members accessible and human, must surely be encouraged. We can be grateful for a film which not only raises some important issues for consideration, but is also of such broad public appeal.

Mountains, Magic & Hard Miles

By Abhaya

Japanese Pilgrimage

By Oliver Statler. Picador, London. Pp. 349. Price £3.50. Paperback.

When I first heard about *Japanese Pilgrimage*, I assumed that any holy places along the pilgrimage route would be shrines and temples dedicated to the Soto or Rinzai schools of Zen or to the Pure Land school. 'Shingon' was little more than a name to me. It came as a surprise to discover that the pilgrimage is, in fact, predominantly Shingon. Of the eighty-eight temples along the route, only some half-dozen are Zen; apart from one or two others dedicated to Amida, the Buddha of Infinite Light, the rest are Shingon, the Tantric school of Japanese Buddhism. Next to Tibet, Japan is the most important centre of Tantric Buddhism and Shingon still flourishes there. The founder of Shingon, the man who introduced the 'School of the Secret Teaching' from China into Japan at the beginning of the ninth century C.E., was Kobo Daishi, otherwise known as Kukai, who became the eighth Patriarch of Esoteric Buddhism at the age of thirty-two.

Since the pilgrimage described is a Buddhist one, the reader does in fact gather quite a bit of general information about Buddhism in Japan along the way. However, this is incidental rather than essential. Far from being a scholarly treatise on Buddhist doctrine or an exposition of the Japanese Tantra, the book is about Buddhism in action. It is not about theory, but about experience. As Oliver Statler is at pains to point out in his Postscript: 'This book is an attempt to fathom the meaning of the Shikoku pilgrimage. It is not an exposition of Buddhism in general

or Shingon in particular.' There are, of course, thousands of books on Buddhism of a scholarly, academic nature which fulfil a vital need. However, scholars in the field of Buddhist studies are beginning to realise, it seems, that Buddhism as practised is not the same as the Buddhism of the sutras or the great commentaries. Consequently, books are now beginning to appear which approach the subject from a more anthropological slant, or which explore the theory in the light of practical experience, as well as books about Buddhism such as *Japanese Pilgrimage*, which are a good read and interesting in a human sort of way.

The thread of the story is the account of the author's own experience of the pilgrimage. Interwoven with this account, told throughout in the present tense, is his vision of the significance of the pilgrimage, past and present; people have been making it for about a thousand years. It is a circular pilgrimage of eighty-eight temples scattered mainly about the perimeter of the beautiful island of Shikoku, Japan's fourth largest island. There is no goal to the pilgrimage in the sense that there is no 'holy of holies' to reach; each temple is as important as any other, and one can begin the pilgrimage from any one of them. It is also the only one of Japan's pilgrimages, we are told that is 'still performed by masses of people in much the same spirit as former times'. The journey is roughly a thousand miles and takes the average pilgrim about two months to walk, through quite varied landscapes and scenery. It is a formidable hike to undertake, with a pack on one's back and at the mercy of the apparently not too predictable weather. The pilgrims, 'henro' as they are called, all wear uniform pilgrims' garb so that they will be recognisable as henro. Their main places of rest, food and shelter along the way are the many

temples, their hosts the priests in charge.

As we follow the bare narrative line of the book, and travel along the well-trodden henro paths, the author brings us into intimate contact, in turn, first of all with the figure who inspired the whole pilgrimage, Kobo Daishi, the man and the legend, then with those fascinating characters, the famous holy men, the wandering ascetics and evangelisers of the medieval period, who were responsible for shaping and propagating the pilgrimage and kindling such enthusiasm in the hearts of the faithful and, finally, with the pilgrims themselves, past and

present, who undertake the spiritual practice of the pilgrimage from various motives, pure or mixed, strong or weak. From this structure there emerges a composite picture of the fascinating religious phenomenon that the pilgrimage is; it is a sort of history of the pilgrimage made up of the graphic stories and allusions, as well as a vivid portrait of religion in action, as actually practised by living human beings, with all their strengths and weaknesses, sometimes succeeding in keeping to their high resolves, sometimes failing, at times suffering, at times weeping for joy, but all of them constantly reciting the henro mantra: 'Namo Daishi Henjo Kongo!' and the common refrain which expresses each one's faith that he does not walk alone but in the company of the Master: 'We Two, Pilgrims Together: the Daishi and I'.

Though the Shikoku pilgrimage was firmly established and popularised by the holy men, the inspirational source of it all is the figure of Kobo Daishi. The facts of his life seem well nigh buried beneath legend, legends which the faith of the henro thrives on; the author has to flesh out the bare bones of the Master's story with his



Kobo Daishi

own imaginative conjecture.

Kobo Daishi's story is in part a variation of the archetypal biography of the spiritual master, of a man of high family who has insight into the unsatisfactoriness of his comfortable life and tears himself away from it in order to search after Truth. His going forth from the household life is not easy. In a short extract from what is reputed to be his first major work, the Daishi writes about the anguish that his going forth cost him, the protests from his teacher and family that he is subjected to. But nothing can withstand his commitment to searching for the right way. After a long period of ritual and meditative purification and great inner struggle, he eventually achieves the longed-for breakthrough; tradition has it that this took place while he was meditating in a cave on Cape Muroto, the great promontory in the south east of the island 'that juts like a blade into the Pacific Ocean.'

Kobo Daishi spent the rest of his life seeing that Shingon was firmly established in Japan. He fulfilled a dual function, spanning the world of meditation and the world of action. He was meditator and scholar, contemplator and great achiever in worldly affairs. His heart seems to have been always in Mount Koya, the famous meditation centre which he founded. He would surely have lived out his life there had he felt free to choose. 'Students of meditation,' he said, 'are treasures of the nation, they are like bridges for the people,' a message which all of us practising Buddhists can take to heart.

Yet the Daishi did not shun other kinds of bridges, even the literal ones. He was a highly gifted civil engineer as well as meditator, scholar, educated, poet and adviser to the court of the Emperor. He insisted on Buddhism for the common man as well as for the rich. ('It has never been possible to produce a delicious dish out of one flavour or a beautiful melody out of one tone.') An essential of his teaching was that any man or woman, through faith and practice, can attain to great spiritual heights in this lifetime. The essence of Shingon is that man can attain Buddhahood in this very existence.

The holy men and the priests of the many temples and the countless henro who make their pilgrimage to them are constantly worshipping Kobo Daishi, always entreating him with earnest prayers, tearful supplication, and with the per-



Henro on the cliff at Ashizuri

formance of rituals. Yet the figure of Kobo Daishi that emerges as the object of all this devotion is not so much Kobo Daishi the meditator or founder of Shingon, but rather Kobo Daishi the miracle worker, the magician. Old men and women in their eighties drive themselves to the limit of their endurance so that they can make once again their impassioned supplication in the Daishi halls. Some die on the way. Gravestones are commonplace along the route, bearing no name but marked, simply, 'Henro'.

We are left in no doubt that here we have the Buddhism of faith. The entrances to some of the Daishi halls are stacked with discarded crutches and plaster castes, reminiscent of shrines in other lands, dedicated to other saints and gods — reminders of the power of man's faith in the achieving of his desires. Here also, as everywhere, the extreme of faith spills over into superstition, into a naive belief in magical transformation. The temple priests and the henro unashamedly give testimony to the most unlikely feats performed by the Daishi.

All religion has an element of magic. What seems to happen is that the basis in fact which the magic enucleates is eventually lost sight of completely and goes

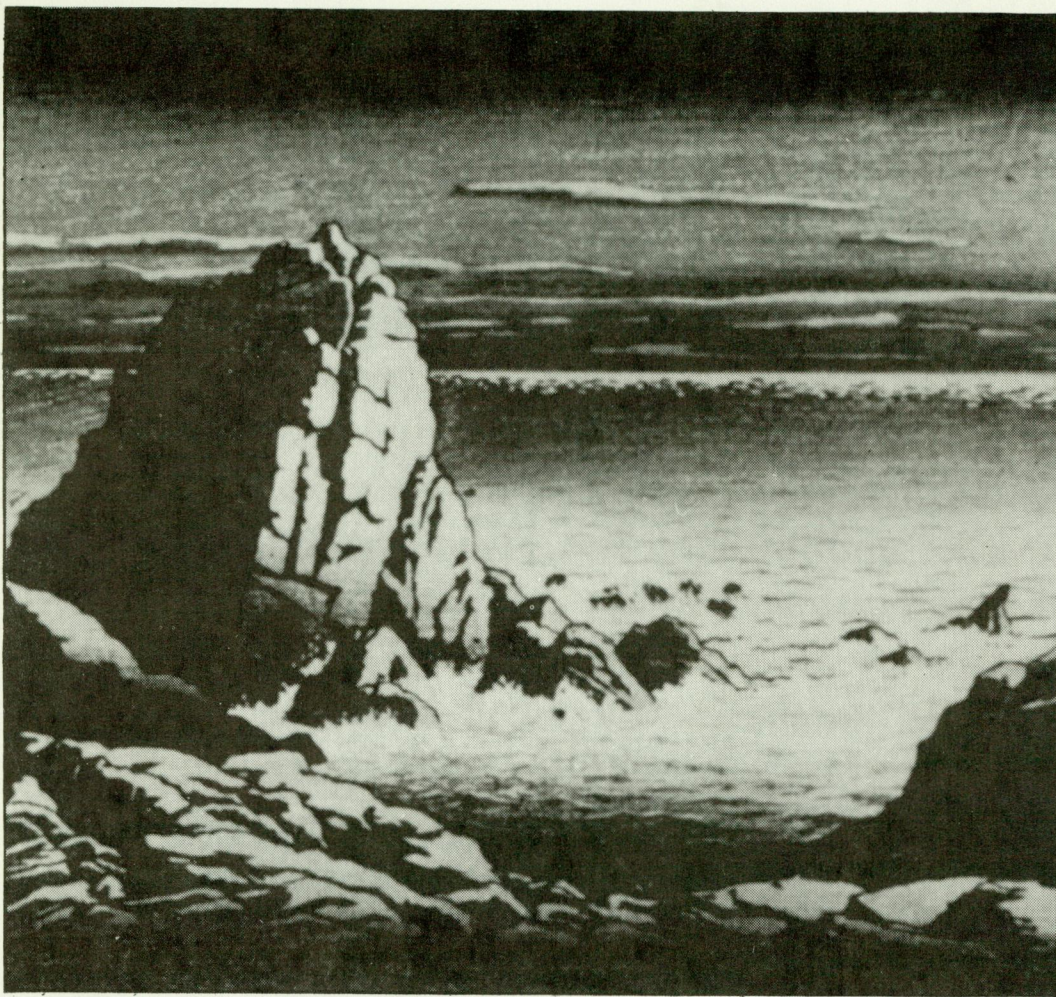
beyond the rational; the irrational gains complete supremacy. Thus the flesh and blood Daishi, the builder of bridges, gives way to the wonder worker, the saint who brings forth a spring or tames an unruly river with the touch of his staff, who removes a cooking fish from a skewer and puts it in a stream where it comes back to life and swims away, who removes all the sharp points from all the shells in a river bed with a prod of his staff because one of them has pierced his foot.

Some of the legends show the Daishi in a somewhat vindictive light. When a fish merchant refuses the saint a smoked mackerel, his horse is suddenly struck with cholera, even though, it has to be added, the horse recovers when the merchant relents! In the legend which accounts for the origin of the pilgrimage, Emon Saburo, the villain of the piece, is stricken for his sins with the sudden death of his eight sons. How could such a saint exhibit such an apparent lack of compassion and operate so frequently in the 'power mode'? The answer probably lies in the fact that many of the tales were shaped by the holy men who knew, as the author so aptly puts it, like the evangelists of all creeds, that

the threat of damnation is a more powerful stimulus to giving than the promise of paradise.

The atmosphere of the pilgrimage is as much influenced by the holy men as by the Daishi. They were the unordained wandering ascetics who flourished in the medieval period. They deliberately shunned ordination, knowing the priests to be shackled by their ties of duty to the government. Free of such encumbrances, they were able to take Buddhism to the common people.

Those mountain ascetics were not learned men; they had no qualms about mingling the cult of Amida with the teaching of the Daishi. If people responded with faith and generosity, that was the main thing. In return for the contributions of the poor to some great cause, they would collect the ashes of their dead and deposit them in the cemetery of Mount Koya to which they returned after their preaching tours. Many of them had strong, charismatic personalities, with a flair for fund-raising and organising, powerful evangelists, well apprised of the fact that a good story, dramatically told, will open a man's purse as easily as anything. There is the Daishi's precursor, the lay priest



Cape Moroto

Gyogi, who taught that actions have consequences, and was responsible for the building of the gigantic bronze Buddha at Nara. Then there is the intense Chogen who 'gripped his prayer beads as a soldier does his sword.' He was the one who organised a nation-wide fund-raising campaign for the rebuilding of the Nara Buddha after its destruction by fire, and went to questionable lengths to achieve his ends. One strange holy man has the tooth-ache so badly that he cannot live with it any longer. He digs his own grave and slowly draws the earth over him, all the while chanting his homage to Amida and the Daishi. Centuries later, devotees still come to the mound, praying for relief from tooth-ache!

Certainly some of the holy men who appear in *Japanese Pilgrimage* are somewhat larger than life; the many henro who throng these pages, the pilgrims those henro have inspired, are also intriguing. Three in particular stand out for me. First there is the American university professor, Frederick Starr, a Japanophile who taught a course called simply 'Japan' and whose lectures were always full to overflowing. He went many times to Japan to make the pilgrimage,

and on one trip managed to survive, in Tokyo in September 1923, one of the most devastating earthquakes in recorded history. The author reveres him as a brilliant champion and teacher of Japanese culture. Then there is the moving story of a woman writer, Takamure Itsue, who makes the pilgrimage in 1918 at the age of 24 to 'try to find an answer to the problem of how to live.' She makes four resolutions at the outset of the pilgrimage and steadfastly sticks to them. One is: 'To accept whatever happens, however unexpected, without anxiety.' Later, when up against the demands of this resolve, she pluckily asserts, 'If someone wants to kill me, I deserve it.' Finally, in some ways the most impressive of all, because of his calm dignity, is the kabuki actor, Ichikawa Danzo VIII, who retires from the stage at the age of eighty four and immediately embarks on the Shikoku pilgrimage, patiently enduring constant stalking by newspaper men. At the end of it, 'He walked out of life as he had walked off the stage, with composure' — quietly climbing over the stern of the midnight ferry to seek his end in the Inland Sea.

The pilgrim we get to see more of than any other is, of course, the

author himself. We see him resting his blisters at Temple Eleven, being precariously tossed over live coals by a Shaman priest, and note his constant resistance to temptations to take a bus. He takes a dim view of the motorised henro, observing that, 'The temples punctuate the pilgrimage; they do not constitute it.' He is honest about his own weaknesses, notably in a passage in which he describes the shame and demoralisation he feels after he has fearfully resisted a woman's persistent attempts to get him to look at and pray over her sick daughter. Local people have great faith in power invested in the henro by the Daishi.

Because it is about pilgrimage, Oliver Statler's book is also a travel book. From temple to temple, the pilgrims move through mountainous landscapes, farmland and villages and along craggy coastline. The shores of three of the provinces of Shikoku are washed by the gentle waters of the Inland Sea, '... a land-gentled sea studded with a thousand islands.' The fourth province looks out, on its southern boundary, onto the vast Pacific. Particularly memorable are the pilgrim's arrivals at the two promontories which jut into the pacific, Cape Muroto and Cape

Ashizuri; beautiful legends are associated with both. Two of the many pleasing illustrations of the book are copies of dramatic prints of the two capes. The strong current of reverence for mountains that is a part of the Japanese culture comes across strongly — the sense of beauty, mystery and awe that the mountains evoke. There is also the ever-threatening rain, which starts to fall at the beginning of chapter three and makes its intermittent appearances. 'The pilgrimage begets two views of rain: it is the henro's torment and it is part of the henro's training and he should thank the Daishi for providing it!'

The prevailing impression which this rich account deposits, what one is left with after all the people in pursuit of cures and spiritual sustenance, after the views of peaceful temples and of mountainous landscapes and wild river beds, after all the deeds of heroic commitment and the miracles and legends spawned by that intense faith which can brim over so readily into superstition, after all this, one is left with an impression of genuine spiritual endeavour, the urge of man to overcome himself. The priest at Temple Thirty Nine brushes aside a query about the innumerable stories of cures with the observation: 'The point of the pilgrimage is to improve oneself by enduring and overcoming difficulties.' The author himself concludes on such a reflective note, to the effect that what is important is not the destination but the effort of trying to reach it, '... not the goal, but the going.' With this we begin to see that this pilgrimage, or pilgrimage in general, is a symbol of the spiritual life itself. This well written book inspires one to keep going.



TUSCANY '85



There are many ingredients which combine to give the annual Tuscany Ordination Course its distinctive flavour and make it the success it has become.

There is the setting, 'Il Convento', a 17th century monastery set on a hill-side overlooking the plains and wooded hills of Tuscany. There is the sense of the past — you see the strange sight of a sheep with its front legs up an olive tree, and then remember a 3000 year old Assyrian statue of exactly the same scene in the British Museum; the nearby ruins of an Etruscan city testify to the Roman legions having once marched through the surrounding countryside; and the countryside itself you have seen depicted in Renaissance paintings, at a time when northern Italy was made up of many small warring city-states.

Then there is the September weather — day after day of sunshine saturating the countryside. In November the weather

changes; strong winds come down from the Alps and batter the Convent day and night. But after a while they cease and the sunshine returns, but with the coolness and clarity of winter. There is the saw-mill in the local village, sending strange metallic noises up the otherwise still valley, as if from some unearthly ritual. And there is the peace of Il Convento itself, where generations of monks have led the contemplative life.

The main ingredients in the Course, though, are the ordinations themselves, of which this year there were 23. Together with Sangharakshita and a team of 12 Order Members, there were 36 people on the course, the largest number to date.

The Course began in early September after two preliminary retreats, held at Padmaloka, earlier in the year. The highlights of the first part of the Course for most people was undoubtedly the question and answer sessions with

Sangharakshita, which took place over the course of eighteen evenings. The questions were based on study of Dr H.V. Guenther's translation of sGampopa's *The Jewel Ornament of Liberation*, a 12th century Tibetan text. Many people found this text difficult to study, but this was more than compensated for by the question and answer sessions, which provided a wealth of material for further thought and discussion.

Subjects covered in these sessions included faith in life, the nature of initiations, the dangers of charisma, falling in love, lyric poetry and intense emotion, humour in the spiritual life, the limitations of language and friendship, including much about Sangharakshita's own experiences of friendship. In relation to so-called 'fierce friendship', it was pointed out that this does not mean simply criticism of one's friend, but more fully it means the opening-up of issues which are deeper than one's friend had

previously supposed.

An issue which was stressed was the need for people to meet new situations with initiative and resourcefulness rather than, as nearly always happens, acting mechanically. On a similar theme, Sangharakshita said that people need to be more aware of their own spiritual resources; we often do not realise how much we could find out for ourselves through meditating and reflecting on our own experience. We have exactly the same equipment, the same 'eight consciousnesses', as had all the great Buddhist teachers.

A subsequent discussion on the nature of consciousness provoked a lot of interest, as well as being itself a demonstration of what we can discover through consulting our own experience. The main point that emerged was that consciousness is by definition that which is subjective, and is therefore unknowable, since in order to know something, one has to objectify it.

It is important we realise that we do not and cannot know what consciousness is. Consciousness is a very strange and mysterious phenomenon. What we must try to do is to experience our consciousness without the habitual movement towards objectification.

Just after mid-October the study and the question and answer sessions came to an end, and preparations for the ordinations began. The cloister area was converted into a large mandala, with four shrines dedicated to Manjughosa, Padma-sambhava, Tara and Vajrasattva. A large white stupa, the product of a week's work in all weathers by one determined Order member, appeared on top of the central well. The number of daily meditations increased, and the hours of silence were extended to cover most of the day. As if at a stroke the retreat turned a corner, and a new depth and sense of purpose took over. The private ordinations took, in all, eight evenings, and although different people responded in their own ways

to their ordinations — some joyful, some excited, some perhaps merely a bit more reflective than usual, and at least one who felt as though he had scored a hat-trick in the F.A. Cup Final — all were conscious of having taken a step, of being subtly changed. The public ordinations took place on Sangha Day, during which the 23 new Order members were welcomed into the Mandala of the Order.

Soon after this, the olive harvest took place, in conjunction with other work which had been going on for the previous two months. Work was in fact an integral part of the Course, and provided a refreshing contrast to study for two days each week.

Study in the final part of the Course covered Sangharakshita's *The Ten Pillars of Buddhism*. It was noticeable how much better the study now went in comparison to the earlier part of the Course! This seemed to be due not only to the greater accessibility of the text, but also to the more relaxed, mature and open

atmosphere which had come about since the ordinations, and which was, of course, not confined to the study groups: friendships deepened and people were happy, if not joyful. It was only a pity that this final phase of the Course could not have lasted longer; the end was upon us all too quickly.

The highlights of these final days were the small question and answer sessions with Sangharakshita which, because of their size, allowed us to explore issues more deeply than might otherwise have been possible. One point out of many that came from these sessions was a definition of 'positive emotion' as an emotion that is both pleasurable and skilful. There are two dangers to watch for in the Spiritual Life: firstly, that in eliminating the unskilful, one also eliminates the pleasurable, which is the extreme of puritanism, and secondly, that in preserving the pleasurable, one also preserves the unskilful which is the extreme of

hedonism. Dhyana ensures that the skilful remains pleasurable, and Insight ensures that the pleasurable remains skilful.

Another aspect of the Course was the video filming. This was undertaken by Moksapriya, assisted by Moksananda, and involved a comprehensive coverage of the Course. Moksapriya hopes to produce a film that can be shown both within the FWBO and to other Western Buddhist organisations, and which will bring out the significance of Ordination into the Western Buddhist Order.

The Course finally came to an end in early December with a celebratory dinner, at which everyone expressed their gratitude to Sangharakshita, without whom there would be no Western Buddhist Order, to Vessantara, whose experienced leadership ensured that the whole Course ran smoothly, and to Suvajra and Buddhapalita who gave of themselves so unstintingly in organising the Course.

DHARMARUCI.

BRITAIN

LBC

During the last few months around the LBC there has been much activity within the communities as people have moved to form new communities and restructure and improve the existing ones.

Workers from the men's business Windhorse Trading have left Sukhavati to create a new community, which will emphasise the clarity of purpose and support to be gained from situations in which people can both live and work together. Communities with this basis are becoming more numerous, Friends Foods and Aid For India having also recently established them, and the Cherry Orchard restaurant having had one in existence for some time.

The women's community Samayatara has also undergone changes along similar lines, with four Order members now living there, whilst at Sukhavati progress is being made towards most of the men working full-time in the Centre living there. Phoenix Housing Co-operative has recently been examining ways of providing more accommodation for those who wish to live in accordance with community ideals.

Changes have also been happening at our annexe, where we hold Yoga, massage, T'ai Chi, Alexander Technique, and related activities. The flooring has been much improved and carpeted, and the place substantially redecorated and refitted. Classes there are attracting more people already, and many of them express interest in activities at the Centre.

Two Order members who have long standing connections with the LBC have left recently: Nagabodhi to live at Padmaloka and Siddhiratna to travel to centres in other countries. Both of them have made substantial contributions to this centre, and we wish them every success.

At the Centre itself the series of talks at the Tuesday Friends' class is again proving rewarding. This session Order members have been speaking on the theme of The Ten Precepts.

One of the highlights of the next session will be a visit to the Centre by the Venerable Sangharakshita, who has offered to take part in our celebration of FWBO Day on 6th April.

MANCHESTER

This autumn Suvajra, the chairman of the Manchester Centre, has been in Italy organising the ordination retreat in Tuscany. In his place we have had Devamitra.

One of Devamitra's talents is public speaking, and we have utilised this talent to the full in his three month visit. As well as giving weekly talks at our classes, he delivered a series of five public lectures in Manchester at the Town Hall and the Central Library. The series, entitled *The Mirror of The Mind* was an exploration of the symbolism of the Tibetan Wheel of Life. About fifty people attended the lectures and, judging by the people that I spoke to, were very appreciative of the lucid, challenging and inspiring picture of Buddhism that Devamitra gave. This was the first time that we've held a series of public lectures in Manchester, and we will certainly do so again if possible.

Something else that we did for the first time this autumn was hold a flag day in the city centre. In fact we held two flag days, the first in aid of the Indo-Tibetan Buddhist Cultural Institute (ITBCI) for which we raised £190, and the second the following day for Action In Education - an Aid For India project - when we collected £400.

As well as these "one-off" events we have been giving talks on Buddhism and teaching meditation to a number of other groups, including Lancaster University and Doncaster Polytechnic Buddhist Societies, Shrewsbury Buddhist Group, and the Burnley Spiritualist Church.

GLASGOW

Glasgow Buddhist Centre is situated in a prominent position in one of the main streets of the city and boldly presents itself to the good citizens of Glasgow in such a way that they can hardly fail to take note of its presence and what it offers them in the way of meditation instruction and practice and information about Buddhism. This steady pressure of publicity is having its effect on the number of people visiting the centre and enquiring about courses in meditation. Twenty eager names were listed for the last course before the poster to advertise it had been printed. The poster then did its work and brought in another fifteen newcomers to give our attendance graph a healthy slope up. This trend has continued into the next course and has also been reflected in all our other classes.

This increasing activity has created a demand for more places in our communities, so we are pressing ahead with the refitting and decoration of Schiehallion, our community on the top floor at 329 Sauciehall Street. The major building work has been very successfully completed and has left us a structurally sound and visually attractive building to complement the beauty of the centre itself. There are now twenty-

four people living in our five communities.

Our printing business, Ink, tends to be quiet during the summer, whilst Gardening Friends has unlimited work. This was reflected in the transfer of workers from both the Centre and Ink to gardening work last summer. Now the gardening business winds down as Ink becomes busier and relies more and more on the skill and commitment of its workers. The two businesses are combining to take a lease on a country cottage for the whole of this winter so that all concerned will have the opportunity of a long retreat as part of their annual programme. Two other aspects of Ink are the projected setting up of a type-setting business, and the constant activity among the volunteers who help run Windhorse Publications from here.

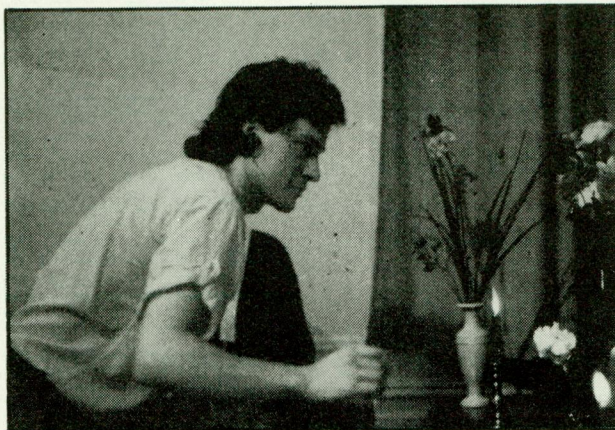
The three Order members coming back from Tuscany will have lots to throw themselves into in Glasgow and, if that is not enough, they can join our expansion to the capital city in 1986. So if you have friends or relatives in Edinburgh, you can help us by giving them that news and advising them to contact us for the latest details.

LEEDS

The autumn has been a time of expansion for FWBO Leeds. It was the first full scale session for the centre and involved more classes than ever before.

The Monday night Yoga class, held in a hired hall, has proved very popular, with an average attendance of 30-40 people, some quite experienced, others encountering Yoga for the first time. While this makes for a large and lively class, it is more difficult as far as the Yoga is concerned, so next term Aryamitra will be introducing an intermediate class. Newcomers' meditation night on Wednesday evenings has shown a steady improvement throughout the term and continues to be well attended, while the regulars' class has also increased in size. The meditation class for the unemployed, held on Tuesday afternoons at the Centre is less successful than we had hoped, but it is worth continuing in the next session. We feel that with more energy put into publicity this could be a useful class.

Five Tuesday evenings in mid-session saw Devamitra delivering his lecture series *Mirror of The Mind*, an exploration of the Tibetan Wheel of Life. The talks were very inspiring and informative and were well received by the audience each night. This was the first series of public lectures under the auspices of FWBO Leeds, and we were generally pleased with the response. A number of people expressed interest in our activities as a result of hearing Devamitra's lectures.



David Morrin becomes Leeds' first mitra

Sangha Day, which was celebrated on October 27th, was marked by a day retreat which was attended by several beginners, having their first taste of a retreat. The day's programme included meditation, communication exercises, and a taped lecture, and culminated in a sevenfold puja. It was an important day in the history of the Leeds Buddhist Centre as David Morrin became the first Leeds mitra. The ceremony was held in a packed shrine-room and attended by several people from Manchester.

Continuing the 'firsts' we are currently making tentative steps towards a Right Livelihood business. "Friends Books" is a secondhand bookstall operating once a week from Leeds market. We have so far collected books door to door and from friends' donations. It is very much an experimental venture but early results have been very encouraging.

It is also an exciting period for the community. In the new year we will be welcoming a new member, taking the total to five. We feel we are developing a strong community, with plenty of energy, which will certainly be needed if the current trend of expansion continues into next year.

NORWICH

We have had a very full session in Norwich this autumn. One of the highlights has been the trilogy of talks on 'Buddhist Lives' first given in Croydon earlier this year. These were held as public lectures

in the middle of Norwich and were all well attended, providing a number of people with an introduction to Buddhism and to the FWBO. The series finished with Subhuti's very warm and lively account of the life of the Venerable Sangharakshita. A week later Subhuti was back in Norwich, this time speaking to a very full house at the Buddhist Centre at a launch for his new book *The Buddhist Vision*.

On Sangha Day there was meditation and puja all day in the colourfully decorated centre. A buffet meal was followed by a short after dinner address by Abhaya, rejoicing in the merits of the local sangha, and by a festive puja that included two mitra ceremonies. It was a very enjoyable day, characterised by a very warm sense of sangha.

Part of Vajrakula is at present out of action as the house has been found to be in a dangerous condition. This is a problem as we have lost two rooms and just gained a new community member. Meanwhile, elsewhere in the building some long overdue redecoration and improvements are taking place.

There is some uncertainty over the future of the building that houses the Buddhist Centre. A development plan would see it demolished and replaced by a huge multi-storey car-park. We do not know what the outcome will be, but whatever happens we intend to see that the steady increase in the momentum of our activities in Norwich is not interrupted.

By the time you read this, Guhyavajra and Moksananda will be back with us from Tuscany. Their energy will be very wel-

come, as Abhaya plans to step down as chairman and hand over to Saddhaloka. Abhaya has been chairman of the Norwich centre since 1981, and has worked very hard over the last four years to help establish FWBO Norwich on a solid footing. He now wants to devote more time to his literary work, and we all wish him well in this and look forward to enjoying the fruits of his efforts before too long.

WOMENS' CO-OP DAY

Initiated and organised by the West London team, the first Women's Co-ops Day was held at the London Buddhist Centre recently. About 25 women attended, representing Hockneys Wholefoods (Croydon), Friends Foods (West London), and the Cherry Orchard, Jambala, and Windhorse Photosetters (Bethnal Green).

The day provided an opportunity to meet and share our experiences of co-ops as well as meditate and perform puja. Led by Gunabhadri, we heard talks presented by each co-op. These generally introduced the team, gave a brief history of the business, and commented on future plans, as well as highlighting issues which had emerged over the years. The talks were entertaining and inspiring as we recalled how many co-ops had begun as naive projects which subsequently took on a life of their own - perhaps as a manifestation of the enthusiasm and energy of the women running them.

Each business has had its share of challenges, and this was the area the afternoon study groups explored. Key themes included the benefits of co-op communities, ethics, objective versus subjective needs, work as spiritual practice, organisation and planning, communication, and commitment.

These themes are no stranger to those involved in Right Livelihood, but the encouraging outcome of the day's discussion was discovering how these issues have been dealt with in practice over the years. In general there has been a movement towards stronger teams with clearer communication and commitment, and an increase in professional skills and experience. This has been reflected in the more efficient running of the co-ops alongside better understanding of how to create a Right Livelihood environment.

Before our concluding puja, we reported the results of our discussion groups. We decided to hold a similar event at the beginning of the next autumn session, since we felt we benefitted from the day as a forum to keep in touch with developments.



Participants at the Womens' co-op day



Tea-break on a Dutch retreat

HOLLAND

Last summer Holland held its first ten day retreat which was led by Vajragita and supported by Anandajyoti and Jayaprabha from England. There were talks about ethics, meditation, and wisdom. The retreat was visited mainly by beginners, some of whom are forming the steadily growing Sangha of Holland. For more study and meditation together there are Friday evenings held at home, open to anyone interested who has been on a retreat. We will soon need more room!

In October Vajragita started a course in Buddhism and meditation with lectures on the six perfections. We are growing more confident and people are responding well.

Some Dutch people went to Spain where Subhuti led a ten day retreat on The Wheel of Life. Five new people contacted us after coming back enthusiastic.

A three-day retreat in November was dedicated to The Sangha and warmly supported by Silabhadra from England and Ajita from Germany. On this retreat it became clear that the FWBO in Holland is developing well.

Our next activities will be the Christmas retreats in co-operation with FWBO Germany and held there. The women's retreat theme will be The Songs of Milarepa led by Sridevi and supported by Vajragita.

But the most wonderful news we can report is the ordination of the first Dutch man: Bodhi-mitra. Sadhu!

HELSINKI

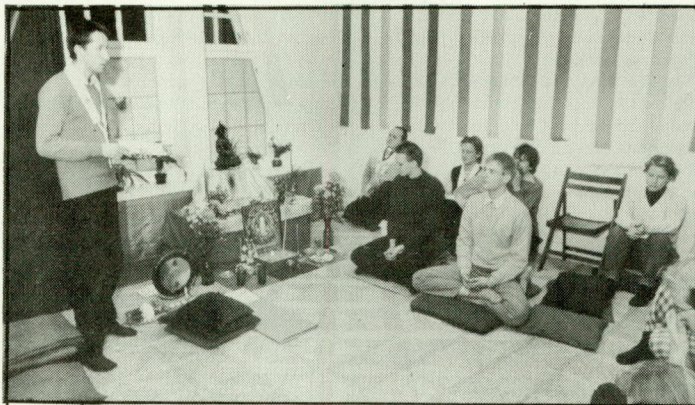
This autumn we have had several visits from schools to our centre: sixth formers who visit on their religious education class. Our centre premises are very small, so small in fact that the room was completely filled up by thirty-five children on one occasion, which was the largest class. Two Order members have also visited schools, and given altogether five talks on Buddhism and the FWBO.

The Finnish version of the 'Festival of Mind Body & Spirit' that took place in October was a success, considering the amount of books we sold and the enrolments we had for our Basic

Buddhism course.

Going on courses and studying is very popular in Finland and Scandinavia, especially during the autumn term. To make use of this tendency we have had three courses this autumn, two for beginners and one for women regulars, which were well attended. The women's course receives a small state subsidy.

In the regulars' class we have had a series of talks on eternalism and nihilism, based on the Brahmajala sutta.



Sarvamitra gives a talk in Helsinki

AUCKLAND

Forty-six people enjoyed our open Summer Retreat, our women's retreat was the biggest ever, and we also had our first ten day Spring Retreat with twenty-eight people attending - which is remarkable considering the time of year.

There have been three successful courses at the University of Auckland. The first one was a Mahayana course taken by Purna attended by fifty people.

Purna and Ratnaketu went to the UK for the Order Convention and Ratnaketu visited Dharo Rimpoché in Kalimpong on his way to England. He showered Dharo with gifts from Aotearoa, including a framed Whole Earth poster. Dharo was particularly taken with this, having not seen the planet from this vantage point before. In a letter to us he said, "As the full Earth has no end like a empty space, it recalls me the Tong-Ni, Shunata as per our Sutra. It is really good to have such a beautiful photo".

He has given us a bell and vajra which Ratnaketu ceremoniously revealed to us on Sangha Day just before puja.

Tuscany has seen the ordination of three New Zealanders: Guhyavajra, Guhyasiddhi, and Vimalajyoti.

Fundraising for the new Auckland Buddhist Centre has been the main focus for 1985 and the centre team has excelled itself. At present we have \$15,000 towards a deposit for the new centre and additional pledges of \$1650. In other words we are well over half way towards our deposit target of \$25,000 and hope to purchase a property in mid-1986.

Monthly standing donations are contributing to our success. We have also had two benefit dinners, the most recent being a Renaissance Dinner. Sixty people were entertained by Shakespearean readings, Renaissance songs, and good food.

There have been numerous school talks on Buddhism and meditation, mainly by Priyananda. Udaya has been working in prisons since 1980. He is taking three meditation courses a year and leading study groups on the Dharma.

never have been achieved without recognition that we all have common ideals, diverse as we are in the expression of our commitment.

WELLINGTON

The highlight of the past few months has been the arrival of Gunapala and Silaratna to live in Wellington. This coincided with the creation of four mitras; the number of local mitras is now ten. Because of these extra people FWBO Wellington has been more outgoing in spreading the dharma.

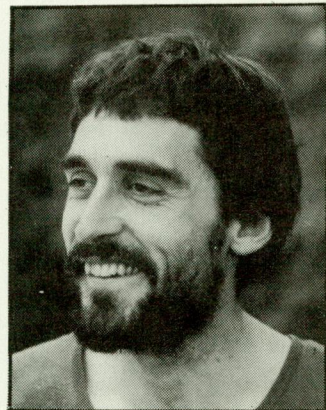
In September Achala and two mitras visited Palmerston North to speak to the Massey University Buddhist Association. This is a recently formed group of students interested in Buddhism, and comprises mostly Malaysians. They were very enthusiastic despite, or perhaps because of, virtually no contact with anyone practising the dharma. We agreed that next year an Order member would visit them once a month.

Letters have been sent out to all secondary schools in Wellington offering them speakers on Buddhism. So far Silaratna has given talks and presented slide shows to two schools.

Silaratna has also given a series of talks on Buddhist symbolism at the Wellington Multicultural Centre. This was part of an experiment to see if more people would come to talks if they were held at a 'neutral' venue. Although the talks were of a high standard and enjoyed by those who attended, few newcomers were enticed to come.

By contrast, the recent Meditation and Basic Buddhism courses have had very large attendances. This is partly due to the Workers Educational Association accepting the Buddhism course as part of its programme. This means that for no cost to the centre the course was advertised by leaflet and mail-outs to many people in the Wellington region.

Now that the number of mitras has swollen, Order-mitra retreats are to be held regularly. The first of these was at Waiterere on the theme of the Bodhisattva Ideal.



Achala

Meditation is becoming more accepted in the Peace Movement. Mitra Annie Maignot is giving meditation instruction to women crew members on the new Greenpeace vessel which is heading to Antarctica to establish a Greenpeace base there. The Meditation Network for World Peace continues to remind peace workers that peace begins with the individual.

Our first de luxe Healthy Living retreat starts at the end of November led by Priyananda, and meditation instruction will be given regularly at the Wellness Centre. This is run by a holistic-care collective in the inner-city. Purna gave a talk at the opening of this centre which was welcomed by over a hundred people.

So all this is happening, in spite of our not having a centre. We are still in the Civic Trust building where there is always a great deal of furniture removal needed before we can meditate.

We are rejoicing in each other's merits and relishing the strong sense of Sangha in Auckland. Such results could

INDIA

AHMEDABAD

Since our last report in July, the terrible riots in the city have fortunately come to an end, and we have been able to resume our normal activities.

Our weekly classes haven't yet regained their momentum, but we hope that the new study group recently started by Mangal, and the one to be started soon by Bakul, will change this. One class which doesn't seem to have lost any momentum is our Sunday morning children's class led by a mitra and a sahayaka (friend). It has been playing to 'full-houses' for some months now!

During September, Bakul, Ratnakar and Mangal went to Bhaja for a one month Order-mitra retreat, and realised again the necessity of such events for deeper understanding and experience of the Dhamma. We decided to arrange a four day retreat for the holiday period from 23rd to 27th November to which we hope many of our mitras and sahayaks will come.

From November 9th to 13th, Mangal will be at Ambarnath, near Bombay, where he will be leading a retreat for the Bombay area mitras and friends before giving a talk at Siddharth Vihara on November 16th.

At the end of August, after a long delay, we were able to launch our new Gujarati publication Buddha, Man or God; a

booklet containing three lectures given by the Venerable Sangharakshita, and so far it has been very well received.

On October 5th we held a Dharmapala Jayanti celebration, but because of the unexpected rain not many people attended. However, this was more than compensated for by our Ashok Vijaya Dashim celebration on October 23rd, which was attended by about 150 people, who enjoyed a very rich programme which included puja and chanting of Buddhist gathas, a diksha (conversion) ceremony, lecture, picnic lunch, garbhas (traditional Gujarati folk dances), music, and a drama based on the life of Angulimala.

MAHARASHTRA

In August the most important festival in India is Independence Day. Although not a Buddhist festival as such, we are called upon to give talks in many places. That morning we opened the TBMSG (Trailokya Bauddha Mahasangha Sahayaka Gana) Vihara in Pimpri. This is situated in Gautam Nagar, a poor slum area. The land was donated and \$200 collected from local friends and mitras to construct the building of tin and wood. Lokamitra gave it the name Maitreya Vihar. As it was, it held about thirty people, but classes were so full that local friends were called upon once again for donations to enlarge the vihara to enable it to hold the seventy or more people who were attending classes. For a little more than half the original

IF YOU'VE EVER WONDERED
WHAT IT'S LIKE TO DO AN
AID FOR INDIA APPEAL...

"For me fundraising was not just a long climb but a view from the heights.... I was learning to put my spiritual practice into action".

DAVID KEEFFE, 1985 London



"It was the nearest I've got to living out my ideals - hard work, but very inspiring!"

CAROLINE OWEN, 1984 Brighton



"Perhaps it is those unexpectedly intense and magical moments that make all the effort seem particularly worthwhile".

ROBIN COOMBS, 1985 Birmingham

Qualities of openness, friendliness and awareness are encouraged within special Aid for India communities, and carried out into the streets each evening as the surest way of finding new supporters. Each appeal could be compared to an ongoing retreat, or described as true Right Livelihood.



JOIN US IN '86!

March-April (OXFORD) June-July (BRISTOL)
September-October (LONDON) November-December (LONDON)

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cost this was done.

After that we held our first official programme in the medi-

cal centre at Dapodi. Although not finished, the ground floor was by then usable and Virabhadra and his team were set to move in with their clinics, library, creche, and office. After so many years of complications it was with a sense of relief that we held this programme.

We celebrated the Venerable Sangharakshita's sixtieth birthday in all our centres. At the same time we inaugurated an appeal for funds for a purse to present to him on his next visit. The response to this has been very enthusiastic.

The next day twenty-four of us set off for Saddhamma Pradip for a four week retreat for those mitras who have asked for ordination. As in May we studied The Ten Pillars of Buddhism. This was the first month-long retreat we have held in the rainy season. Although there were certainly disadvantages, such as not being able to go out of the building so easily, and a greater likelihood of snakes, the rain did seem to add to the importance of the retreat. During the retreat a small solitary retreat hut was completed on the far corner of our land. Solitary retreat facilities have been very hard to find, so with a growing demand we decided to provide our own facilities. It is a very basic building, made of mud and stone, but quite suitable for

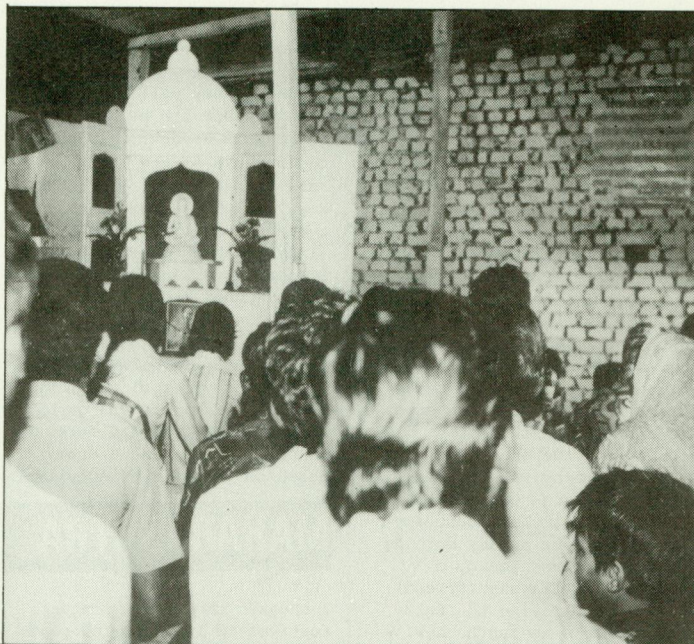


the purpose.

After the retreat we made another step forward here in starting our first Right Livelihood scheme. Ravindra Turwar, one of our mitras, has started a fabrication business to support our Dhamma work. We hope that this will lead the way for a number of such enterprises.

On 22nd October we celebrated Ashok Vijay Dashmi - the day Dr Ambedkar and 500,000 followers converted to Buddhism. We had

lectures at all our centres and many other places, but the greatest concentration of our activity was in Bombay. One of Vimalakirti's programmes was at Vashi on the outskirts of Bombay, where there are many Buddhists living. We have three mitras there, and recently Vajrasil has been every full moon to give lectures. The response is so good that it promises to be yet another quite distinct area of activity in the Bombay area.

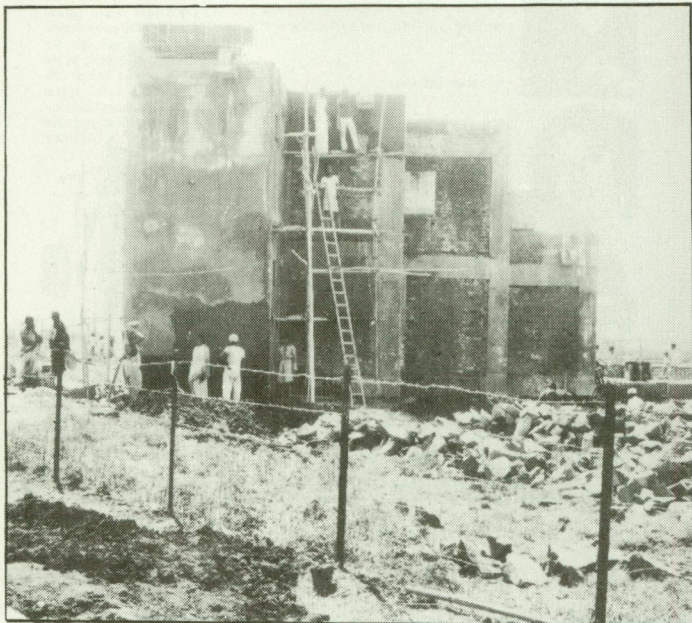


A class at the Pimpri centre

Ashvajit went to Visakhapatam in Andhra Pradesh on the east coast. This was our first contact there. He followed this with a few days in Hyderabad where he gave two lectures. Lokamitra accepted a programme at Nashik in the ancient Buddhist caves there, where Nashik Buddhists meet every year on this occasion. Nashik has the third largest population in Maharashtra after Bombay and Pune. It is therefore very good

that we were able to make this contact. Virabhadra gave a talk there two years ago and was very well remembered. Now they want much more contact in terms of lectures and retreats.

In the last few days our office has moved from Dhamma Vijay to the first floor of the medical centre where it will stay for a year until the medical project needs it. Our new address appears on the back of this Newsletter.



The new Dapodi medical centre under construction

Padmaloka

It has been a quiet autumn for the retreat centre at Padmaloka, but although there have not been many retreats the retreat centre community has been busy in other ways.

At the end of September there was a small fire in the candles factory. This caused some damage to the building and equipment, but the worst effect was to set back production for the Christmas market.

Later on in October the community marked the week of ordinations which were taking place in Tuscany. Each evening we directed a metta bhavana meditation towards those who were receiving their ordination. This felt especially moving because three of them were from Padmaloka.

On Sangha Day at the end of the week there was a special celebration. In the morning a puja coincided with the time of the public ordinations. In the afternoon we again directed a metta bhavana to Tuscany, with the new names of those just ordained read out. The evening started with a celebratory puja in the shrine-room which had been adorned like a Pure Land. This included a mitra ceremony for one of the



Padmaloka, now purchased for the Movement

community members. The day was rounded off with a bonfire, vegetarian barbecue, and fireworks.

Also this autumn, work has started on the retreat kitchen, to refurbish and enlarge them.

The major event this autumn was a Men's Event entitled 'The Buddhist Vision'. During this event study groups were held on Subhuti's new book of the same title. Subhuti himself chaired a series of six talks which explored the same themes as his book: The Wheel of Life, The Spiral Path, and the Mandala of the Five Buddhas. About sixty men attended this weekend, and returned home having caught at least a few glimpses of the Buddhist Vision.

Vajraloka

Clear frosty mornings and the first snowfall hail the arrival of winter, and the community at Vajraloka settles back to its daily retreat programme after a break of two months.

During the autumn there was a three week retreat for women mitras and a month of visualisation retreat for men Order members. The community spent some of this time on retreat at Tyddyn Rhydderch, a nearby cottage. We devoted time on this retreat to vipassana practices which we will be working through on Order members' courses next year. Some time was taken out to visit the London Buddhist Centre where we held a meditation day. The response to this was lively and enthusiastic. We will be doing more of these events next year, both at the LBC and other centres.

We have just brought out a programme for the first half of next year, which is available at centres. It marks a new departure in the style of retreats held at Vajraloka and we hope it will give a feel for the increasingly teaching-oriented approach we are taking.

The resident community will be reduced in the near future, Vidyaraja finishing a three month stay, and Kamalasila going to India before taking three month's Sabbatical to write a book on meditation. A number of people are interested in coming here for long term stays, and we expect the community to increase again in early 1986.

In December we have a post-Ordination retreat for new Order members. This will be followed by our winter retreat led by Dharmananda. Meanwhile, Satyananda and Vajradaka will be going to Scotland to lead the retreat there. In February we look forward to a sesshin around the Parinirvana Day festival and the first of our Order courses.

CORNHILL FARM

—The New Womens' Retreat Centre



The new Womens' Retreat Centre at Cornhill Farm

Sanghadevi is happy to report that, after three years of efforts by the fundraising team, FWBO Wanstead has now purchased Cornhill Farm, which will be used as a Womens' Retreat Centre, and a team of four women moved in on the 15th November, 1985.

Cornhill Farm, just inside the Welsh border in the same county as Vajraloka, is a five bedroomed farmhouse with an attractive grouping of outbuildings which will lend themselves well to conversion into a self-contained retreat complex. There are seven acres of land, offering plenty of scope for attractive landscaping; the surrounding countryside is gently rolling with several lakes and many delightful walks. The farm itself lies at the end of a long pot-holed track, three-quarters of a mile from the small and peaceful village of Bettisfield. Very soon after arriving on the farm, the community team met some

members of the local community, to show them slides and answer questions about the plans for the farm. The atmosphere was friendly, and went a long way towards clarifying areas of doubt and confusion about Buddhism and about the centre itself, that their arrival had stimulated. The plan is now to hold a proper open day for villagers in January.

Planning permission has been sought, and if all goes well, conversion work will begin in late March. Meanwhile, the team are looking for a further £17,000 - on top of the £33,000 already raised - to complete the first phase of the task - which will be to create a meditation room, some more sleeping accommodation, and better kitchen and dining facilities. Obviously, all donations will be very welcome.

Sanghadevi is keen to see this first phase of conversion work completed during 1986, since until then, the full-time community members will be sharing the house and its

facilities with the visiting retreatants. The full-timers want to generate a good basis for the centre as a whole, and hope to make it the perfect setting for women preparing themselves for ordination, so the sooner they are properly established the better.

The first proper retreat took place at Christmas, and before that several women took part in a continuous 'working retreat' to get the place ready for its first influx of visitors. Many retreat are planned for 1986. All the intensive meditation retreats for women that would normally have been held at Vajraloka will now take place at Cornhill Farm. There will also be Yoga and massage weekends, and introductory weekends and day events for those new to meditation and the FWBO.

A full brochure will appear soon, but full details of all coming retreats and events can be obtained direct from the Centre, right now.

THE ORDER OFFICE

On the Move in Print On The Air

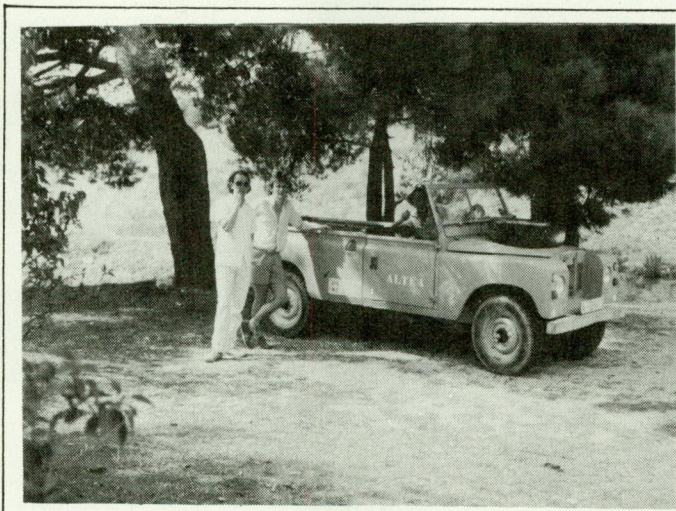
At the beginning of September, the Venerable Sangharakshita and three other members of the Order Office team left for Tuscany to take part in the three month pre-ordination course for men. In the few days between the launching of his new book The Eternal Legacy: an Introduction to the Canonical Literature of Buddhism and his departure for Italy, the Venerable Sangharakshita managed his usual impressive workload. He chaired the talks at the Men's Event at Padmaloka on the theme of the Higher Evolution of Man. He was particularly pleased with these talks, all given by Order members who were relatively unknown as speakers, both because of the high standard of delivery and because the speakers showed that they had grasped the essential principles of this approach, used by the Venerable Sangharakshita in the late 'sixties, and were able to develop it in their own ways. He answered questions put to him each evening by leaders of men's mitra study groups who were preparing for the winter session of study on The Buddha's Noble Eightfold Path.

It seems that, in Britain at least, the press, radio and television are taking an increasing interest in Buddhism, and some of that interest has been directed to the FWBO. In one week at the beginning of September, the Venerable Sangharakshita was interviewed by Roger Berthoud of the Illustrated London News (his excellent piece appeared in the November issue), and by the BBC for a programme on Buddhism in Britain 'The Lion and The Lotus' transmitted on Radio Four in November. He also recorded seven talks for the Thames Television epilogue 'Night Thoughts' choosing the theme of 'pilgrimage' as the connecting thread between them. These talks were simultaneously translated into sign language - new signs for 'Buddha' and 'meditation' had to be created on the spot! They will probably be transmitted in June.

Whilst the retreat in Tuscany is in progress, little information filters out as to what is going on there, apart from the fact that ordinations have taken place and the new names of the ordines. We do know that the Venerable Sangharakshita has been answering questions on Gampopa's Jewel Ornament of Liberation, editing material

for Mitrata, and writing various articles, letters, and papers. He has, among other things, completed a short appreciation of Alan Ginsburg as a contribution to a "festschrift" to be published on the occasion of the poet's sixtieth birthday. Rumour has it that he is also writing a long poem himself! After the ordinations he paid a brief visit to Naples and Pompeii

many for a meeting of the European Buddhist Union in Hamburg. He passed through the Netherlands on his way and stayed with Vajragita in Utrecht who is single handedly establishing Buddhist activities there. He then travelled to the FWBO centre in Essen and from there to Hamburg with Dharmapriya from the Essen Centre. Although this meeting suffered as usual from an overcrowded and overly formal programme, definite steps forward have been made in the Union since our first experience of it some six years ago. It does now consist of more Buddhist groups in which people take the practice of the Dharma seriously and in which commitment to Buddhism is, to some extent, recognised as a prerequisite for Buddhist activity. Indeed, the atmosphere of the meeting was very friendly and optimistic. The



Property hunt in southern Spain

with Prasannasiddhi which, though interesting and enjoyable, did not render up the cultural highlights of Florence or Rome.

The last few months have seen an unprecedented quantity of the Venerable Sangharakshita's literary works in print. Travel Letters, The Glory of the Literary World, The Eternal Legacy have all appeared and more is promised. The new Mitrata series, The Bodhisattva Ideal, commenced in October, typeset and in a new smaller and handier format. It is based upon the lecture series of the same name and follows the same pattern as the previous series on The Buddha's Noble Eightfold Path. With the increasing experience of the research team, the value of the material in this publication grows with each issue. It truly is an indispensable source of understanding of the practice of the Dharma today.

During September and October Subhuti also spent much of his time away from Padmaloka, leaving Kovida as the only full-time member of the Order Office team. Subhuti travelled to Ger-

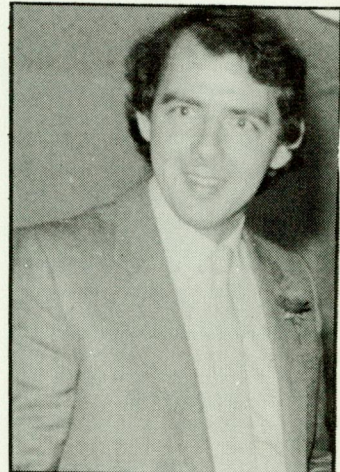
major decision of the meeting was to open up EBU membership to all genuine Buddhist groups of a 'reasonable' size. We hope that the Union will become more and more a genuine forum for the Buddhists of Europe to come together. The delegates were looked after quite exceptionally well by the Hamburg Tibetan Centre and the German Buddhist Union. Subhuti reports that the highlight of the meeting was, for him and Dharmapriya, meeting with Advayavajra and Vajramala, the Head and General Secretary of the Order Arya Maitreya Mandala, established by the Venerable Sangharakshita's old friend, the late Lama Govinda. The FWBO in Germany has already established links with the AMM and we hope that in future our two movements will develop even closer ties.

After his return from Germany, Subhuti flew to Spain with Cittapala. They spent a few days in Andalusia and visited Osel Cho Ling, a Tibetan centre high up in the Apuljaras where many Order members and friends have stayed for solitary retreats. They later met

the director of the centre, Dr Francois Camus, in Granada, who was very helpful with information about property in the region - for this part of Spain would be a very suitable location for an FWBO retreat centre. Subhuti and Cittapala then travelled to Alicante where they joined Vajranatha and Vajrayogini, a Dutch Order member who runs a centre for Gestalt and psychosynthesis in Belgium, for a retreat at El Bloque, a centre run by Vajrayogini's son and daughter-in-law for psychotherapy and other growth groups. Some twenty people attended the retreat, most of them Dutch and most with little previous contact with Buddhism. Throughout the retreat, Subhuti led study on The Wheel of Life, The Spiral Path, and The Mandala, giving a comprehensive introduction to the Dharma. Two things were notable about the retreat: the power and impact of the Dharma, and the strength of Christian conditioning. Many of the people on the retreat had been brought up as Catholics and still found themselves reacting to its influence. It was very hard for them to disentangle their genuine response to Buddhism from their rejection of Catholicism and its effects. On the whole it was a very successful retreat, and it is hoped that it will be repeated next year.

When he returned from Spain, Subhuti began to launch his new book The Buddhist Vision, published by Rider. He travelled to most British FWBO centres giving a talk introducing the theme of the book which is a general introduction to Buddhism based again upon the Wheel, the Spiral, and the Mandala.

The Venerable Sangharakshita's Sixtieth Birthday Appeal fund now stands at about £70,000. Although this falls well short of what we had hoped for, it should be enough to achieve some of the goals that we had set ourselves. Work has started on redecorating the Order Office community. Most important of all, arrangements are now in hand to buy Padmaloka. By the end of this year, we should at least have secured and made fit the Venerable Sangharakshita's principle base.



Subhuti

RETREATS

at the new

WOMENS' RETREAT CENTRE

Spring 1986

Intensive Meditation

7th Feb—7th March
(for mitras and Friends: £59.50/week)

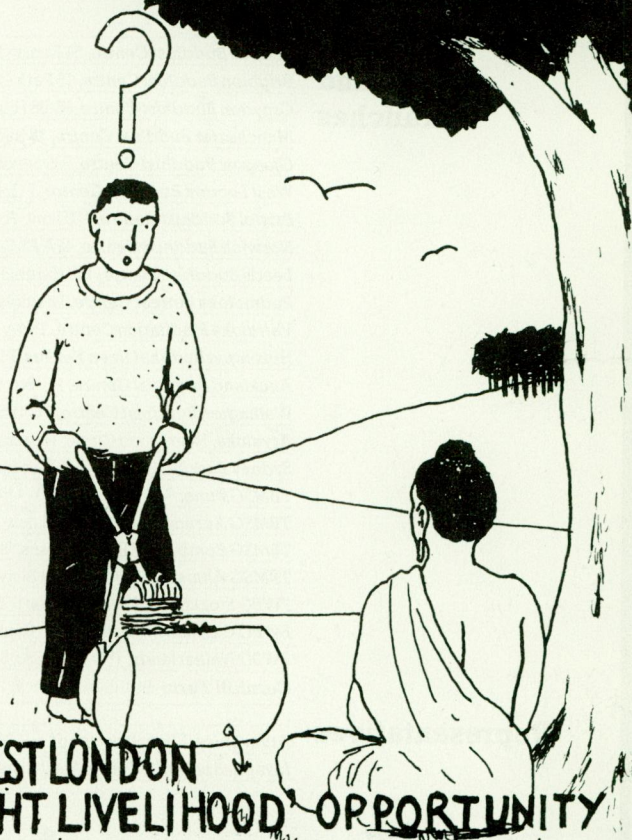
Introductory Weekend

21st—23rd March
(for newcomers to the FWBO:
£25.00, (£20.00 for low income)

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Winter and Spring programme:

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PARINIRVANA SESSHIN
(Parinirvana Day 15th Feb)

Tuesday 18th February to Tuesday 18th March
ORDER MEDITATION COURSE

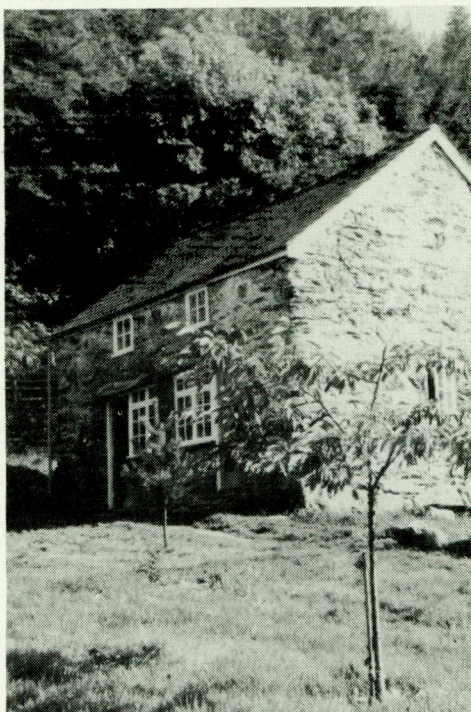
Tuesday 18th March to Saturday 22nd March
CLOSED for COMMUNITY

Saturday 22nd March to Saturday 5th April
MEDITATION WORKSHOP

Saturday 5th April to Saturday 19th April
MEDITATION LEADERS RETREAT

Saturday 19th April to Friday 25th April
WORKING RETREAT

Telephone 0490 16 406 (afternoons only)

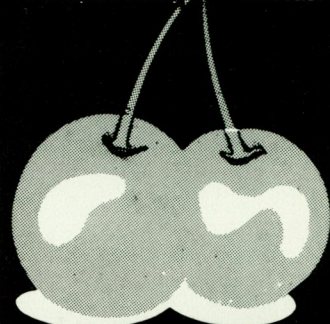


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