

**fwbo 8**  
**newsletter**







# The Friends of the Western Buddhist Order

# newsletter

president Ven. Sthavira Sangharakshita

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## Aims & achievements

With the coming of April this year, the Western Buddhist Order has achieved two years of existence, for it was on April 7th 1968 that the initiation of twelve people into the Upasaka Ordination brought our own Sangha into existence. So maybe this is a good time to take a look at our achievements, and our original aims, and see if we are still doing what we set out to do.

What were our aims two years ago?

First of all, of course, "to work under the guidance of Ven. Sthavira Sangharakshita for the creation of the nucleus of a western Buddhist order."

To maintain and support our teacher and his monastic disciples, as well as other members of the Sangha associated with them in their activities.

To encourage the study of, and make more widely known the life and teachings of the Buddha.

To foster the spirit of Sangha; to help develop the Bodhisattva Ideal; to stimulate the appreciation of all Buddhist arts and crafts; to celebrate Buddhist festivals, and anniversaries; to conduct retreats, seminars, lectures, and meditation classes; to acquire such property as is needed to fulfil any of these aims.

Well, what have we achieved?

Here are some statistics. Eight country retreats, attended by a total of over three hundred people.

Nearly four hundred meditation classes in London alone.

The establishment of two independent Buddhist communities.

Five series of lectures, and twenty-seven single lectures, making a total of sixty-seven lectures.

Five seminars in London, and three weekend seminars outside London.

And of course, the Western Buddhist Order itself, which has grown in numbers from twelve to twenty three during its two years of life.



Well, numbers are fine, but what exactly do they mean in terms of evolution towards enlightenment, and the establishment of a firm, living, spiritual tradition in this country?

They mean, at the very least, that the lives of twenty-three people have changed in some respect, and in most cases very deeply changed. The establishment of the communities has played its significant part in changing the popular image of Buddhism in this country from an Oriental cult with overtones of asceticism and sexual depravity, to a sensible down to earth, harmonious and stimulating way of getting people to live and grow together. In Buddhism, growth is life, stagnation is death. And the ultimate consequence of stagnation is perpetual suffering.

And what can be said of the future?

Rather than asking, what does the future hold for us, we should ask, what do we hold for the future? For if anything is certain, it is that nothing will happen unless we make it happen. If each one of us wants enlightenment sufficiently, with our whole being, we will be enlightened accordingly. The whole problem of the spiritual life is that of making our will perfect.

One thing, at any rate, can be said of our future: if we are to grow as a true Sangha, if we are to move towards the goal in concord, then we must have a place in which to do so as a whole group, and not only as isolated individuals. In short, the Western Buddhist Order needs a centre where all its activities may carry on, unimpeded by the havocs, divinely sent as they may be, of fire, flood, and pestilence.

The acquisition of such a centre needs three things: Time, Money, Effort. If you have any, or all, of these precious gems, we ask you now to give, and not to count the cost.

Without your gift we cannot build the new world.

ANANDA UPASAKA.



## THE CREATIVE MIND

The characteristics of the creative mind are the opposite of those of the reactive mind. The creative mind does not re-act. It is not dependent on or determined by, the stimuli with which it comes into contact. On the contrary, it is active on its own account, functioning spontaneously, out of the depths of its own intrinsic nature. Even when, initially prompted by something external to itself, it quickly transcends its original point of departure and starts functioning independently.

The creative mind can therefore be said to respond rather than to react. Indeed it is capable of transcending conditions altogether. Hence it can be said that whereas the reactive mind is essentially pessimistic, being limited to what is given in immediate experience, the creative mind is profoundly and radically optimistic. Its optimism is not, however, the superficial optimism of the streets, no mere unthinking reaction to, or rationalisation of, pleasurable stimuli. By virtue of the very nature of the creative mind such a reaction would be impossible.

On the contrary, the optimism of the creative mind persists despite unpleasant stimuli, despite conditions unfavourable for optimism, or even when there are no conditions for it at all. The creative mind loves where there is no reason to love, is happy where there is no reason for happiness, creates where there is no possibility of creativity, and in this way "builds a heaven in hell's despite".

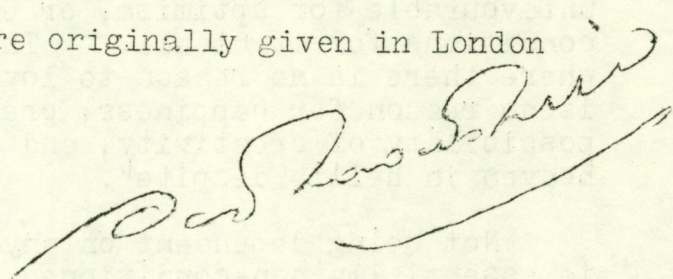
Not being dependent on any object, the creative mind is essentially non-conditioned. It is independent by nature and functions, therefore, in a perfectly spontaneous manner. When functioning on the highest possible level, at its highest pitch of intensity, the creative mind is identical with the Unconditioned, that is to say, it coincides with absolute Mind. Being non-conditioned, or unconditioned, the creative mind is free. Indeed it is Freedom itself. It is also original in the true sense of the term, being characterized by ceaseless productivity. This productivity is not necessarily artistic, literary or musical, even though the painting, the poem and the symphony are admittedly among its most strikingly adequate manifestations. Moreover, just as the creative mind does not necessarily find expression in 'works of art', so what are conventionally regarded as 'works of art' are not necessarily all expressions of the creative mind. Imitative and lacking true originality, some of them are more likely to be the mechanical products of the reactive mind.



Outside the sphere of the fine arts, the creative mind finds expression in productive personal relations, as when through our own emotional positiveness others become more emotionally positive, or as when through the intensity of their mutual awareness two or more people reach out towards, and together experience, a dimension of being greater and more inclusive than their separate individualities. In these and similar cases the creative mind is productive, in the sense of contributing to the increase in the world of the sum total of positive emotion, of higher states of being and consciousness.

Finally, as just indicated, the creative mind is above all, the aware mind. Being aware, or rather, being awareness of itself, the creative mind is also intensely and radiantly alive. The creative person, as one in whom the creative mind manifests may be called, is not only more aware than the reactive person, but is possessed of far greater vitality. This vitality is not just animal high spirits, or emotional exuberance, much less still mere intellectual energy, or the compulsive urgency of egoistic volition. Were such expressions permissible, one might say it is the spirit of life itself rising like a fountain from the infinite depths of existence, and vivifying, through the creative person, all with whom it comes into contact.

(Based on part of a lecture originally given in London in 1967.)



## DEATHS

those have lived only  
who have died three times:  
once in heart (by the agony  
of tree and star and fallen  
apple blossom) once  
in mind (who finds  
an endless sea with no land  
in every yes and fearful no)  
and once in flesh (whose hand  
at crack of night entwines  
cold and air where  
warm and hair should go).  
whose soul these ends survives  
grows hot as ice and cold  
as fire and new as time  
and old as breath  
and in these deaths, lives.



## VEN. SANGHARAKSHITA'S VISIT TO FRANCE

At the beginning of January the Ven. Sthavira Sangharakshita accompanied by David Crowley (Upasaka Devendra) paid a short visit to France, his first since the inception of the FWBO. The purpose of the visit was to establish direct contact with French-speaking Buddhists, and to explore possibilities of cooperation between them and the Friends.

On their arrival in Paris, they were met by the Ven. Thich Thien Chau (an old friend of Bhante and of our movement), Bhikkuni Mandala, Prof. Cao Luy Thuan, M Huynh Cao Tri, Dr. Bui Mong Hung, and M. Maurice Salan.

While in Paris, Bhante gave two lectures, one under the auspices of the Vietnamese Overseas Buddhist Association, when he also showed slides of his tour in India in 1966-67, the other under the auspices of La Connaissance du Bouddhisme. The latter was outstandingly successful, being attended by about eighty people. The address, which was interpreted into French by M. Roland de la Moussaye, was extremely well received, and followed by a lengthy and vigorous discussion. Besides answering questions at an informal drawing-room meeting at the home of M. and Mme. Antoine de Bary, Bhante held important discussions with M. Maurice Salan and M. Bonet-Moury, president and secretary respectively of La Connaissance du Bouddhisme, on matters of common concern to them and the Friends. As it soon became evident that the aims of the two groups were almost identical, there was no hesitation in acceding to their urgent request that Bhante should visit Paris regularly.

In the middle of their visit, Bhante and David had the pleasure of spending two days at Luynes, in the Loire valley, as guests of our old friend and supporter Antoinette Willmott and her husband. (Antoinette is currently translating 'A Survey of Buddhism' into French).

While in Paris, Bhante and David stayed with Ven. Thien Chau as guests of M. and Mme. Long Hiep. Several Vietnamese friends placed themselves at the disposal of the visitors and were untiring in their efforts to show them the sights of Paris.

On his return to London, Bhante said that he felt his visit had been an important step towards closer collaboration between French and English Buddhists.

## VEN. SANGHARAKSHITA AT YALE: AN INTERIM REPORT

From the end of January to the middle of May (excluding a break for the Easter Retreat) Bhante was at Yale University as visiting lecturer in Philosophy.



During this period he conducted at Berkeley College a Hall Seminar on 'Buddhism and the West'. In accordance with the University regulations, only fifteen students were permitted to take the course, though nearly sixty applied. For the benefit of the disappointed, a Sunday evening meditation and discussion class was started. This was attended by upwards of eighty persons, mostly students, but including a few friends from off campus.

In the course of his stay Bhante also addressed various groups for the study of psychology and comparative religion, and conducted a three-day course in the well-known communication exercises for the benefit of twenty-six students.

Besides winning friends and influencing people, Bhante has been engaged in literary work, including the writing out of one of his most popular lectures, 'Mind: Reactive and Creative', for publication in pamphlet form. He has also promised us an article on his experiences at Yale for our next issue.

#### MAHAYANA BUDDHIST NUNNERY IN INDIA.

This spring marks the tenth anniversary of the Tibetan Friendship Group, founded by Sister Khechog Palmo (Freda Bedi). She feels that the best way to make this a memorable occasion would be to bring in new friends for the group.

Out of the twenty thousand Buddhist nuns of old Tibet, there remain only about one hundred and fifty examples of women dedicated to the Dharma in the robe, and this figure includes the elderly and sick.

The Mahayana Buddhist Nunnery (Karma Drubgya Tharjay Ling) at Tilokpur, twenty miles below Dharmsala, founded by Sister Khechog Palmo, stands above the sacred cave of Tilopa, and houses nearly forty nuns (the only existing group of more than 15 or 20 persons).

One of our friends, Susan Rowan, from Reading, England, spent last summer taking initiations in Dalhousie and helping the young protegies of the nuns (ten girls between the ages of six and ten years) and is now preparing to go into retreat.

#### 1970 EASTER RETREAT AT HASLEMERE

The eighth retreat to be organised by the FWBO took place at the Ockenden Venture's school 'Keffolds', from March 27th to April 5th this year. It was attended by eighty-two people, many of them being members



of the regular weekly meditation class held in London for newcomers to Buddhism.

Bhante arrived at the retreat almost straight from New York, with a bad chill which turned into Bronchial Pneumonia, and forced him to keep to his bed for five days. Thanks to the initiative and resourcefulness of members of the Order, however, in particular Penny-Nield-Smith, Krystyna Rowe, and Karl Taylor, the retreat was a complete success. On the programme were classes in Hatha yoga, Anapana-sati and Metta-bhavana meditation, taped lectures, puja ceremonies, and classes in the Chinese Dance meditation, T'ai Chi Ch'uan, which proved tremendously popular. As usual, meals were prepared by members of the order, with the willing and indispensable help of other friends, notably Bob Sprenger, to whom we would like to record our lasting gratitude.

We look forward to seeing all those who came on the Easter Retreat again in August.

WESAK

The festival of Vaisakha Purnima this year will be held at Sarum House, 3, Plough Lane, Purley, Surrey, on Sunday May 17th, beginning at 11 am. This is, for all Buddhists, no matter what sect, THE event of the year, as it celebrates the greatest event in the life of the greatest man the East has known. As it is also the celebration of your own innate enlightenment, we invite you all to come and join with us in this supreme time of devotion.

There will be food provided in plenty, but we ask you to bring your own offerings of food, candles, incense, flowers or money, not only to offset the cost of organising this event, but also to emphasise the fact that it is your thing as well as ours.

On the programme we hope to include a film show, music, meditation and devotional ceremonies, and weather permitting, an open air candle ceremony, fireworks, bonfire, and refreshments by firelight.

There are regular fast trains to Purley from Victoria every half hour, (cheap day return fare is 6/-) throughout the day until 11pm. If you phone us from the station, we can arrange a lift for you (660.2542) Otherwise, it is only ten minutes walk away.

A limited amount of accommodation is available for Saturday night at Sarum House. If you wish to make use of this, please let us know in good time, and please bring a sleeping bag or sheets with you if you can.



## SARUM HOUSE

Regular activities are continuing to be held at Sarum House, including public meditation classes, tape lectures, devotional and full moon ceremonies and week-end retreats. The library of the FWBO is available for anyone wishing to use it for study of all aspects of Buddhism and related subjects. Please watch the diary for details of events.

## EQUANIMITY

According to all authorities, Enlightenment possesses two aspects: compassion and wisdom. Compassion requires no explanation, since it is, most decidedly, not something produced by dry, abstract moral theorising, but is immediate, all-embracing, and uncomplicated. Wisdom, though; what do we mean by that word?

I would suggest that wisdom, practically speaking, is equanimity. Equanimity, at best, is to be fully aware of all that is 'going on', both subjectively (in oneself), and objectively (in the external world). It is to be established in an unwavering state of serenity, which is anything but cold and arrogant disdain for other people, their sufferings and human failings. Once we experience enough of life to understand what the Buddha meant when he used the word 'dukkha' (which can mean anything from powerful physical pain to the most subtle psychological unease) only then are we in a position to 'step outside ourselves, and enter a state of gentle unruffled coolness, (not of course coldness) as far as is ever possible for a living being, constantly receiving impressions from the outside world.

The stoic philosophers prized equanimity as the highest good, and Epicurus declared that this supremely painless state is the state of the gods. Certainly, our age seems to pay no attention whatsoever to the state of emotional and spiritual equilibrium which we call 'equanimity'. We see the consequences of this neglect all around us, in the restlessness which is so noticeable a characteristic of our civilisation.

The transition from ego-consciousness to 'free' egoless awareness is only possible through the cultivation at all times of equanimity; without that 'centredness' that a steady, unhurried mind can give us, no genuine moral or spiritual progress can surely ever be achieved.

SUMEDHA UPASAKA.



The Friends Of The Western Buddhist Order  
summer diary 1970

may  
sunday 17  
llam  
festival of wesak  
sarum house  
3 plough lane purley  
Q1 66 2542

thursday 21  
6 pm  
celebration of wesak  
for the order  
sarum house

june  
friday 19  
weekend retreat  
sarum house

every week

meditation classes

sakura 14 monmouth street london wc2  
zen class 6 30 pm monday (with suzuki roshi)  
beginners 6 30 pm tuesday  
regular 7 00 pm wednesday  
advanced 7 00 pm thursday

sarum house 3 plough lane purley surrey  
regular class 7 30 pm wednesday

centre house 10a airlie gardens kensington w8  
zen class 4 to 7 pm saturday (suzuki roshi)

20 burlington road london w4 (with suzuki roshi)  
zen class 7 to 9 am mon to fri  
zen class 6 30 pm daily not thursday or  
monday

yoga classes conducted by penny nild-smith

centre house 10a airlie gardens kensington w8  
6 15 pm tuesday  
7 30 pm tuesday

lectures on buddhism

sarum house 3 plough lane purley surrey  
7 30 pm monday

every month at sarum house

full moon puja ceremony on the night of the full moon

july  
sunday 12  
summer seminar  
centre house  
10a airlie gardens  
kensington

august  
friday 14  
summer retreat begins  
(until august 31)  
keffolds







## THE DHAMMAPADA

A new translation by Ven. Sthavira Sangharakshita

The Pali Dhammapada is a collection of 423 verse aphorisms arranged according to subject in twenty-six sections. Most of these verses are found elsewhere in the Pali Tipitaka: some are original to the Dhammapada. However, all represent, according to tradition, the Buddha's teaching to His disciples on various occasions. The present version is an attempt to reproduce in modern English something of the terseness and directness of the original avoiding the stilted diction and obsolete expressions that have sometimes characterised previous translations

### III. The Section Of The Mind

- 33 As a fletcher straightens the arrow, so the man of understanding makes straight the trembling unsteady mind, (which is) difficult to guard (and) difficult to restrain.
- 34 As a fish threshes from side to side when taken from one abode to another and cast on dry land, so the mind throbs and vibrates (with the strain) as it abandons the domain of Mara.
- 35 (The mind) is frivolous and difficult to control, alighting on whatever it pleases. It is good to tame the mind. A tamed mind brings happiness.
- 36 The mind is extremely subtle and difficult to grasp, alighting on whatever it pleases. Let the man of understanding keep watch over the mind. A guarded mind brings happiness.
- 37 Far ranging and lone-faring is the mind, incorporeal and abiding in the cave (of the heart). Those who bring it under control are freed from the bonds of Mara.
- 38 His wisdom does not attain perfection whose mind is unsettled, who is ignorant of the Real Truth, and whose faith wavers.
- 39 There is no fear for the man who is awake, whose mind is uncontaminated by craving, and unperplexed, and who has given up vice and virtue.



- 40 Perceiving the body to be (fragile) like a clay pot,  
and fortifying the mind as though it were a city, with  
the sword of wisdom make war on Mara. Free from  
attachment, keep watch over what has been won.
- 41 Before long, this body, devoid of consciousness, will  
lie rejected on the ground like a useless faggot.
- 42 Whatever harm foe may do to foe, or hater to hater,  
greater is the harm done (to oneself) by a wrongly  
directed mind.
- 43 Neither mother nor father, nor any other relative,  
can do one as much good as a perfectly directed mind.

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Note: words in brackets represent explanatory  
additions by the translator.







