

The Friends of the Western Buddhist Order newsletter

president Ven. Sthavira Sangharakshita

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"The Asker is the Answer, The Doer is what is Done." Almost every honest editorial is a masked editor in search of an explanation for the drama of answers he has sculptured into a particular form, attempting a translation of what he has done. It seems that every form - music, war, meditation, is an 'answer' to an unconscious or veiled question waiting its release. We must talk of questions, for it is in questions we find peace or chaos - it is in the need to pose problems that we may find our waiting answers. Every act may be the result of opposites as they confront each other - it is from the koans of 'being' that our forms, questions, answers, and acts arise. So, in a way, every editorial is an attempt to stretch the reader back to beginnings, to say what is an editor and what does he do.

"Life is more complicated than we think, yet far simpler than anyone dares to imagine." So then, is my purpose in writing at all. Through all the questions readers ask and editors try to answer - the still point of the fulcrum is what Is Now before you - any questions you dare to dream of that I might try to answer, is simply what is Done. What is asked is this - a mosaic of private answers and you, reader, the Asker - you are the Answer, the writers here, only add new faces in the glass. Your own image - turning into spaces and forms, all multiple and one. "Every object is a Mirror."

Between 'Becoming' and 'What Becomes' is the process and that perhaps is the 'way' of the editor, to 'be a ringing glass that shivers ever as it rings; the editorial is that which unites the reader with the writer, the perception with the conception, the beginning with the end, the initial act with the resounding sound, to bring together into one act all stages of the answered question until there is no-such-thing.

'In the beginning,' like editors, we think ourselves the conductors of our own music, the directors of spaces; we think our thoughts direct us and that we direct thought. So editors, like others, set down scores of music to their orchestras but when they stand on the podium to direct the untutored sounds, music rises of its won accord - once mover, now moves, enters the music, listens, like a running spring to the air it moves. Here, then, are the separate tunes of the taught as teachers, of lessons forming and evaporating to order into patterns only you construct; "Let it pass as it touches your cheeks, it will quiver behind you, united again." Editors, like conductors, are amplifiers, reflecting in movement what is seen to be still. All this that seems to be different, is metaphor and the same.

This was to be a Newsletter about 'Ways' or 'Dos' - all things are dos and everything is the Way. Eating is a way. Once I wrote, "i chew all my food 50 times. now i know what food is. i became food, wanting to eat, i was eaten, now i know. at first it was hard, i had to be discipline and direct the count. one day, i tasted being tasted and all counting

stopped. eating and being eaten were one thing. where are boundaries? counting was a chant. each second was delicious and beautiful, all texture and feel." Now chew people 50 times, see what you look like, looking at others, you know what the other side of 'you' is, feel yourself being seen. So we circle in our knowing, no knowing, in embrace.

SARUM HOUSE WAY

What is it?

Geoffrey says "change"; Paul says "it varies"; to Smudge it's "peaceful anyway". Some think of us as the country cousins out in the "sticks"; some see a lively centre of Buddhist activity; as Chris says, it's here. So - what has been happening here the last two months?

May 6-14th Jiyu Roshi and Mokurai visit us and conduct a sesshin with thirty people - tents on the lawn, mattresses on the floor, conch shell blowing in the pre-dawn, mindful meals followed by unmindful eating, eyes gazing at the wall - one or two seeing it, most seeing something of themselves - and afterwards the garden blossoming from skilful activity and the clearing of weeds. Aubrey Phornton, Bill Douglas stay on.

May 17th Public Wesak Festival - as far as one could count over a hundred people were stacked knee-deep in the sitting room, shoulder high in the rest of the house. Krystyna performed the feeding of the four thousand miracle. Everybody seemed to be having a good time. Chime Youngdong Rimpoché managed to come in the afternoon and introduced the film "Requiem for a Faith". Bhante, the Venerable Sthavira Sangharakshita, led us in the evening, chanting round the bonfire. Food, fireworks, friendliness summed up the day.

May 19th An evening explaining to local schoolchildren what we have here. Mike Hughes came to stay.

May 21st Full Moon Day of Wesak. Sangharakshita led us in a special Puja, and in the first meeting of the Western Buddhist Order with him since his return from the States.

May 22nd Bob moves in, spends the weekend in retreat.

May 24th Paul visits Brighton for their Wesak celebration - suggests it might be useful if we visited weekly, which we arrange to do.

May 26th Hazel and Stephen leave to spend the summer visiting groups

May 29th Bill Douglas leaves to go back to teaching music at

San Francisco University

May 30th Some join Hastings in their Wesak. Bill moves in.

June 1st Aubrey goes to join Jiyu Roshi in the States, via Paris.

June 19th Full Moon Ceremony

Again we overflow into the tents for the beginning of a week-end retreat led by Bhante - (not many members of the Order there, so nothing intensive); mostly meditation, six in the morning, eleven at night, with a pause for a lecture each afternoon. A peaceful interlude.

June 21st A BBC interviewer comes to discuss 'community'.

So we go - we still continue our listening to taped lectures on Mondays, our Wednesday meditations, weekly visits to Brighton Group, to Sakura, the outside things. What can one say of the rest?

I see a collection of individuals in an old-as-time, new-as-time, unrehearsed Morris dance where each is intent on his own movement; by that movement made aware of the others, made by their moving more intense in his own; one stumbles and discovers that the world didn't end, another by his fall finds strength he didn't know; one climbs a peak and finds others there before him, and in the depths finds others were there too. The group brings us up to our own aloneness and dependence, it is a microcosmic ebb and flow that never stands still so that you can catch it, always a foreign country and always home, where others do nothing yet you find yourself facing your own conditioning, your areas of self restriction, the fact that you are free. We are like a heap of puppies testing out their individuality, a group of gardeners finding out what will grow, a prehistoric village seeking out the unknown.

"What is the way, here?" "did you say. Getting on with "it", whatever "it" is, and growing. And, when you are free of "it",.....

Upasika Gotami

ZEN

Sitting here facing the wall, Gazing at faint cracks.
Eyes wide open, or half closed, vision blurred.
Pushing down air - energy into my stomach, holding it there.
Letting it free with "mu".
Somewhere to my left the Roshi sits. To my right outside
sunshine sparkles among the trees. Inside I sit with people
on either side. Time expands in all directions or contracts
around me as feelings, and thoughts, move through me.

Attention wavers, thoughts pour in, sometimes it seems like
ages, sometime only seconds. Just when it seems too much,
with pain burning in joints and back the clear cool sudden
sound of the bell, brings joys, as you bow for the end.
Zen is sitting.

Alan Sharples

april retreat '69

Soft night,
quiet and dark.
A full moon weaving patterns of light through the pines,
A cool wind blowing through your mind.

At first only a shadow,
Then realisation as the eyes accustom.
Meditating,
Cross-legged,
Thoughts reaching far and further beyond.
Eyes,
Staring across aeons of confusion in the dark sky.
Do not disturb him,
Slip away, unnoticed,
Or stay,
Communicate through a wall of time,
Grasp each other's thoughts,
And linger,
In harmony.

Dawn,
gold, red,
giving birth to a new day.
Old man rising
Do not look at me in anger old man,
I could not stop the dawn.

Deborah Lobstein.

We read of fasting being condemned as extreme, this refers to
a point reached for instance by Milarepa beyond which one's
strength is too greatly diminished. Many great spritual
beings did fast and to excess before they realised for them-
selves that this was unnecessary, however the commitment it
seems may well have been so, as a part of their training.

For us of lesser zeal perhaps a week on water alone might be
of some benefit this will enable us (after the physical
hunger of approximately the first two days has passed) to
have something of an insight into our own nature, and
observe our cravings, and the extent to which we are affected
by the actions of those about us, and also inanimate objects,
or rather, our view of them.

This glimpse may show us something of what detachment involves. As a bonus, fasting helps to purify the body, clarify the speech and sharpen the mind.

Upsaka Munindra (Jim)

EXPERIENCE

Some folk say, "Life is meaningless, because Nature is ruthless, amoral, even downright "satanic" - there is a view of life, examine it, evaluate it, experience the world through the eyes of such a sombre outlook. Then, on the other hand, there are people who say, "The universe is fundamentally purposive - identify with that absolute purpose, experience rapture and illumination". When we see disease, war, volcanic eruption, it may prove very hard to hold on to the conviction that the universe is basically "on our side".

This is by way of establishing that we are all, in space-time-matter-ego, travelling from one opposite to another - oscillating between light and darkness, happiness and sadness, gain and loss, and so on. This was how I saw life when I first entered the Buddhist movement, in the middle sixties. Was there no path to liberation from this deplorable state of affairs, where the opposites were playing a game of tennis, and this vulnerable little being was the unwilling yet utterly helpless tennis-ball? That was how I saw it those years ago.

Any man who can honestly affirm the complete and utter reality of this world-process...should think, again, deeply systematically, with discrimination. Where nothing stays for more than a fleeting instant, how can reality reside in that? I wasted hours and days questioning, interrogating life as if I were a Gestapo officer and it were my prisoner.

After wandering about in the intellectual wilderness for a long time, it occurred to me that I was the greatest clown and idiot to "blame" the universe because it was a play of opposites, because it contained transformation (change) and disagreeable and unpleasant aspects and experiences. I came to grasp intuitively (though it was difficult, that has to be frankly admitted) that the whole cosmos was an explosion of Energy, and I and you, matter and mind, were merely the way that this Energy appeared - and I, despite the fact that I was physically separate from all this, was spiritually continuous with it - first moods of "oneness", of unitive consciousness.

Reaching a state of pure awareness without presuppositions - this was what I spent my time doing. All activity of "I" was only conventionally or relatively different from other activity of "I"s innumerable, across the world and across the universe. Compassion - sitting by the ocean, realising

the waves and ocean really were ONE, so that the crab was me and so were the fish and the gulls - identification with the laughing wind through many hours:

In a sense, it is all an echoing dream - slumbering, the whole teeming world of striving beings is snoring in the sleep of egoism and nescience - in another sense, we have only to let oursenses contact the world, recognise we are the same basic stuff, and all the lights are suddenly turned on in the room that had been sunk in gloom for numberless aeons. If we harm others, this is harming ourselves - we should stand on the heights of our mind - cliffs, and know that there is nowhere and nothing that is other than us, in the still and timeless depths of our hearts and beings. Meditation is a way to "come into" this state of oneness - devotion is another - a moderate amount of study is another - any activity if it is performed from this "absolute" standpoint, is valid, is supremely valid.

Life was unconscious of itself for a long, incredibly long time- beings killing and attacking. We human beings - whether we be whitehaired old men, young children, adolescents, whatever age - we are possessed of a stronger consciousness than our evolutionary forebears - let us use it to best advantage, and rise above the dominance of the opposites by understanding the fact of oneness - we all are together as one being, and individuality is a stepping-stone to universality. This is my sadhana (discipline)

Geoffrey Webster (Upasaka Sumedha)

grey dusty surface.....becoming a space symbol of
beyond.....step through the walls of time.....
.....and be
turn away
from the race and clatter.....walk down the stairs
open the door THE MOMENT IS MADE wait-----and in
silence follow the flow into the sweet haze.....candle
flickers before the indescribable face...changing now
firm now smiling...now.....what do you do.....
a figure bends in a motion of devotion to whom...for what..
you sit.....you see figures wearing symbols....
white ribbon....gold thread....white cord...draped over a
carnaby street shirt.....curving over the breast.....
the thin vapour curls upward mingling its fragrance with the
roar somewhere above your head.....words.....
revealing a way.....do you want to know.....is this why you
came.....do you want to know peace.....
do you want to know who you are..do you want to be buddha....
....who is buddha....who is that up there cast in bronze.....
who am i
"count after the in and out breath....1-10.....first stage....
are you sitting comfortably...then i'll begin when the bell
rings".....relax.....breathing and counting.....

breathing in borrowing the cosmos.....breathing out distract-
ing thought.....cleaning out at last every moment.....be..
take in the light.....fill the space.....expand.....
flowthrough the confines of skin.....bethe silence..the
floor..pass into no edges.....slowly.....
hearing the last bell sound.....rising....turning to
receive tea and biscuits and people...."how did you hear of
this place".....I heard about it at the lectures"...."did
you hear the one on"...."can you sit in a circle please we
are going to have the discussion now.....
turning from....the act of offering.....clear water in silver
reflection.....orange flicker in still eyes...deep....far
into.....turn.....see waiting looking circle
of circles....faces.....eyes....don't ask me
LET US SIT.....LET US PRAY.....LET US BE.....
rebirth....enlightenment..self...mandala.....words read..
heard.....words beyond.....other life's knowledge...other
life..maitreya.....theravada....no enlightenment until.....
who answers you.....from what source....how OLD are you....
who asks who.....who asks who what....why.....you are it
.....sit and be....sit on the floor which is buddha.....
walk with understanding on buddha stairs.....whose hand now
on the door...open onto....know that this street.....this
grey.... this roar....choke of dust fumes you....is buddha
...is is.....is....there is nowhere to go....and "we
shall see you next week"

Upasaka Karuna

NINTH FWBO RETREAT AT HASLEMERE SURREY

Perhaps for the first time in our short history, the word
'retreat' was a misnomer. It was more of a confrontation;
a confrontation, that is, of the conscious mind with the
unconscious, which, as many psychologists will tell us, is a
very rare occasion. For sixteen days on end, there were
few occasions when one was allowed to forget that we normal-
ly live in a situation which demands automatic living, with
all its consequent boredom and frustrations; that 'normal
life' in fact consists of a continual misfiring of our
psychological rocket engines.

Opportunities for discovering this within the context of
society are, needless to say, all too rare. Yet it is
imperative that we should discover this fact, and discover
it with considerable force, if we are ever to begin to
evolve, from our habitual state of 'unlife'. This is why
the biannual events which transform Keffolds School at
Haslemere from a quiet institute for spreading the abc of
knowledge to young refugee children to the ideal environ-
ment for propogating communication of a quite revolution-
ary nature are of such cataclysmic significance, not only
to immediate Buddhist world, but to Western society at
large. This year, the accent was definitely on the word

'communication'; few escaped its soul-searching eye, and at the end of the fortnight, those who wanted to escape had long ago done so. So the 'communication exercises' initiated four years ago in this country by Ven. Sthavira Sangharakshita let forth a torrent of repressed energy from the too-long-closed flood gates of the mind. A world has been opened which few admit even to themselves exists: the world in which real people make contact with each other in a world of ever increasing non-communication. And, however unnoticed, something has been permanently changed in the lives of those who had the courage to say 'let's communicate'.

ANANDA UPADAKA

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.

IV. The Section of Flowers

44. Who shall conquer this earth and the Realm of Death with its deities? Who shall make out the well taught Verses of Truth as an expert picks flowers?
45. The Learner (of the Transcendental Path) shall conquer earth and the Realm of Death with its deities. The learner shall make out the well taught Verses of Truth as an expert picks flowers.
46. Seeing the body as froth, and thoroughly comprehending its mirage-nature, let one proceed unseen by the King of Death having broken the flowery shafts of Mara.
47. As a great flood carries away a sleeping village, so death bears off the man who, possessed of longing, plucks only the flowers (of existence).
48. The Destroyer brings under his sway the man who, possessed by longing, plucks only the flowers (of existence), and who is insatiate in sexual passions.
49. Let the silent sage live (lit. fare) in the village as the bee goes taking honey from the flower without harming colour or fragrance.

50. One should pay no heed to the faults of others, what they have done and not done. Rather should one consider the things that one has oneself done and not done.
51. Like a beautiful flower, brightly coloured but without scent, even so useless is the well uttered speech of one who does not act (accordingly).
52. Like a beautiful flower, brightly coloured and scented, even so useful is the well uttered speech of one who acts (accordingly).
53. As many garlands are made from a heap of flowers, so one who is a mortal born should perform many (ethically) skillful deeds.
54. The fragrance of flowers, of sandalwood, of aromatic resin or jasmine, does not go against the wind, (whereas) the fragrance of the good does go against the wind.
55. Sandalwood or aromatic resin, blue lotus or wild jasmine, of all these kinds of fragrance the odour of virtue is unsurpassed.
56. Insignificant (in comparison) is this fragrance of aromatic resin and sandalwood. The fragrance of virtue (it is that) blows among the gods (as) the highest.
57. Mara does not find the path of those who are virtuous, who live mindfully, and who are freed through Perfect Knowledge.
58. As pink lotuses, sweet-scented and lovely, spring from a heap of rubbish thrown in the highway,
59. So among rubbishy beings, among ignorant worldlings, the Disciple of the Perfectly Awakened One shines forth exceedingly in wisdom.

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

DIARY OF EVENTS

Aspects of the Higher Evolution of the Individual.

A series of eight lectures given by the Ven. Sthavira Sangharakshita.

OCT 16 How consciousness evolves.

OCT 23 From alienated awareness to integrated awareness.

OCT 30 Individuality, true or false.

NOV 6 The question of "psychological types".

NOV 13 Psychotherapy versus meditation.

NOV 20 The problem of personal relationships.

NOV 27 The individual and the spiritual community.

DEC 4 Is a guru necessary?

6.30. Tea.

7.00. Lecture.

8.00. Discussion.

9.00 Refreshments.

9.30. Chanting and meditation.

Programme will end at 10.30.

Price 6/- per evening.

Centre House, 10a, Airlie Gardens, London, W.8. 01 727 0078.

Regular events held in London.

Meditation.

Sakura, 14 Monmouth Street, London, W.C.2.

01 836 0630

Beginners 6.30.p.m. Tuesday.

Regular 7.00.p.m. Wednesday.

Advanced 7.00.p.m. Thursday.

Sarum House, 3 Plough Lane, Purley, Surrey. 01 660 2542.

Regular classes with instruction 7.30 Wednesday.

Every month at Sarum House, Full moon ceremony on the night of the full moon. You are welcome to come along at any time.

The Friends would appreciate the yearly contribution of 10/- towards the printing and distribution costs of the newsletter. Contributions can be sent to Sarum House.

STOP PRESS

Communications Weekend. Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, W.C.1.

Conducted by the Ven. Sangharakshita including Communications Lecture refreshments and Communication Exercises.

Saturday evening Oct 31st and Sunday morning Nov 1st.

As personal attention is advised during the two day course numbers will be limited, therefore booking will be necessary.

Further information from Sarum House-01 660 2542.

